

# **PARTNER UP**

## **FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

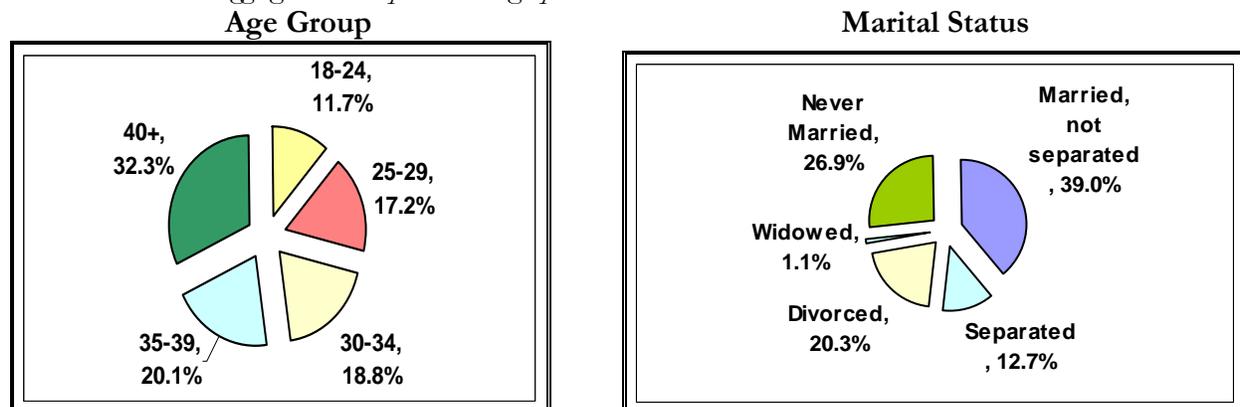
Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement conducted a three-year project, *Partner Up*, which was funded by a grant award from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). It was awarded through an initiative, sponsored by the U S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), aimed at delivering services and identifying policies that support healthy relationships and healthy marriage. The overall goal of the federal initiative was to influence the three-decade trend of declining marriage rates and the increasing rates of single-parent households in the United States. The Department of Child Support Enforcement contracted with OMNI Institute, a local nonprofit social science research firm in Denver, to evaluate the *Partner Up* initiative in Colorado. This is the final report of that evaluation. The goals of the evaluation were to assess: 1) the overall effectiveness of the *Partner Up* Program and 2) the critical implementation factors associated with program success.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- *The Partner Up program served a total of 581 participants throughout the course of the three-year period.*

People from a range of educational, ethnic, marital and financial backgrounds benefitted from program services. As the data indicate, the smallest percentage of participants fell within the 18-24 years age range (11.7%) and the largest group was age 40 and over (32.3%). The education level of participants varied; however, the majority had at least some high school education and 95 participants (16.8%) had a Bachelor's or graduate degree, indicating that the program was useful for participants with a broad array of education levels. Of participants in the program, 8.1% reported Spanish as their primary language at home, representing the importance of bilingual materials and facilitators. Almost half of participants were married and not separated when they entered the program. Alternatively, 26.9% of participants reported never having been married, but of that group, 51.8% were either living with a boyfriend/girlfriend/fiancé or were in a relationship but not living together.

Chart Series 1: *Aggregate Participant Demographics*

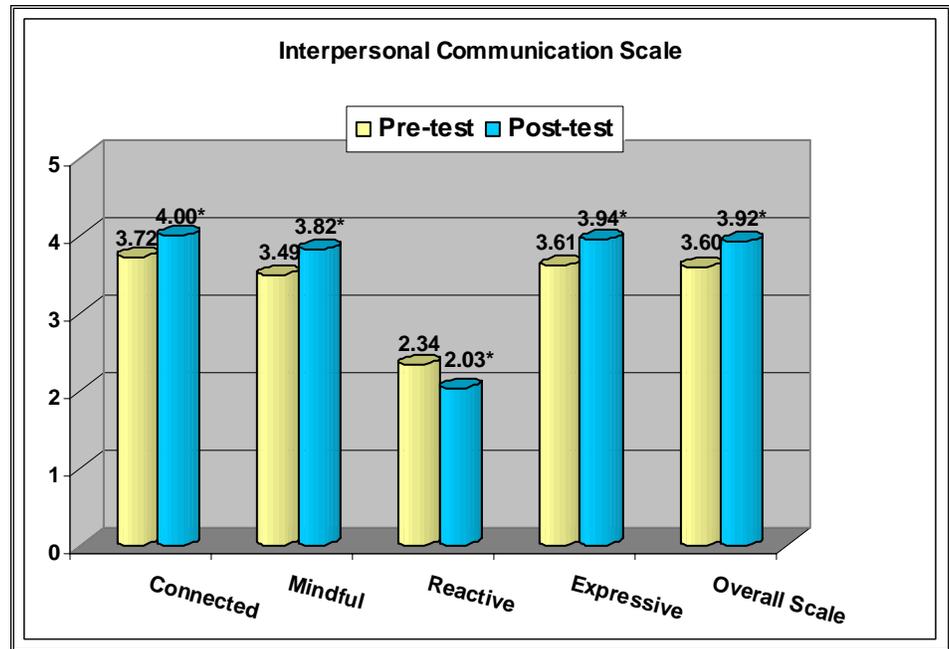


➤ **Results for the Interpersonal Communication Scale showed statistically significant changes.**

The Interpersonal Communication Scale assessed participants' communication skills at the beginning of program services (pre-test) and following program services (post-test). The sample included 173 matched pre-tests and post-tests, and results showed statistically significant changes across all scales of the measure and for the measure as a whole. Medium-to-large effect sizes were also revealed for changes on all four scales and for the overall scale. This indicates that the various curricula implemented by the *Partner Up* centers had a positive, real-world impact on the participants' abilities to communicate with others.

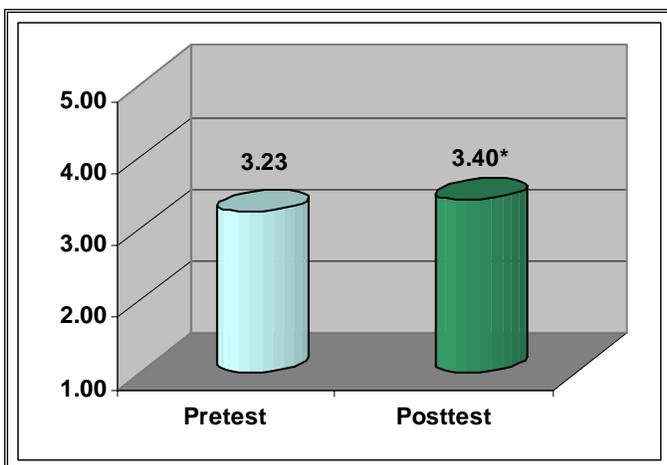
**Chart 5: Aggregate Interpersonal Communication Results**

Results show increased interpersonal communication skills across all sub-scales and for the measure as a whole. Results are statistically significant at the .05 level.



➤ **Participants reported an increased belief in how important marriage is for their own well-being and the well-being of their children.**

Participants reported how important they thought marriage is for their own well-being and the well-being of their child/ren. For this question, the mean change from pre- to post-test was statistically significant, indicating the program not only affected communication skills, but was also very focused on marriage and thoughts about marriage.



**Chart 6: Importance of Marriage**

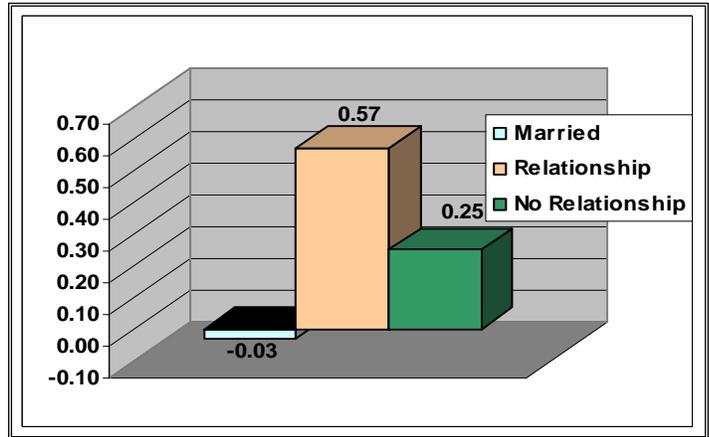
Results indicate that there was an increased belief in the importance of marriage during the program.

- **Participants who reported not being married but in a relationship showed the greatest increases in their belief that marriage is important for their own or their children’s well-being.**

Further analysis was conducted to see if the findings indicated in Chart 6 above varied at all depending on the marital status of participants.

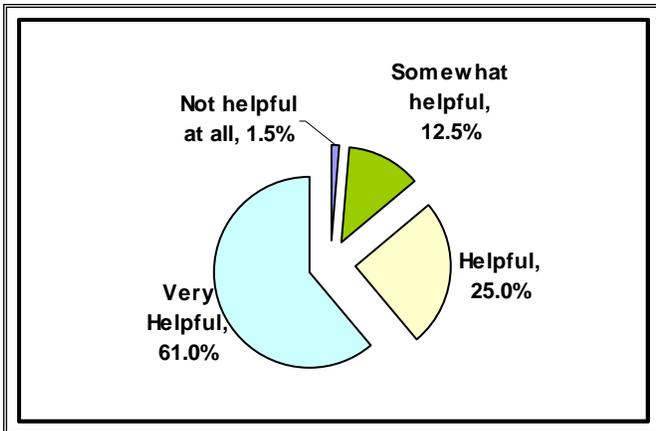
**Chart 11:** *Change in Importance of Marriage Scores from Pre-test to Post-test, by Relationship Status*

These results suggest that the *Partner Up* program successfully changed attitudes about the importance of marriage among non-married individuals. Such attitude change could help non-married individuals more strongly consider marriage as a way to improve their well-being and that of their children.



- **Participants reported that *Partner Up* services were helpful toward the goal of improving parental support for their child/ren and providing relationship support.**

Overwhelmingly, participants reported that program services were helpful in improving parental support while 100% of participants who responded to a question about how helpful the program was regarding relationship support reported that it was helpful.

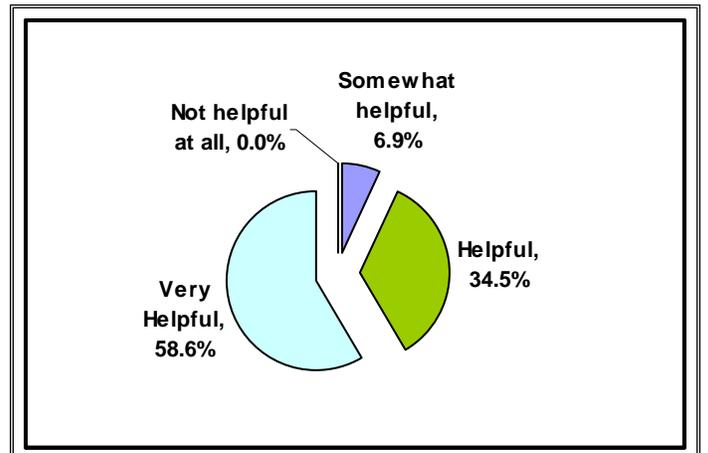


**Chart 8:** *Parental Support After Program Services (left)*

Results show that 98.5% of participants found the program to be “somewhat helpful,” “helpful” or “very helpful” in helping them improve parental support.

**Chart 10:** *Relationship Support After Program Services (right)*

Although 22.8% of participants indicated that they did not need support in this area, 100% indicated that the program was “somewhat helpful,” “helpful” or “very helpful” in providing relationship support.



## INTRODUCTION

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This Final Report summarizes the three-year *Partner Up* evaluation. The goals of the final report are to 1) inform program staff about implementation practices that may improve services, 2) educate local stakeholders about the effects of the grant throughout the state, and 3) contribute to the national evaluation of the Healthy Marriage Initiative. The report includes a brief background on the project and the participating centers, information about program participants, and a discussion of the evaluation efforts. Detailed descriptions of the statistical analysis methods are included, as well as analysis and interpretation of the data results. Finally, this report includes qualitative data from mid-grant and end-of-grant interviews with program staff and center Executive Directors.

### BACKGROUND

Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement conducted a three-year project, *Partner Up*, which was funded by a grant award from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). It was awarded through an initiative, sponsored by the U S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), aimed at delivering services and identifying policies that support healthy relationships and healthy marriage. The overall goal of the federal initiative was to influence the three-decade trend of declining marriage rates and the increasing rates of single-parent households in the United States. Although children can succeed in a variety of family structures, being raised by parents with healthy marriages has been found to improve children's emotional and physical health, as well as support their academic success (Institute for American Values, 2005). Marital distress and poor communication place children at risk for mental health symptoms and behavioral problems at home and school (Bouchard & Lee, 2000). Effective communication between marital partners, however, is associated with greater quantity and quality of parental involvement with children, and protects against these negative outcomes.

## **GOALS OF *PARTNER UP***

The overall goal of the federal initiative was to influence the three-decade trend of declining marriage rates and the increasing rates of single-parent households in the United States. The primary objectives of the *Partner Up* initiative in Colorado were to:

- ❖ Increase paternity establishments
- ❖ Increase voluntary compliance with child support
- ❖ Strengthen marriages and improve family relationships for 300-400 high-risk, low-income parents with children
- ❖ Foster a better image for the child support program
- ❖ Identify Colorado policies that are disincentives to marriage
- ❖ Develop best practices, especially in relationship to parents
- ❖ Provide technical assistance to community programs that want to create similar programs
- ❖ Document program effectiveness and disseminate information about successful practices

The Family Resource Center Association (FRCA) was contracted by the Department of Child Support Enforcement to implement the *Partner Up* program at the community level. FRCA selected five family resource centers across Colorado to deliver services. The centers were the Piñon Project in Montezuma County, La Plata Family Center in La Plata County, Mountain Resource Center providing services to Park, Clear Creek, and Jefferson Counties, Focus Points in Denver County; and Lowry Family Resource Center in Denver and Arapahoe Counties. Each site selected its own curriculum based on the specific populations it serves.

## **PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION (LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL)**

The overall evaluation design of this demonstration project consisted of three levels: National, State, and Local. RTI International (RTI) conducted the national-level process and outcome evaluation. The Lewin Group was the national technical assistance provider for funded agencies, offering assistance related to implementation and data collection activities. The Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Child Support Enforcement, as the grantee, managed the grant and

state-level data collection and reporting. The local-level evaluation contributes to the national and state levels and focuses on additional research questions that inform local implementation of the program.

## **DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL EVALUATION CONTRACTOR**

OMNI Institute (OMNI) was contracted to conduct the local evaluation of the project. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit research firm. OMNI has been providing research, evaluation and needs assessment services to Colorado communities, non-profits, state agencies and foundations for over 30 years. Through this work, OMNI has developed a working approach that is customer-oriented, culturally sensitive, and keenly focused on utilization. This work spans a host of content areas, including: substance abuse prevention; STD/HIV testing; participatory research in low income neighborhoods; youth program evaluation including mentoring, bully-proofing, and afterschool services; international development research in Romania, East Africa and India; and early childhood education assessment. OMNI staff utilize the latest technology in the collection, analysis and reporting of research and evaluation data. This includes the use of qualitative analysis software, web-based surveys, and SPSS quantitative analysis software.

## **LOCAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

The following local evaluation questions are those which guided the evaluation activities. *(Note: Many of the following evaluation questions are those which overlapped with the RTI implementation study. Coordination between OMNI and RTI occurred so as to minimize the data collection burden on centers and ensure that evaluation efforts were complementary.)*

- ❖ How do the various participating state and local centers respond to efforts to promote relationships and marriage in various center settings? What are the sources of support or resistance for this type of initiative in the various centers?
- ❖ What is the workload impact of activities aimed at promoting relationships and marriage in various center settings? Who are the people, and what are the skills necessary to effectively carry out this project?
- ❖ What is the average length of time that participants need to complete the program? What is the average cost per participant? What is the major cost factor associated with these services?

- ❖ What are the demographic, family and employment characteristics of mothers and fathers who are interested in improving their relationships? What are the characteristics of those who complete the program and make subsequent changes in their relationships?
- ❖ What barriers do parents face to healthy relationships and marriage? What types of services and resources do they want? What type of collaboration is needed among community centers to address these needs?
- ❖ What changes are made in the programs and services to make them appropriate for Hispanic/Latino populations?
- ❖ What policies and approaches serve as incentives/disincentives to building healthy relationships and marriage among low-income, single parents? How do they differ in urban and rural settings?
- ❖ What are the challenges and opportunities for state and local centers working with faith-based and other community-based organizations?
- ❖ Do participating married/unmarried parents learn effective communication and negotiation skills with the goal of strengthening their family relationships and, ultimately, enhancing their parenting skills?
- ❖ Do participating unmarried parents have the opportunity to learn about the benefits of marriage, including the social, emotional, and financial aspects?

## **EVALUATION DESIGN**

Throughout this program demonstration project, OMNI worked with state- and national-level evaluators to ensure that local evaluation efforts effectively contributed to state and national efforts. Specifically, OMNI worked with RTI, the national evaluators, to ensure that necessary demographic data about participants were collected and shared. OMNI also worked with RTI to reduce duplication of implementation data collection efforts and to maximize the complementary nature of local and national evaluation efforts. In addition, OMNI worked with state-level evaluators to ensure that the necessary client identifiers (for the extraction of state-level data) were obtained from the individual centers. Finally, OMNI worked closely with key stakeholders regarding local evaluation efforts to ensure that the specific questions were being addressed adequately.

## ***PARTNER UP SERVICES***

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### **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED**

The centers received funding and began implementing their programs in July 2006. For this grant, the family centers implemented educational programs and support services that promoted healthy relationships and healthy marriages among unwed individuals and couples with children. Each of the centers took a unique approach to implementing the *Partner Up* program and blended various approaches depending on the specific population that was served. Services were grouped into five different types: Group Training/Marriage Curriculum, Individual Training on Relationship/Marriage Curriculum, Short-Term Support Sessions, Ongoing Individual Support, and Written Material presented on Relationship/Marriage Curriculum. Further descriptions of the various curriculums and services are provided below.

### **CLIENT-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS**

As mentioned above, the client-level interventions varied depending upon the curriculum selected by the *Partner Up* site. The overarching goal across all curricula was to strengthen marriages and improve family relationships. The number of sessions ranged from 4 two-hour sessions to 12 three-hour sessions. Interventions varied from instructor-led couples' sessions learning *The Awareness Wheel* (*Couple Communication* curriculum) to psycho-educational sessions for singles learning *Collaborative Communication* or *Phases of Relationship* (*CORE Communication* curriculum) to facilitator-led parents' sessions learning the *Stages of Healthy Families and Realities of Marriage* (*Exploring Relationships and Marriage with Fragile Families* curriculum). Agencies reported that between 80 – 90% of participants completed the programs that were implemented.

The curricula offered by the centers were *Couple Communication* (3 centers), *CORE Communication* (2 centers), *Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities: A Violence Prevention Parent Training Program* (2 centers), and *Parenting Healthy Relationships* (1 center). Two centers implemented both the *Couple Communication* and *Core Communication* curricula. One center implemented both the *Couple Communication* and *Parenting Healthy Relationships* curricula.

The *Couple Communication* program was typically implemented with married couples who did not have a serious conflict within the past six months (e.g., domestic violence conflict) and/or who wished to improve their communication skills. Even though this program was designed for couples, some single individuals participated. To accommodate single individuals, the program facilitator served as their “partner.” Program completion was defined as having completed four sessions.

The *Core Communication* program was implemented with individuals who were unmarried and wished to improve a relationship, or with married couples who were unsuitable for *Couple Communication*. Recent domestic violence or other issues that could harm the group dynamic would make a couple unsuitable for the *Couple Communication* program. To complete the *Core Communication*, a participant had to either attend all six sessions or 24 hours of the program.

The *Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities* program was appropriate for individuals from ethnic minority populations. The curriculum taught participants “how to navigate resources, communicate needs, and advocate for their children.” Another center modified its curriculum to work with individuals from all ethnic backgrounds by individualizing activities to fit the audience. The *Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities* program was completed when a participant completed the intake forms and attended the 10-week program.

The centers also offered a combination of services to their clients depending on the needs of the population. One-on-one counseling, mediation with families and Family Support Services were all instances of the Individual Training on Relationship/Marriage Curriculum that participants received from the centers. Short-term support sessions usually accompanied some type of relationship/marriage training, reflecting the dedication to wrap-around services that the *Partner Up* sites are known for throughout communities. These support sessions could focus on supervised visitation, nutrition classes, legal services and family counseling, to name a few. One site offered additional classes: *Es Difícil Ser Mujer*, which is a class for women discussing depression and other issues women face; *Operation Frontline*, which is part of the *Share Our Strength* program, offering a six-week nutrition education curriculum; and Legal Night, which provided a one-night session for families to obtain legal assistance and advice. These classes provided another forum for participants to receive the information, education, and support they needed. On-going individual support was also offered by each of the centers to supplement the *Partner Up* services. This support could focus

on child enforcement issues, such as paternity, custody, and child support payments. Additionally, the on-going individual support provided financial assistance, scholarship application assistance, employment and housing assistance, case management, emergency assistance, and life skills, for example. Lastly, written materials were used to convey relationship/marriage information.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTOCOL**

The *Partner Up* program encouraged safe and healthy relationships. As such, it was necessary for program staff to recognize and be aware of relationships that did not fit this description. To address the topic, each site developed its own domestic violence protocol, which was submitted to and approved by the federal ACF office. These protocols included identifying resources in the community and clearly defining domestic violence. The centers also outlined detailed plans for screening and responding to incidents of domestic abuse. Each month during the conference call conducted by the federal ACF Office, sites reported out on any incidents of using the protocol and discussed how the situation was handled and lessons learned, if applicable.

## EVALUATION METHODS

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OMNI chose a mixed-methods approach to evaluation. Quantitative measures were supplemented with qualitative data. The evaluation design included pre-test and post-test measurement, completed by participants of the program, to assess changes in communication skills during the time they were involved in the *Partner Up* program. Standardized demographic information was also collected for each of the participants through a self-administered Enrollment Form. Narrative reports with Executive Directors and program staff, and key stakeholder interviews, were used to enhance quantitative data. Descriptions of each measure are provided below and the actual measures can be found in Appendix A.

### ENROLLMENT FORM AND CONSENT

*Partner Up Consent Form:* The informed consent form was completed by each *Partner Up* participant. It was a consent to participate in the *Partner Up* program and to disclose “demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and information related to the services received, referrals made, and programs or classes attended through the initiative” to OMNI, RTI, and the Urban Institute. Participants were asked for age, contact information, and social security number (SSN). SSNs were then used at the State-level to match participants’ child support information.

*Partner Up Enrollment Form:* Adapted from the initial Enrollment Form developed at the Federal-level, this form collected demographic information on the *Partner Up* enrollees. Each participant completed the form at the beginning of services, and the same information was collected across the five sites. Demographic information included gender, race/ethnicity, marital/relationship status, information about the youngest child, and employment and income information. The enrollment form also collected information regarding the type of services that the participant was planning to receive, since the services varied between the sites and depended on the individual. The sites also used the form to collect information about the services that the participants were actually receiving in case they had changed since the initial registration into services.

## MEASURES

In order to collect standardized process and outcome information for the evaluation, OMNI developed core measurement tools during the initial phase of the grant to be used by each of the five *Partner Up* sites. The five centers had input regarding the instruments, as did RTI, the Lewin Group, and representatives from the State of Colorado.

*Interpersonal Communication Scale:* The *Partner Up* Interpersonal Communication Scale is a pre-/post-test measure adapted from the *CORE Communication Pre-Post Questionnaire: Skills and Processes* (Copyright © 1997 Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc., Evergreen, CO 80439). It was originally a 17-item instrument designed to measure the change in a participant's interpersonal communication skills from the start of receiving services to the completion of the program or services. In-depth information about the measure, including factor analysis and reliability tests that were conducted can be found in the technical report (see appendix B).

*Importance of Marriage, Parental Support, and Relationship Support:* After feedback from the Lewin Group part-way through the grant, three additional questions were added to the pre-/post-test measure. One of the questions was designed to capture participants' perceptions and opinions about marriage and its importance to their own well-being as well as their child/ren. Two of the questions focused on the areas of support that the participant needed 1) in gaining knowledge and skills for establishing and/or maintaining a healthy and committed relationship, and 2) to improve parental support for their child/ren. These questions were answered at pre- and post-test.

*Narrative Reports:* Mid-grant and end-of-grant Narrative Report templates were created in order to capture implementation information, staff perceptions, child support issues and lessons learned, among other topics. Information from the mid-grant reports was distributed among all of the centers so that key lessons could be shared and centers could learn from one another. Reports were completed by Executive Directors and/or program staff.

## **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

For a subset of the local evaluation activities, *Partner Up* grantees utilized the Colorado KIT (CO KIT) web-based data entry system. This system is designed, supported, and used by several state-funded initiatives in order to simplify data collection and improve program evaluation efforts across the state of Colorado. *Partner Up* sites were trained on the CO KIT system during year one of the grant and used the system to enter the Enrollment Form and pre-/post-test data. Participant information was entered into the online system on an on-going basis, and OMNI extracted the data periodically for analysis. A narrative report template was also created and distributed to each of the centers to complete. Key stakeholder interviews were conducted to compliment the context and broader picture of the project.

## **ANALYSIS**

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical analysis software package. Demographic information was analyzed by running frequencies, while the pre/post measure was analyzed using paired-sample *t*-tests. Additional marriage questions were analyzed using frequencies analysis or *t*-tests, depending on the question. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and contrast analysis statistical testing were utilized to conduct further analysis on the pre/post measure.

## RESULTS

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### DEMOGRAPHICS OF POPULATION SERVED

The *Partner Up* program served a total of 581 participants during the grant. Demographic information for participants can be seen in Table 1 and Chart Series 1. 71.4% of participants were female and 28.6% were male. The majority of participants identified themselves as White/Caucasian (63.8%) and 17.1% identified as Hispanic/Latino/Spanish. Spanish-speaking participants made up 8.1% of participants. Marital status varied with 39% of participants being “married, not separated,” 12.7% “separated,” 20.3% “divorced,” 1.1% “widowed,” and 26.9% “never married.” Of those who reported not currently married, almost half (48.2%) reported not being in a relationship, while the remaining half were either living with their boyfriend/girlfriend/fiancé (33.5%) or in a relationship but not living together (18.4%). Almost 12% of females reported that they were pregnant, while 7.5% of males reported that their spouse/partner was pregnant.

Closer scrutiny, based on the year-end narrative reports, revealed the participants’ relationship status varied greatly between centers. For example, the percentage of married couples ranged from as low as 10% to as high as 80%. Further, the percentage of single individuals ranged from as high as 90% to as low as 20%. Three centers that provided the Couple Communication programs reported that most participants were couples, but single individuals also participated. Another center reported that the Couple Communication and Core Communication programs were provided to primarily single individuals. The centers that implemented the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities program reported that their participants were married, in a relationship, and single parents. Furthermore, they were able to offer the program without altering the curriculum because many participants were in some type of relationship that allowed for the course content to be applicable.

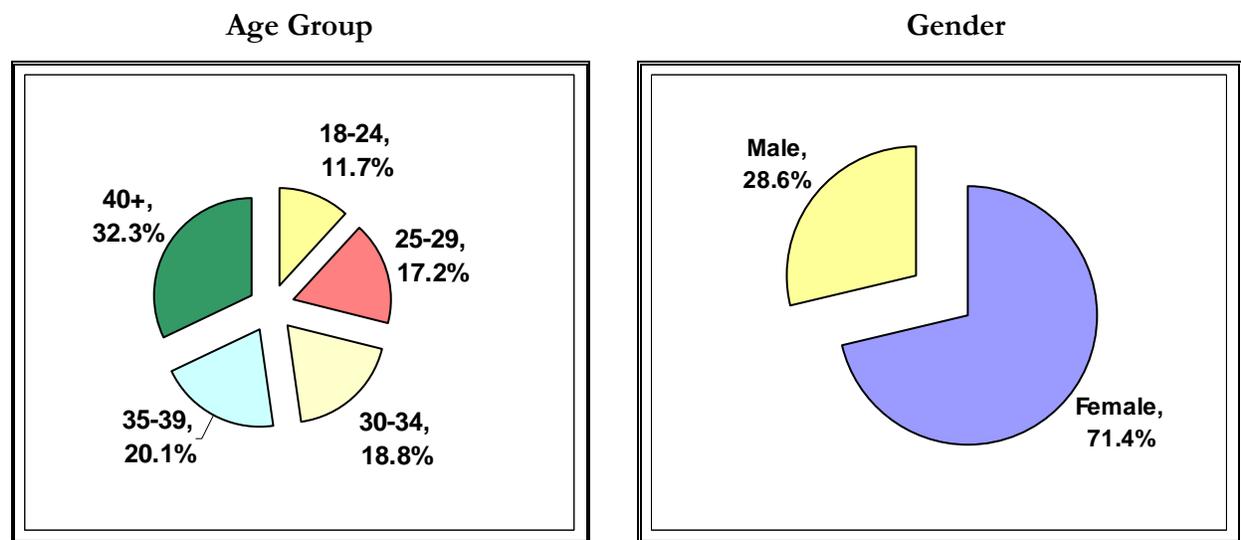
**Table 1:** *Aggregate Participant Demographics*

Participant Information *		Number (Percent)
Age	18-24	64 (11.7%)
	25-29	94 (17.2%)
	30-34	103 (18.8%)

	35-39	110 (20.1%)
	40+	177 (32.3%)
	Total	548 (100%)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	415 (71.4%)
	Male	166 (27.1%)
	Total	581 (100%)

\* It should be noted that, due to varying amounts of missing data across the measure items, the sample sizes reported for the different analyses are often less than 581 and differ among each other.

**Chart Series 1: Aggregate Participant Demographics**

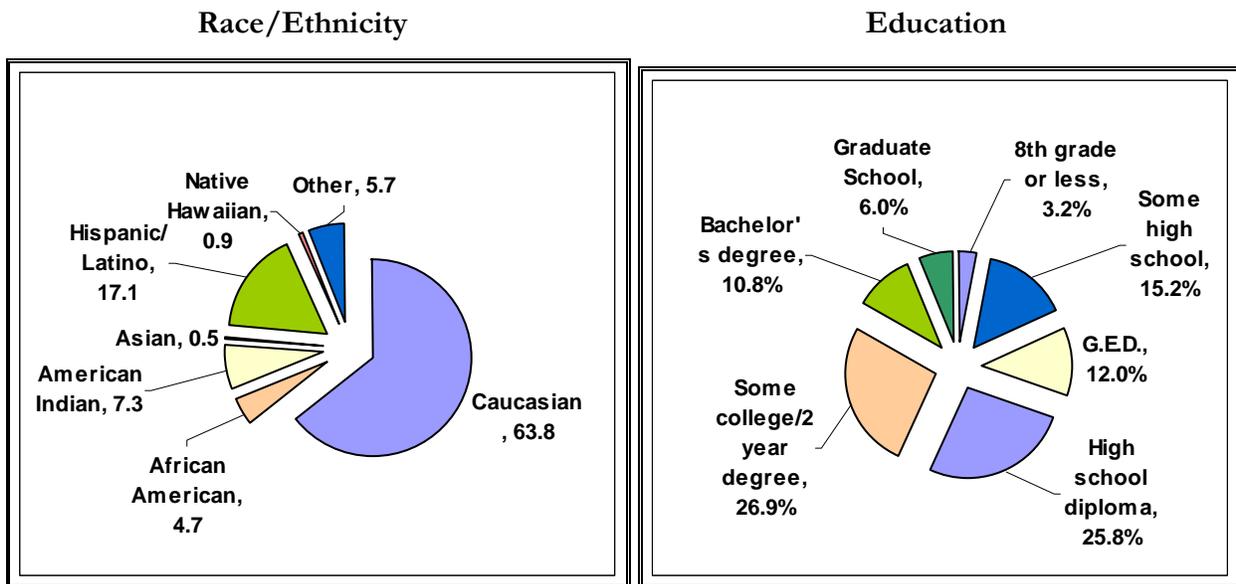


**Table 1: Aggregate Participant Demographics (continued)**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	White/Caucasian	366 (63.8%)
	Black/African American	27 (4.7%)
	American Indian/ Alaska Native	42 (7.3%)
	Asian	3 (.5%)
	Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	98 (17.1%)
	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	5 (.9%)
	Other	33 (5.7%)
	Total	574 (100%)
<b>Highest Education Completed</b>	No formal schooling	-
	8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	18 (3.2%)

	G.E.D.	68 (12.0%)
	High school diploma	146 (25.8%)
	Some college/ 2 year degree	152 (26.9%)
	Bachelor's degree	61 (10.8%)
	Graduate school	34 (6.0%)
	Total	565 (100%)
<b>Main Language Spoken in Home</b>	English	478 (91.9%)
	Spanish	42 (8.1%)
	Total	520 (100%)

**Chart Series 1: Aggregate Participant Demographics** (continued)



**Table 1: Aggregate Participant Demographics** (continued)

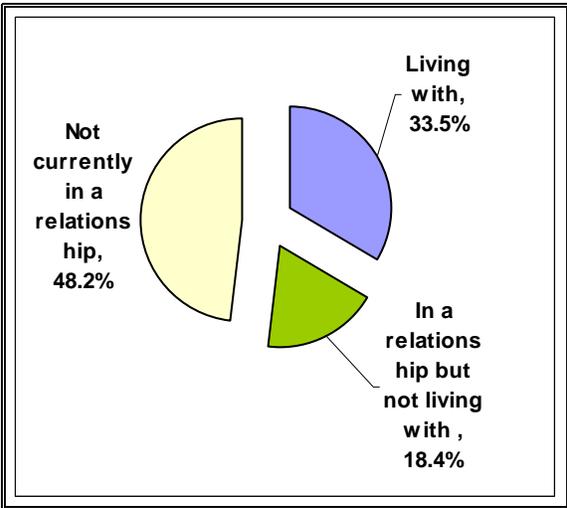
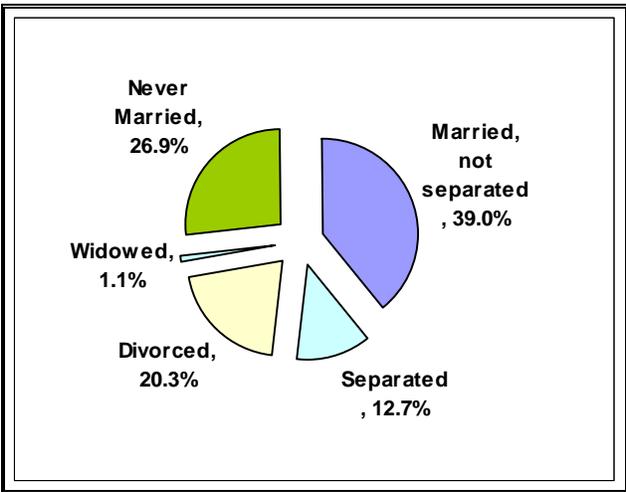
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married, not separated	217 (39.0%)
	Separated	71 (12.7%)
	Divorced	113 (20.3%)
	Widowed	6 (1.1%)
	Never Married	150 (26.9%)
	Total	557 (100%)
<b>If you are NOT currently married, please select the best answer</b>	Living with your boyfriend/girlfriend/fiancé	91 (33.5%)

	In a relationship but not living with your boyfriend/girlfriend/fiancé	50 (18.4%)
	Not currently in a relationship	131 (48.2%)
	Total	272 (100%)
<b>Pregnancy Status: If you are female, are you pregnant?</b>	Yes	47 (11.9%)
	No	348 (88.1%)
	Total	395 (100%)
<b>If you are male and have a spouse/partner, is your spouse/partner pregnant?</b>	Yes	12 (7.5%)
	No	348 (88.1%)
	Total	395 (100%)

**Chart Series 1: Aggregate Participant Demographics (continued)**

**Marital Status**

**If you are NOT currently married, please select the best answer.**



As the data indicate, the smallest percentage of participants was within the 18-24 age range (11.7%) and the largest group was age 40 and over (32.3%). The education level of participants varied; however, the majority had at least some high school education and 95 participants (16.8%) had a Bachelor’s or graduate degree, indicating that the program was useful for participants with a wide range of education levels. Of participants in the program, 8.1% reported Spanish as their primary language at home, indicating the importance of bilingual materials and facilitators. Almost half of participants were married and not separated when they entered the program. Alternatively, 26.9% of

participants reported never having been married but, of those participants, 51.8% were either living with their boyfriend/girlfriend/fiancé or were in a relationship but not living together. Helping these couples through communication issues and strengthening their overall relationships hopefully enabled them make healthier and more informed decisions about their futures.

Table 2 and Chart Series 2 contain information regarding the participant’s youngest child. These data are important to the child support enforcement component of the project, which was conducted at the state-level. Of participants in the program, 67.3% reported that their current spouse/partner was their youngest child’s parent, and 60.9% of those couples were married at the time the child was born. As Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) is interested in paternity information for the participants, it should be noted that, of those participants who were not married at the time of birth, 74.8% had established paternity for the child.

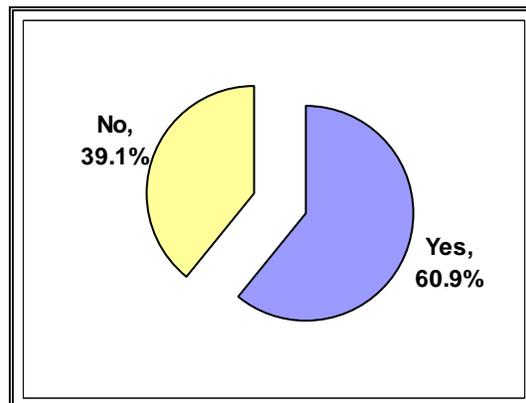
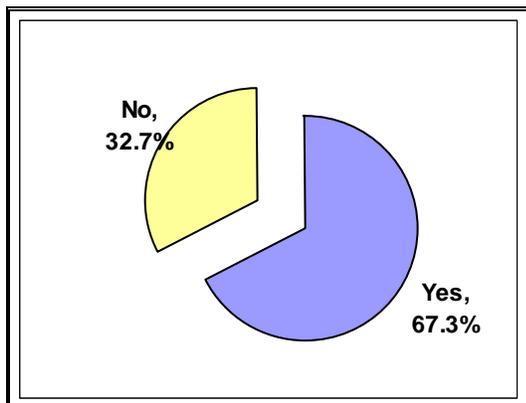
**Table 2:** *Aggregate Information Regarding Youngest Child*

<b>Participant Information</b>		<b>Number (Percent)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	249 (50.1%)
	Female	40.5 (49.9%)
	Total	497 (100%)
<b>Is your spouse/current partner this child's parent?</b>	Yes	251 (67.3%)
	No	122 (32.7%)
	Total	373 (100%)
<b>Were you married at the time this child was born?</b>	Yes	245 (60.9%)
	No	157 (39.1%)
	Total	402 (100%)
<b>If no, has paternity been established for this child?</b>	Yes	154 (74.8%)
	No	82 (25.2%)
	Total	206 (100%)

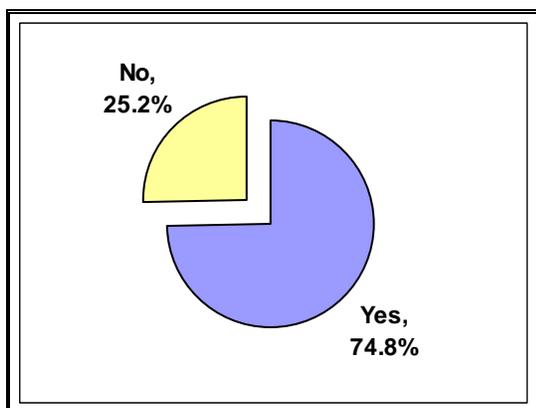
**Chart Series 2: Aggregate Participant Information Regarding Youngest Child**

Is your spouse/current partner this child's parent?

Were you married at the time this child was born?



If no, has paternity been established for this child?



As shown in Table 3, current work status varied across *Partner Up* participants. The largest group of participants (40.7%) reported not working at the time of receiving *Partner Up* services. A smaller group of participants reported working full-time (35.2%) and 24.1% reported working part-time. Over one-fourth of participants reported an income of under \$5,000 in the last 12 months for their household, while close to 15% reported an income of over \$40,000.

**Table 3: Aggregate Employment and Income Information**

Participant Information		Number (Percent)
Current Work Status	Full-time (at least 35 hrs per week)	184 (35.2%)
	Part-time (1 to 34 hrs per week)	126 (24.1%)

	Not working	213 (40.7%)
	Total	523 (100%)
<b>Before taxes and deductions: What was your household income for the past 12 months?</b>	None	69 (13.4)
	\$1 - \$5,000	86 (16.7%)
	\$5,001 - \$10,000	58 (11.2%)
	\$10,001 - \$15,000	57 (11.0%)
	\$15,001 - \$20,000	41 (7.9%)
	\$20,001 - \$30,000	72 (14.0%)
	\$30,001 - \$40,000	57 (11.0%)
	Over \$40,000	76 (14.7%)
	Total	516 (14.7%)

Despite the overall large number of *Partner Up* participants, recruitment was reportedly a challenge for centers. To meet this challenge, center staff incorporated the curricula into existing programs and used community partners, such as churches and schools, to recruit participants. Word of mouth proved to be a useful recruitment method, as well. Information regarding how participants were referred to the program was collected through the enrollment form. Table 4 displays an itemization of the various referral sources, with the largest percentages coming from friends or family, the Family Resource Center, brochures and General Assistance.

**Table 4:** *Aggregate Referral Information*

<b>Participant Information</b>		<b>Number (Percent)</b>
<b>Government office/program:</b>	Child Support	26 (11.7%)
	TANF/cash welfare	45 (20.2%)
	WIC	16 (7.2%)
	General Assistance	84 (37.7%)
	SSI	9 (4.0%)
	Food Stamps	42 (18.8%)
	Medicaid	26 (11.7%)
	Head Start	8 (3.6%)
<b>Media/Ads:</b>	Newspaper	33 (17.2%)
	TV	1 (.5%)
	Radio	-

	Billboards	-
	Flyer	29 (15.1%)
	Other Media	57 (29.7 %)
	Brochure	83 (43.2%)
<b>Other:</b>	Website	9 (3.1 %)
	Community event	17 (5.8%)
	Friend or Family	146 (49.8%)
	Marriage license bureau	1 (.3%)
	Pastor or Church	6 (2.0%)
	Health care org	3 (1.0%)
	Hospital (following birth of baby)	1 (.3%)
	Prenatal clinic	4 (1.4%)
	Other health care clinic or hospital setting	7 (2.4%)
	Family Resource Center	99 (33.8%)

Lastly, the enrollment form attempted to capture information regarding the specific services that *Partner Up* participants received during their participation in the program. Results showed that a wide range of services was offered to participants. Each client must received information or training on relationships/marriage, but it is clear that centers offered even more services to address the overall needs of families. Hundreds of additional services of either short-term support sessions or ongoing individual support, were provided, all of which focused on assistance relating to finances, visitation, legal issues, education, and other such family focused services.

## **OUTCOME DATA**

### **Statistical Considerations for Interpretation**

In this report, change over the course of the program was assessed by statistically comparing participants' responses to survey questions prior to program participation, known as baseline or a pre-test, with responses following completion of the program, referred to as a post-test. This comparison is made through a test of statistical significance, called a paired samples *t*-test, which

assesses the likelihood that an observed change between pre-test and post-test is statistically meaningful.

When using a paired samples *t*-test, each individual's response on the pre-test must be matched to his/her post-test response in order to statistically compare participants' pre-post data. Data that cannot be matched, due to someone only taking the pre-test or only the post-test, for example, are excluded from the paired samples *t*-test. The data included in the analysis are referred to as matched cases.

When matched pre-post data are not achievable (e.g., inadequate sample size, no unique identifier, etc.), the group difference on the pre-test can be compared to the post-test. This group sample *t*-test can be used to assess the likelihood that an observed change between pre-test and post-test is not due simply to chance. While this statistical test is less sensitive than a paired samples *t*-test, it can provide helpful information about statistically meaningful changes.

Statistical tests, like the *t*-test, are tests of statistical significance. Statistical significance is a way of representing the probability that shifts in pre-post data indicate a real change. Tests of statistical significance calculate that probability (p-value); which in turn can be used to judge the level of confidence with which one can generalize observed changes. It is standard practice in the social sciences to consider p-values less than (<) 0.05 statistically significant. In some cases, p-values between .05 and .10 are worth noting because they approach the .05 benchmark. In these cases, the term "approaching significance" is used.

An important limitation of interpreting the p-value and statistical significance is with regard to statistical power. Most small programs lack an adequate sample size, that is, the number of participants completing the pre- and post-test, to evoke confidence in the p-value and test of statistical significance. A more unrestricted analysis is to determine the effect size to answer the question: how much of an effect did the program have? Effect size analyses provide an indication of the amount of change regardless of sample size. Effect sizes can be negative or positive, and a score of 0 represents no change. Generally speaking, effect sizes in social research are likely to be small (under .20).

Effect sizes and p-values can be used together to provide a more comprehensive picture of true program outcomes, particularly with a larger sample size. In the case of a sample size of 15 or fewer, p-values should not be interpreted. In those instances, effect sizes can provide a “benchmark” for comparison against other small sample results.

### **Interpersonal Communication Results**

The Interpersonal Communication Scale was a pre-/post-test measure given at the beginning of program services and at the end. Program effects showed an increase in scores, signifying that participants increased their interpersonal communication skills. Analysis was conducted on the matched pre- and post-tests, and in this case there were 173 matched pre- and post-tests. As is revealed in Table 6 and Chart 5, aggregate-level results showed statistically significant changes across all scales and for the measure as a whole. The pre-test mean score for the entire measure was 3.60 and the post-test score was 3.92, showing a .32 increase mean change. The change was statistically significant at the .05 level. At the item-level, each individual question showed results in the desired direction of change.

**Table 6:** *Aggregate Interpersonal Communication Results*

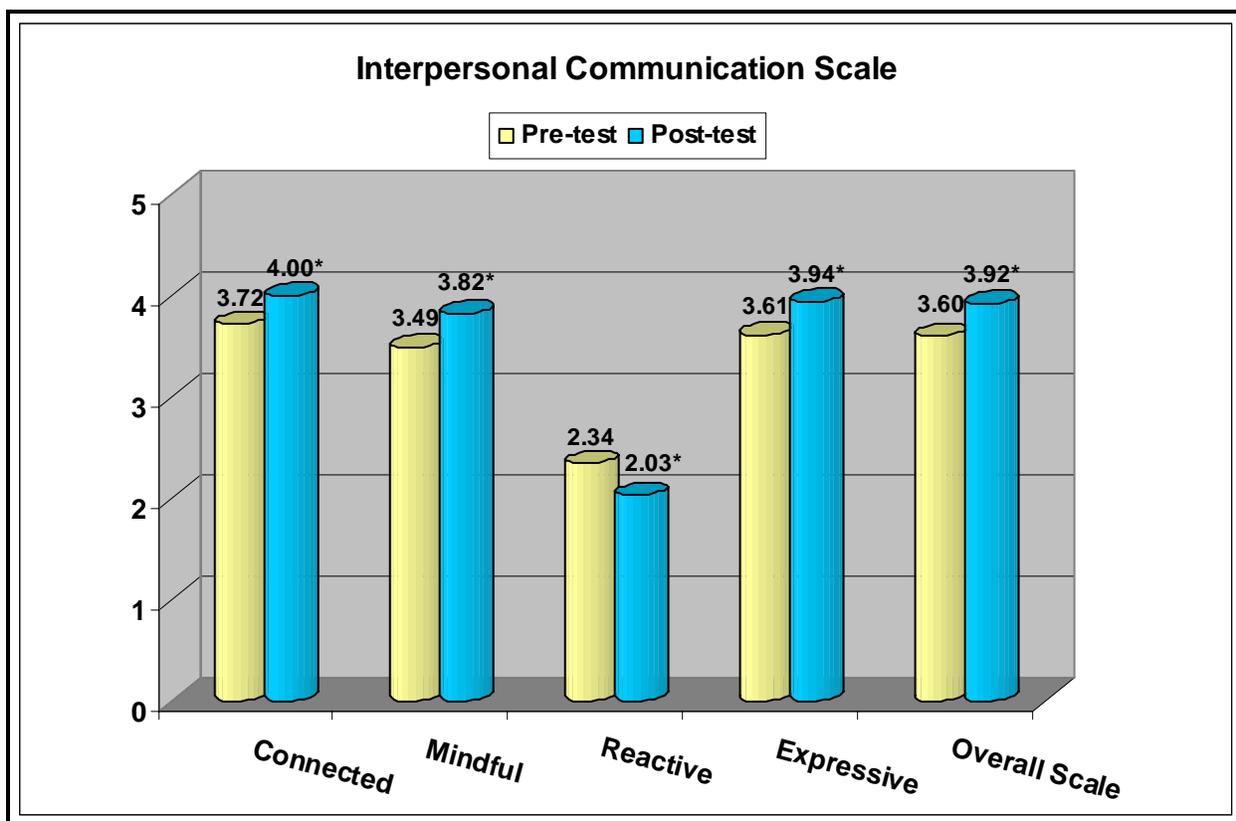
1=Never/Almost Never; 2=Seldom; 3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Almost Always

In general, when you are discussing an issue with someone, how often do you:	Pretest Group Mean	Posttest Group Mean	Mean Change	Desired Direction of Change?	Significance	Effect Size
<b>Connected Communication scale</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0.36</b>
Acknowledge the other's feelings?	3.83	4.11	0.28	Yes		
Acknowledge the wants and wishes of others?	3.71	3.96	0.25	Yes		
Invite/support the other to talk about their point of view?	3.68	3.97	0.29	Yes		
Ask what the other is thinking, feeling, and wanting?	3.66	3.98	0.32	Yes		
<b>Mindful Communication scale</b>	<b>3.49</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0.50</b>
Send clear, complete and simple messages?	3.52	3.72	0.20	Yes		
Explore possible causes of the issue?	3.63	3.90	0.27	Yes		
Use your full understanding to reflect on the issue?	3.69	3.96	0.27	Yes		
Calm yourself when you feel stressed or think the other is stressed?	3.48	3.86	0.38	Yes		
Begin and maintain a connection?	3.44	3.81	0.37	Yes		
Attend to other's nonverbal responses?	3.16	3.66	0.50	Yes		
<b>Reactive Communication scale **</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>-0.31</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>-0.38</b>
Blame or attack the other directly?	2.42	1.95	-0.47	Yes		
Make spiteful, unkind remarks indirectly?	2.28	1.96	-0.32	Yes		
Speak for other - put words into the other's mouth?	2.30	2.16	-0.14	Yes		
<b>Expressive Communication scale</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0.34</b>
Share your feelings?	3.6	3.89	0.29	Yes		
Make known your wants and wishes?	3.6	3.99	0.39	Yes		
<b>Overall Scale Mean</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0.55</b>

\* indicates the difference is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ); ^ indicates approaching significance ( $p > .05, < .10$ ); n.s. indicates difference is not statistically significant.

\*\*The Reactive Communication Scale is reversed scored, indicating that a decrease in these items from pre- to post- test is the desired result.

Chart 5: *Aggregate Interpersonal Communication Results*



As is noted in the above table, each of the scales showed statistically significant results in the desired direction. The overall effect of *Partner Up* services as measured by the Interpersonal Communication Scale was that the participants gained interpersonal communication skills. These skills will help improve and strengthen marriages and parent-child relationships. Medium-to-large effect sizes were revealed for changes on all four scales and for the overall scale. This indicates that the various curricula implemented by the *Partner Up* centers had positive, real-world impact on the participants' abilities to communicate with others.

**The Interpersonal Communication Scale showed statistically significant results across all scales, indicating participants increased their interpersonal communication skills from pre-test to post-test.**

## Importance of Marriage

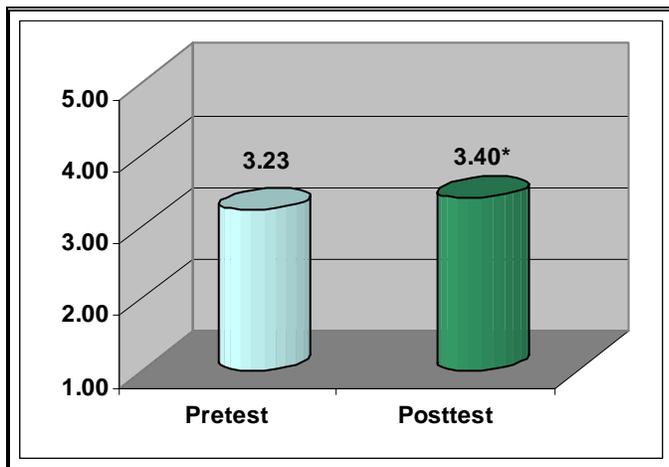
This pre- and post-test question asked participants, “How important do you think marriage is for the well-being of you and your child/ren?” This was designed to capture specific attitudes and beliefs regarding marriage. The desired program effect was an increase in the mean from pre- to post-test, which would indicate higher levels of reported belief in marital importance. As seen in Table 7 below, participants scored a 3.23 at pre-test, indicating they believed marriage to be important. At post-test, participants had a mean score of 3.40, indicating an increased belief in the importance of marriage and a mean change of 0.17. This mean change was statistically significant and had a small effect size of 0.17.

**Table 7:** *Importance of Marriage*

Question	Pretest Group Mean	Posttest Group Mean	Mean Change	Desired Direction of Change?	Significance	Effect Size
How important do you think marriage is for the well-being of you and your child/ren? (n=124)	3.23	3.40	0.17	Yes	*	0.17

\* indicates difference is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

**Chart 6:** *Importance of Marriage*



In the year-end narrative reports, it was reported that *Partner Up* participants had a positive outlook on marriage. Furthermore, a good marriage was believed to be important for the sake of the children. These attitudes toward marriage support the outcome data results.

The Importance of Marriage question was very important to the evaluation, as it focused specifically on participants' ideas of marriage. The mean change was statistically significant, indicating the program not only affected communication skills, but was also very focused on marriage and thoughts about marriage. These findings are consistent with a conclusion drawn by top scholars on family issues, which is that marriage is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes for children (Wilcox, 2005). The program also affected knowledge around the issue for the family center staff. All agencies reported that the *Partner Up* programs improved staffs' understanding of how healthy marriages and relationships connect to child well-being. Further, when *Partner Up* sites were asked if they observed or heard specific examples of how participants' learning of relationship skills has contributed to improved family stability and child well-being, the centers reported that 1) Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities program participants "have commented on their increased confidence, ability to communicate needs better at home, for services and with teachers" and 2) Couples Communication participants "felt that they had the tools to make their marriage work".

**Participants showed an increased belief in the importance of marriage for their own well-being and the well-being of their children.**

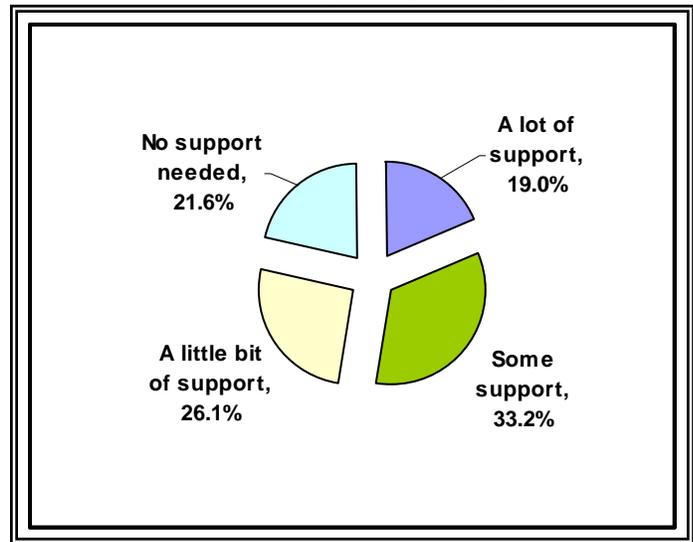
### **Parental Support**

Participants were asked a question at pre- and post-test regarding the amount of support they needed to improve parental support for their child/ren. Parental support included emotional and physical support, child support payments, co-parenting with the child's other biological parent, regular visitation, and so on. As is illustrated in Chart 7, 78.3% of participants entered the program expressing some level of support was needed while 21.6% reported "no support needed." After receiving program services, the majority of participants reported the program as being helpful. As seen in Chart 8, 98.5% of participants reported that the program was "somewhat helpful," "helpful," or "very helpful" toward the goal of improving parental support for their child/ren.

**Chart 7: Parental Support Before Program Services**

**Before Program Services:**

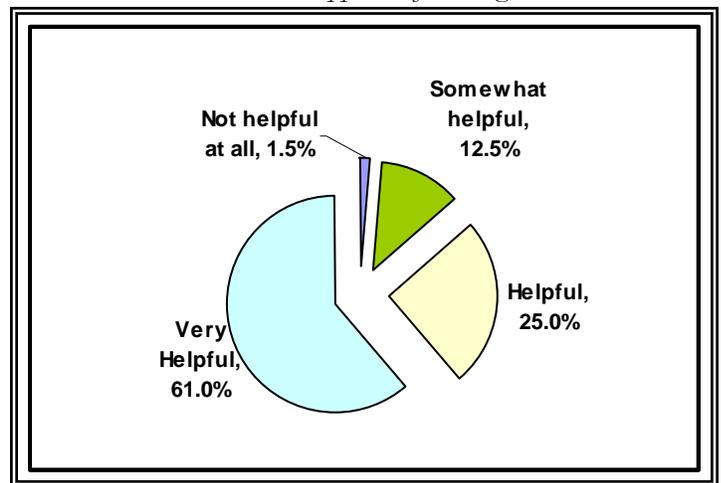
A lot of support	19.0%
Some support	33.2%
A little bit of support	26.1%
No support needed	21.6%



**Chart 8: Parental Support After Program Services**

**After Program Services:**

Not helpful at all	1.5%
Somewhat helpful	12.5%
Helpful	25.0%
Very helpful	61.0%



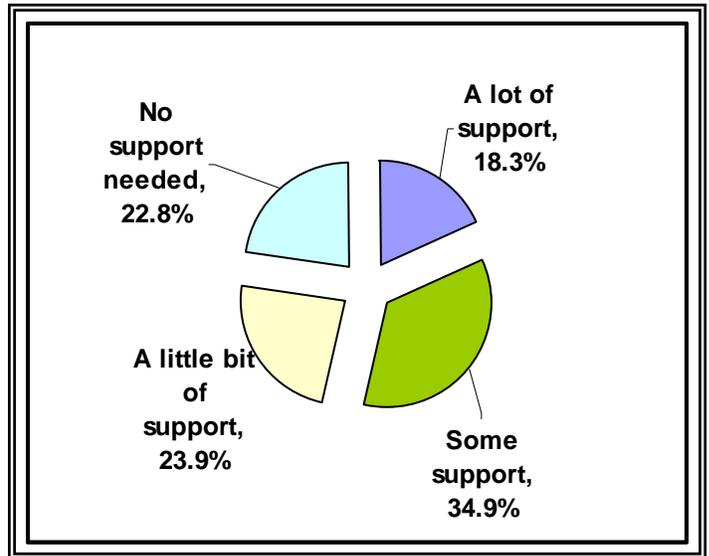
**Relationship Support**

Similar to Parental Support, this question was asked at pre- and post-test regarding relationship support needed by participants. This question asked, “How much support do you need in gaining knowledge and skills for establishing and/or maintaining a healthy and committed relationship?” The post-test question asked how helpful the services were in gaining the knowledge and skills necessary. As is shown in Charts 9 and 10, the majority of participants came into the program reporting “a little bit of support” to “a lot of support” was needed, but close to one-fourth of participants reported that they needed “no support” in this area. At post-test, 100% of participants reported that the services were helpful.

**Chart 9: Relationship Support Before Program Services**

**Before Program Services:**

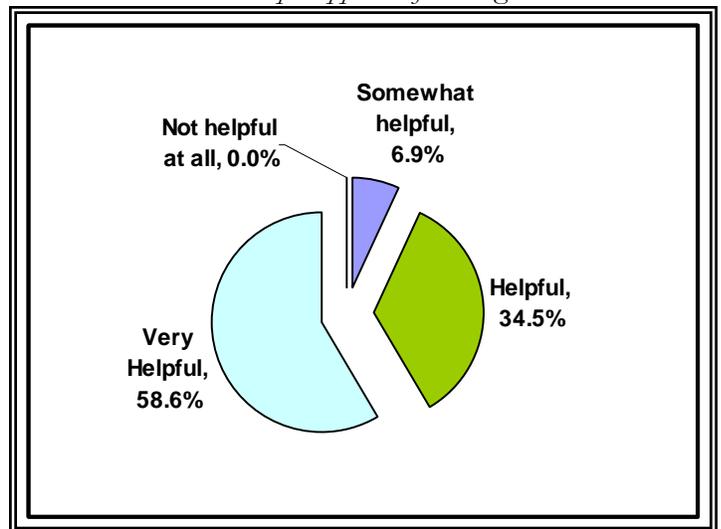
A lot of support	18.3%
Some support	34.9%
A little bit of support	23.9%
No support needed	22.8%



**Chart 10: Relationship Support After Program Services**

**After Program Services:**

Not helpful at all	0%
Somewhat helpful	6.9%
Helpful	34.5%
Very helpful	58.6%



**At post-test, 100% of participants reported that the services were helpful in the area of relationship support, regardless of whether they indicated that they needed support or not. Additionally, 98.5 % indicated that program services were helpful in improving parental support.**

### **Pre-Post Test Subgroup Analyses, by Relationship Status**

Subgroup analyses can help determine whether a program is more effective for some participants compared to others in the sample. For example, some participants may show significant improvements after taking part in the program, while others in the sample may stay the same or even show declines. One participant characteristic that may influence how individuals respond to the *Partner Up* program is the type of relationship they were in at the onset of the program. Three types of relationships in particular may impact program effectiveness outcomes: married, not married but in a relationship, and not in a relationship. Participants' reports of their relationship status on the Enrollment Form were used to classify participants into one of these three categories. Outcome variables were defined as the amount of change from pre-test to post-test (i.e., post-test minus pre-test) on the four Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICS) subscales and the overall scale mean (i.e., Connected, Mindful, Reactive, Expressive, and Overall Mean). Analysis was then conducted to examine group differences on score changes for the item asking, "How important do you think marriage is for the well-being of you and/or your children?" (i.e., the "importance of marriage" item).

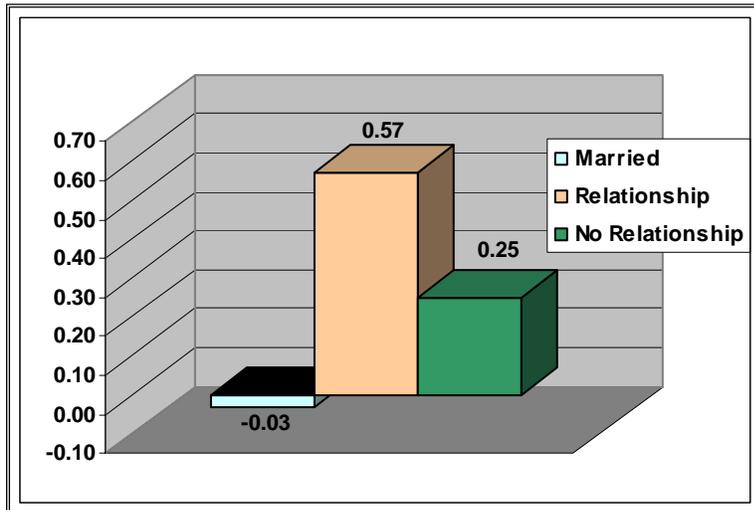
These subgroup analyses were exploratory in nature; that is, there were no specific hypotheses as to which group would show the greatest improvements relative to the other two groups. Instead, analysis sought to explore the pre-/post-test data findings based on subgroup differences to help inform future *Partner Up* programming. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and contrast analysis statistical testing were utilized to assess whether there were group differences among the three relationship status groups and, if so, which group out-performed the others.

One-hundred fifty-five participants answered the relationship status questions and completed both a pre-test and post-test, and therefore were included in the subgroup analyses. For the subgroup analyses, 94 participants (61%) reported being married, 30 participants (19%) reported being not married but in a relationship, and 31 participants (20%) reported not being in a relationship.

For the four ICS subscale and the overall scale scores, no significant differences were found among the three relationship status groups. That is, all participants demonstrated essentially equal and significant improvements in their self-reported levels of being connected, mindful, reactive, and

expressive, as well as improvements in their overall ICS scale scores. This demonstrates the power of the *Partner Up* program to flexibly meet the needs of participants, regardless of their initial relationship status.

**Chart 11:** *Change in Importance of Marriage Scores from Pre- to Post-test, by Relationship Status*



There were, however, significant group differences in changes score for the “importance of marriage” item by relationship status ( $F = 5.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ) as is shown in Chart 11. It should be noted that fewer participants answered this question ( $n = 109$ ) than the other subgroup analysis questions, as it was added to

the ICS measure part-way through the grant. As can be seen in Chart 11, participants who reported not being married but in a relationship showed the greatest increases in their belief that marriage is important for their own or their children’s well-being. Participants who reported not being in a relationship at all showed the second greatest gains. Married participants showed a slight non-significant decrease in scores on this item. These results suggest that *Partner Up* programs successfully changed attitudes about the importance of marriage among non-married individuals. Such attitude change could help non-married individuals more strongly consider marriage as a way to improve their own well-being and the well-being of their children.

**Participants who reported not being married but in a relationship showed the greatest increases in their belief that marriage is important for their own or their children’s well-being.**

#### **RESULTS OF MID- YEAR PROGRAM MANAGER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS**

Mid-grant narrative reports were completed by each of the *Partner Up* centers in the fall of 2007. These reports were done either by the direct program implementation staff, the Executive Directors,

or both. Interesting findings included information regarding program implementation and the blending of services for specific populations. The issues of relationship and communication were both very sensitive and all centers took measures to ensure that participants were in a comfortable, supporting environment to learn and talk. For example, one center made sure that it separated couples from singles and/or offered many classes in a one-on-one setting so that they could discuss differences in relationships openly and comfortably and could address individual needs/issues. Relationship discussions focused not only on the couple, but on communication skills in general. This was important when the couple had children because, as one center noted, a child definitely alters the relationship of the couple and it impacts the family dynamic.

Some successes during recruitment for the program included blending *Partner Up* services into Family Support Services, keeping staff informed of changes from the State- and Federal-levels, drawing parents from the Early Childhood Education Program, using established relationships, such as schools and human services, and offering solid child care and meals during classes. Also successful to the centers were other services that were extremely compatible or complementary to the *Partner Up* services. These compatible services included paternity referrals, prenatal counseling, employment programs, Even Start programs, education classes, and parenting classes.

As mentioned in the client-level interventions, centers offered not only group services and support, but also individual, short-term, and on-going support. One-on-one counseling, mediation with families and Family Support Services were types of individual services clients could obtain. Short-term support sessions typically accompanied one of the relationship/marriage trainings. These support sessions could focus on safe exchanges, supervised visitation, nutrition classes, legal services, and family counseling. On-going individual support was also offered by each of the centers to supplement the *Partner Up* services, including dealing with child enforcement issues, financial assistance, scholarship application assistance, employment and housing assistance, case management, emergency assistance, or life skills.

Some centers incorporated events into their regular programming, as those proved to be an effective way of getting people involved not only in the center, but also in the community. Field trips, certificates, graduation ceremonies commemorating program completion, and one-day 8-hour

workshops were among the events that centers implemented. One center also hosted an annual family dance.

## **OVERALL CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The following challenges and lessons learned were extracted from the year-end narrative reports completed by each *Partner Up* center.

### **Staff Turnover**

Program staff (in)stability was the major challenge for the centers. Staff turnover impacted how the program was implemented and the resources needed to train the replacement program staff. Additionally, it also affected the time it took to develop relationships and establish credibility with at-risk families. Each event of staff turnover extended this process.

### **Office of Child Support Enforcement**

Working with Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) offices was another challenge. Centers noted that it was difficult to establish a working relationship with CSE staff and case workers, and some CSE staff seemed resistant to working with the *Partner Up* agencies. Key state personnel assisted these efforts in the following ways: 1) served as a resource regarding the benefits of larger collaborative efforts, 2) advocated for a partnership between the centers implementing the *Partner Up* program and the CSE offices, and 3) assisted in identifying contacts at CSE to work with *Partner Up* centers. While these efforts proved helpful in regards to initiating relationships, significant staff turnover in the centers hindered the level of collaboration among all parties. Unfortunately, partnerships did not flourish between local and state CSE offices and *Partner Up* centers during the 3-year grant.

Some *Partner Up* agencies reported that among participants, perceptions of child support changed during the program. Most notably, two centers expressed that these participants reported making or increasing their child support payments. Contrary to this, at other sites, participants' perceptions were not determined by staff to change.

## **Program Implementation**

The lessons learned by the *Partner Up* center staff can be grouped into six categories. Three lessons learned by centers involved planning and preparing for program implementation. For example, investigation of evidence-based curricula to ensure quality implementation and sustainability, as well as ensure the training requirements logistically fit with the agency (i.e., training cost and delivery method) were lessons learned that could be done internally at an agency when planning to implement a new program. Developing long-term relationships with, and engaging the target audience from, a strengths-based perspective were tasks to complete when preparing for program implementation.

Three lessons learned involved the actual implementation of the program: being flexible, open-minded, and having two program facilitators. Having flexibility in the structure and format of the program assisted participants in engaging in the program, while being open-minded helped the participants feel safe to express their opinions, beliefs, and values. Having two program facilitators assisted with reducing the workload for the staff, as well as being able to implement the program in a unique manner. Ideally, one facilitator would be male and the other would be female.

## **Future *Partner Up* Work**

Based on their experience with the *Partner Up* programs, three agencies reported that they will continue to offer one or more of the *Partner Up* programs. One agency is going to incorporate the curriculum into their other programming. Another agency is going to include more family planning topics to the curriculum, such as financial management, computer, nutrition, and conflict resolution classes. The other agency is going to collaborate with other organizations that offer the programs. Another two agencies reported they will not continue the *Partner Up* programs because the accessibility and affordability of the program's training was straining their budgets when there was staff turnover. However, one will use the concepts from the Couple Communication curriculum in Life Skills programs.

## SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS LEARNED

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- ❖ Five-hundred eighty-one participants were served by the three year grant.
- ❖ Education level, income level, age and marital status varied widely across those that participated in the *Partner Up* program.
- ❖ For the respondents who reported not being married at the time of their youngest child's birth, 74.8% reported that paternity had been established.
- ❖ Results for the Interpersonal Communication Scale indicate that the various curricula implemented by the *Partner Up* centers had positive, real-world impact on the participants' abilities to communicate with others.
- ❖ Participants reported an increased belief in the importance of marriage for their own well-being and for the well-being of their children, indicating the programs focused not just on overall relationship skills, but on the specific topic of marriage.
- ❖ Program services proved beneficial in providing relationship support and in helping to increase parental support.
- ❖ Centers found additional success by offering on-going individual support supplementing *Partner Up* services, including dealing with child enforcement issues, financial assistance, scholarship application assistance, employment and housing assistance, case management, emergency assistance, or life skills.
- ❖ Centers found many of their existing programs to be very compatible with *Partner Up* services. These included paternity referrals, prenatal counseling, employment programs, Even Start programs, education classes, and parenting classes.

## CONCLUSION

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The Colorado implementation of the Healthy Marriage Initiative, *Partner Up*, demonstrated significant effectiveness for its participants. The program targeted relationship and marriage issues, while also linking participants with other services offered at each of the centers. Collaboration, both with internal services and with the community, proved to be a successful strategy for serving families with a variety of relationship needs. Because of the trusting relationships that the family centers were able to provide, the centers proved to be a valuable piece of program implementation success.

If a similar program is implemented in Colorado again, it would prove useful to focus heavily on helping families navigate the child support system. More specifically, staff could be trained on how to contact local and state CSE staff and where to find answers to child support questions and to continually work to improve partnerships between family centers and governmental agencies. The *Partner Up* center's staff turnover proved to be the biggest challenge throughout the course of the grant. Although this is somewhat inevitable, there should be processes in place to help the transition of new staff. For example, internal records of data and data entry should be kept so that new staff could successfully navigate through the data and provide an accurate picture of participants and services. Staff turnover was a challenge in terms of program implementation, partnerships with Colorado CSE and reporting. At the beginning of the grant, staff could incorporate transition procedures into the program planning. This would ensure that new staff could pick up where previous staff left off and understand not only how to move forward, but also how the program and evaluation had been handled thus far. Transition plans would include information such as where evaluation tools are stored, how they are labeled, dates for administering them and dates for reporting. Lastly, combining *Partner Up* services with existing services within centers should be continued.

## REFERENCES

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Wilcox, W.B. (2005). *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-six Conclusions from the Social Sciences: A report from family scholars, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. New York: Institute for American Values. Retrieved December 22, 2006, from <http://www.americanvalues.org/html/r-wmm.html>

# Appendix A





**Marital Status (choose one):**

- Married, not separated
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Never Married

**If you are NOT currently married, please select the best answer:**

- Living with your boyfriend/girlfriend/fiancé
- In a relationship but not living with boyfriend/girlfriend/fiancé
- Not currently in a relationship

**Pregnancy Status:**

**If you are female, are you pregnant?  Yes  No**

**If you are male and have a spouse/partner, is your spouse/partner pregnant?  Yes  No**

**Information about youngest child:**

In the following section, please provide us information about your youngest child:

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth (mo/day/yr) \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

(last) (first) (MI)

Sex  Male  Female Is your spouse/current partner this child's parent?  Yes  No

Were you married at the time this child was born?  Yes  No → If no, has paternity been established for this child?  
 Yes  No

**Employment and income information:**

Current Work Status (check one):

- Full-time (at least 35 hours per week)  
12 months?
- Part-time (1 to 34 hours per week)
- Not working

Before taxes & deductions:

What was your household income for the past

(This includes your income and the income of  
adults over the  
age of 18 living with you.)

(check one)

- None
- \$1 - \$5,000
- \$5,001 - \$10,000
- \$10,001 - \$15,000
- \$15,001 - \$20,000
- \$20,001 - \$30,000
- \$30,001 - \$40,000
- Over \$40,000

**How did you learn about this program/service? (check those that apply):**

Government office/program:

- Child support
- TANF/cash welfare
- WIC
- General Assistance
- SSI
- Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Head Start
- Subsidized child care
- Housing

Media/Ads:

- Newspaper
- TV
- Radio
- Billboards
- Flyer
- Other media
- Brochure

Other:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web site                | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor or church                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community event         | <input type="checkbox"/> Health care org                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend or family        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital (following birth of baby)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage license bureau | <input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal clinic                         |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other health clinic or hospital setting |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Resource Center                  |

\*\*\*\*\*

**To be filled out by FRC staff:**

**Anticipated *Partner Up* Services (check those that apply):**

\*A minimum of one of these must be supplied to the client to be considered "*Partner Up*"

- Group Training in Relationship/Marriage Curriculum\*
- Individual Training on Relationship/Marriage Curriculum\*
- Short-Term Support Sessions (e.g., about how to talk to lawyers, etc.)
- Ongoing Individual Support (not focused on relationship skills)
- Written material presented on Relationship/Marriage Curriculum

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

**To be filled out by FRC staff AFTER PROGRAM SERVICES:**

***Partner Up* Services received (check those that apply):**

\*A minimum of one of these must be supplied to the client to be considered "*Partner Up*"

- Group Training in Relationship/Marriage Curriculum\*
- Individual Training on Relationship/Marriage Curriculum\*
- Short-Term Support Sessions (e.g., about how to talk to lawyers, etc.)
- Ongoing Individual Support (not focused on relationship skills)
- Written material presented on Relationship/Marriage Curriculum

**PARTNER UP QUESTIONNAIRE  
(PRE)**

The following questions will help us to find out how well our programs work to help couples and families.

In order for this information to be helpful, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and honestly as possible. All of your answers will be anonymous and kept strictly confidential. This is not a test; there are no right or wrong answers.

***Please do not write your name on this survey.***

*For each question, indicate your answer by filling in the bubble that best represents your response. If you are unsure of what a word or a question means, you may ask for help. If you do not find an answer that fits exactly, use the one that comes closest. Feel free to skip any question which makes you feel uncomfortable.*

Today's Date (mo/day/yr): \_\_\_\_\_

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## Colorado Partner-Up Project Interpersonal Communication Scale

<b>In general, when you are discussing an issue with someone, how often do you:</b>	<b>Never/ Almost Never</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>
1. Direct the other in what to do about it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Blame or attack the other directly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Send clear, complete, and simple messages?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Make spiteful, unkind remarks indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Explore possible causes of the issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Speak for other – put words into the other’s mouth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Use your full understanding to reflect on the issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Share your feelings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Make known your wants and wishes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Calm yourself when you feel stressed or think the other is stressed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Begin and maintain a connection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Listen briefly, then begin talking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Attend to other’s nonverbal responses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Acknowledge the other’s feelings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Acknowledge the wants and wishes of others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Invite/support the other to talk about their point of view?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Ask what the other is thinking, feeling, and wanting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Next Page→)

1. How much support do you need to improve parental support for your child/ren? (Parental support includes emotional and physical support, child support payments, co-parenting with your child's other biological parent, regular visitation, etc.)
  - A lot of support
  - Some support
  - A little bit of support
  - No support needed
  - Question does not apply—I do not have children
  
2. How much support do you need in gaining knowledge and skills for establishing and/or maintaining a healthy and committed relationship?
  - A lot of support
  - Some support
  - A little bit of support
  - No support needed
  
3. How important do you think marriage is for the well-being of you and/or your child/ren?
  - Very important
  - Important
  - Somewhat important
  - Not important at all

**Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire!**

**PARTNER UP QUESTIONNAIRE  
(POST)**

The following scale will help us to find out how well our programs work to help couples and families.

In order for this information to be helpful, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and honestly as possible. All of your answers will be anonymous and kept strictly confidential. This is not a test; there are no right or wrong answers.

***Please do not write your name on this survey.***

*For each question, indicate your answer by marking the box that best represents your response. If you are unsure of what a word or a question means, you may ask for help. If you do not find an answer that fits exactly, use the one that comes closest. Feel free to skip any question which makes you feel uncomfortable.*

Today's Date (mo/day/yr): \_\_\_\_\_

(Next Page→)

## Colorado Partner-Up Project Interpersonal Communication Scale

<b>In general, when you are discussing an issue with someone, how often do you:</b>	<b>Never/ Almost Never</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>
18. Direct the other in what to do about it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Blame or attack the other directly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Send clear, complete, and simple messages?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Make spiteful, unkind remarks indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Explore possible causes of the issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Speak for other – put words into the other’s mouth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Use your full understanding to reflect on the issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Share your feelings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Make known your wants and wishes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Calm yourself when you feel stressed or think the other is stressed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Begin and maintain a connection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Listen briefly, then begin talking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Attend to other’s nonverbal responses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Acknowledge the other’s feelings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Acknowledge the wants and wishes of others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Invite/support the other to talk about their point of view?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Ask what the other is thinking, feeling, and wanting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Next Page→)

4. How much has this program helped you to improve parental support for your child/ren? (Parental support includes emotional and physical support, child support payments, co-parenting with your child's other biological parent, regular visitation, etc.)
- Very helpful
  - Helpful
  - Somewhat helpful
  - Not helpful at all
  - Question does not apply—I do not have children
5. How helpful was this program in gaining knowledge and skills for establishing and/or maintaining a healthy and committed relationship?
- Very helpful
  - Helpful
  - Somewhat helpful
  - Not helpful at all
6. How important do you think marriage is for the well-being of you and/or your child/ren?
- Very important
  - Important
  - Somewhat important
  - Not important at all

**Thank you very much for completing this survey!**

# Appendix B

## Interpersonal Communication Scale

OMNI Institute Technical Report  
Brian Wolff, Mary Jane Carroll, and Carole Broderick  
March 28, 2008

### Table of Contents

- I. Scale Description
- II. Report Sample
- III. Factor Analyses
  - a. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
  - b. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
- IV. Conclusion

### Citation

#### *Instrument*

Interpersonal Communications Program, Inc. Evergreen, CO

### **I. Scale Description**

The Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICS) evaluates how frequently individuals use positive interpersonal communication skills when discussing issues with others. The ICS is derived from a scale developed by Interpersonal Communications Program, Inc. for their Couple Communication Program®.

The ICS contains 16 items. For each item, the individual selects the response that estimates the frequency of the interpersonal communication behavior. Each item uses the same response scale. Response choices include: “Never/Almost Never” (1), “Seldom” (2), “Sometimes” (3), “Often” (4), or “Almost Always” (5). Table 1 shows all 16 items and their shortened variable names (to be used throughout this technical report).

**Table 1: ICS item list**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Direct the other in what to do about it? (<b>direct</b>)</li><li>2) Blame or attack the other directly? (<b>blame</b>)</li><li>3) Send clear, complete, and simple messages? (<b>message</b>)</li><li>4) Make spiteful, unkind remarks indirectly? (<b>remarks</b>)</li><li>5) Explore possible causes of the issue? (<b>causes</b>)</li><li>6) Speak for other – put words into the other’s mouth? (<b>speak</b>)</li><li>7) Use your full understanding to reflect on the issue? (<b>use</b>)</li><li>8) Share your feelings? (<b>share</b>)</li><li>9) Make known your wants and wishes? (<b>wants</b>)</li><li>10) Calm yourself when you feel stressed or think the other is stressed? (<b>calm</b>)</li></ul>
--

- |   |
|---|
| 11) Begin and maintain a connection? ( <b>connect</b> )                           |
| 12) Attend to other's nonverbal responses? ( <b>attend</b> )                      |
| 13) Acknowledge the others' feelings? ( <b>othfeel</b> )                          |
| 14) Acknowledge the wants and wishes of others? ( <b>wantwish</b> )               |
| 15) Invite/support the other to talk about their point of view? ( <b>invite</b> ) |
| 16) Ask what the other is thinking, feeling, and wanting? ( <b>ask</b> )          |

## II. Report Sample

This technical report contains pre-test data collected from individuals enrolled in the Colorado Partner-Up Project during FY 2007-2008. The total number of respondents was  $n = 217$ . However, due to missing data, we excluded 31 participants from the analyses. Therefore, the sample size used for the following analyses was  $n = 186$ . The confirmatory factor analysis described later in this report required no missing data in order to be conducted, therefore it was necessary to use the reduced sample size of 186 instead of the original number of respondents.

## III. Factor Analyses

Using the SPSS 15.0 and AMOS 16.0 statistical software packages, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reliability analyses, then a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted to determine whether the ICS had an underlying multi-factorial structure, and if so, what factors comprised that structure. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to conduct the CFA for this analysis. SEM was the most appropriate statistical technique for this analysis, as it allowed us to test a combination of latent and observed variables in the same model (i.e., a hybrid model).

### *a. Exploratory Factor Analysis*

An exploratory principal components factor analysis was performed on this 16 item scale. Four factors met the retention criteria of eigenvalues greater than 1.0. A scree plot test provided corroborating evidence for this four factor solution. The four factors accounted for 34.76%, 12.47%, 6.94%, and 6.63% of the total variance, respectively. Using the Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method, the item components of each of the four factors were identified by the highest factor loadings (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Factor loadings, communalities ( $\eta^2$ ), and item means ( $M$ ) and standard deviations ( $SD$ ) for the Interpersonal Communication Scale exploratory factor analysis (EFA).  $N = 186$ .

Item	EFA factor loadings				Item statistics		
	F1	F2	F3	F4	$\eta^2$	$M$	$SD$
Othfeel	<b>.80</b>	.23	.20	.12	.61	3.94	0.84
Wantwish	<b>.78</b>	.39	.19	-.19	.70	3.85	0.86
Ask	<b>.75</b>	.07	.13	.28	.62	3.87	0.97
Invite	<b>.70</b>	.45	.22	.08	.69	3.77	0.98
Message	.01	<b>.73</b>	.19	.23	.57	3.63	0.93
Use	.29	<b>.72</b>	.20	.12	.53	3.78	0.97
Causes	.28	<b>.65</b>	-.27	.04	.66	3.80	1.01

Calm	.23	<b>.58</b>	.14	-.05	.56	3.52	0.97
Connect	.14	<b>.54</b>	.30	.47	.46	3.53	0.88
Attend	.33	<b>.46</b>	-.03	.10	.41	3.25	1.03
Remarks	.14	.18	<b>.80</b>	-.06	.61	3.85	1.00
Blame	.12	.20	<b>.78</b>	-.20	.33	3.78	1.03
Speak	.17	-.08	<b>.70</b>	.07	.74	3.70	1.08
Direct	.04	.01	.21	<b>-.75</b>	.82	2.84	0.92
Share	.45	.25	.14	<b>.53</b>	.74	3.78	1.23
Wants	.34	.30	-.09	<b>.49</b>	.67	3.72	1.11

Note: Bold numbers show the highest factor loadings for each item.

High internal consistency reliability estimates were found for the first three factors ( $\alpha = .86, .77, .72$ ). The fourth factor, however, had a low reliability estimate ( $\alpha = .31$ ). As a result, we ran a series of additional reliability analyses excluding one item of the scale at a time. The item “Direct” demonstrated the poorest fit of all scale items, and thus was removed from subsequent analyses. By excluding this one item, the reliability estimate of the fourth factor was high and more consistent with the other three factors ( $\alpha = .71$ ). The reliability estimate for the overall scale with these 15 items was also high ( $\alpha = .86$ )

Based on the items in each factor, we created the following factor names, in order: Connected (4 items), Mindful (6 items), Reactive (3 items), and Expressive (2 items). All items in Reactive were negatively loaded and were therefore reverse scored to fit the direction of the overall scale and the other factors (i.e., higher values were coded to reflect higher frequency of positive interpersonal communication skills). Table 3 shows the final item components of all four factors based on the exploratory factor analysis, with their respective means, standard deviations, and reliability estimates ( $\alpha$ ). Finally, Table 4 shows that all but one of the bivariate correlations among the four factors were significantly correlated in the low to moderate range.

**Table 3:** ICS final factor structure based on exploratory factor analysis

<b>F1: Connected</b> <i>M</i> = 3.86 <i>SD</i> = .77 $\alpha$ = .86	<b>F2: Mindful</b> <i>M</i> = 3.58 <i>SD</i> = .66 $\alpha$ = .77	<b>F3: Reactive</b> <i>M</i> = 3.78 <i>SD</i> = .83 $\alpha$ = .72	<b>F4: Expressive</b> <i>M</i> = 3.75 <i>SD</i> = 1.03 $\alpha$ = .71
Othfeel Wantwish Invite Ask	Message Causes Use Calm Connect Attend	Blame Remarks Speak	Share Wants

**Table 4:** Bivariate correlations among ICS factors

	<b>F1</b>	<b>F2</b>	<b>F3</b>	<b>F4</b>

<b>F1: Connected</b>	1.00			
<b>F2: Mindful</b>	.63**	1.00		
<b>F3: Reactive</b>	.38**	.27**	1.00	
<b>F4: Expressive</b>	.48**	.48**	.11	1.00

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the  $p < .01$  level

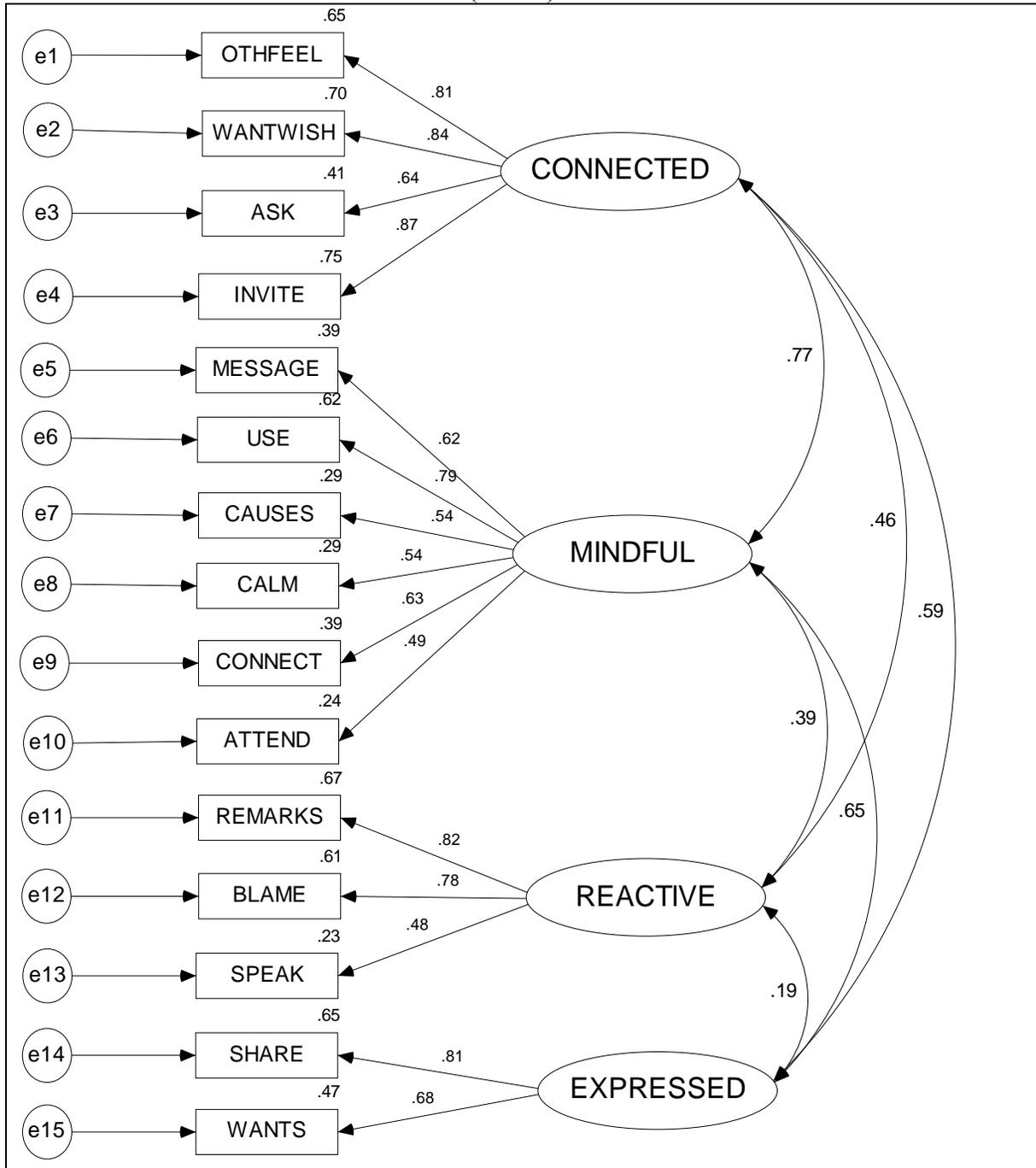
### ***b. Confirmatory Factor Analysis***

To confirm the stability of the EFA four factor solution, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using structural equation modeling. As depicted in Figure 1, the CFA model tested included the four latent factors identified in the EFA, namely Connected, Mindful, Reactive, and Expressive, each loading on to their respective items (see Table 3). Latent error terms (signified by e1, e2, ..., e15) for each observed variable were also included in the hypothesized model.

The overall model fit the data adequately, confirming the EFA four factor structure. Two model fit indices were examined, namely  $\chi^2 / df$  and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Statistical conventions suggest adequate model fit if  $\chi^2 / df < 2.5$  and if RMSEA  $< .08$ , with scores closer to zero indicating better fit for both indices. For the hypothesized model,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.62$  and RMSEA = .058, suggesting adequate model fit. Figure 1 shows the covariances among the latent variables, as well as the  $B$  weights and  $R^2$  values for each observed variable.

We ran the model a second time, including the “Direct” item originally excluded because it substantially lowered the reliability of Factor 4 (Expressive). This revised model demonstrated  $\chi^2 / df = 1.87$  and RMSEA = .068. A  $\chi^2$  difference test was conducted to determine whether the revised model with the “Direct” item in it was significantly worse than the original model without that item. The  $\chi^2$  difference score was 47.18 (df=14),  $p < .001$ , providing strong evidence that the revised model was significantly worse than the original model. In sum, excluding the “Direct” item from the four factor model created a significantly better fitting overall model.

**Figure 1:** CFA structural equation model including latent variable covariances, with *B* weights and  $R^2$  values for each indicator variable. (n=186).



#### IV. Conclusion

The Interpersonal Communication Scale can reliably assess how frequently individuals use positive interpersonal communication skills when discussing issues with others. Further, through a combination of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, four factors were found to

underlie the overall scale structure. These factors reliably measured four types of interpersonal communication, namely Connected, Mindful, Reactive, and Expressive. As a result, users of the Interpersonal Communication Scale can confidently derive scores from any or all of these four factors, in addition to the overall scale score, when conducting analyses on responses from their own samples.