Relationship Smarts Plus (RS+), an evidence-based curriculum developed by the Dibble Institute, includes 13 lessons that focus on personal development related to identity, goals and values, distinguishing between healthy versus unhealthy relationship behaviors, safe choices in forming relationships, preventing dating violence, developing communication skills, and preparation for adult roles and responsibilities related to parenting and marriage.

Participating in RS+ Improves:

- Awareness of healthy dating patterns and the importance of mutual respect, shared values, and commitment in developing stable romantic relationships.
- Knowledge of healthy versus unhealthy relationships, the ability to recognize patterns of abuse, and understanding of the choices and behaviors that put teens’ physical and emotional health at risk.
- Problem solving and communication skills to facilitate open and safe discussions about relationship needs and views and to effectively manage differences that arise in relationships.
- Levels of self-efficacy in relationships to help teens feel empowered to make good choices in relationships.

Outputs: UGA Extension has reached 6870 GA Youth.

- Since 2008, **65 county FACS and 4-H Extension agents across 50 counties** completed training in the RS+ program.
- As well, UGA Extension has trained **151 community professionals across 10 counties** in the RS+ program.
- Since launching programming in 2009, RS+ has been offered (in part or in its entirety) by UGA Extension 119 times, reaching **3445 unique youth across 33 counties**.
- Since 2012, UGA Extension has provided training, technical assistance, and support to GA Department of Family and Children Services, Public Health and other community funded agencies offering afterschool programs to at-risk youth as part of the GA Personal Responsibility Education Program (GA-PREP). This state teen pregnancy prevention project is funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, and in partnership with the GA Department of Family and Children Services. To date, RS+ has been implemented 159 times and reached **3425 youth across 10 counties**.

Example comments of what youth reported learning:
- **You need to think about the things you expect before you date.**
- **Abuse is not okay and there are people who will help**
- **Make good choices. Don’t let others persuade you to do something you don’t want to do.**
- **The difference between conditional and unconditional relationships.**
- **These lessons have taught me to be nicer and kinder to ladies.**
- **It will help me complain about things without being mean or rude.**
- **You should not have sex right away.**
- **You don’t have to sleep with someone to show them you love them.**
- **How to use technology the right way.**
- **Social and emotional values take the longest to develop.**
- **What a healthy relationship contains.**
- **How relationships need chemistry, friendship, and commitment.**
- **How parents treat each other (lovingly or not-so-lovingly) can affect the child.**
- **Never pressure someone into doing something they don’t want to.**
- **A baby needs both parents.**
- **If your friends are doing something wrong, you should be able to tell them what they’re doing is wrong.**

*For a complete 2014 report, and to learn about other resources available from the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension to support healthy relationships, visit [http://www.gamarriages.org](http://www.gamarriages.org). For questions or additional information, contact Dr. Ted Futris, Associate Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Science, at tfutris@uga.edu.*
Outcomes: Participating youth reported increased capacity to develop healthy relationships.

Of the 3445 youth who participated in at least one RS+ class, data was collected from 2135 adolescents across 28 counties. The majority of these youth were in the 8th grade (60%), 13-14 years of age (63%; M= 13.91), female (57%) and Caucasian (45%). Also, 82% of the youth reported that they had been in a dating relationship.

Youth gained knowledge. At the conclusion of each lesson, participants were asked to report whether their knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the various topics/skills that were covered in the lesson was (1) poor, (2) fair, (3) good, or (4) excellent before the program and then asked what their understanding was like after the program. Each lesson evaluation included five items and mean before and after scores were computed with higher scores reflecting greater understanding. As summarized below, on average, youth reported their understanding of the principles/skills taught was “fair” prior to each lesson and significantly improved to “good” or “excellent” afterwards.

When asked to rate how helpful the lesson was, the majority rated each lesson as either very helpful or helpful.

Participants’ Reported Change across Relationship Smarts Lessons (n = 2135).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Lesson</th>
<th>Offered Lesson</th>
<th>Attended Lesson</th>
<th>Completed Evaluation</th>
<th>Mean Score (SD) Before</th>
<th>Mean Score (SD) After</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>% who improved</th>
<th>% helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>2.69 (0.70)</td>
<td>3.27 (0.59)</td>
<td>26.89**</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>1726</td>
<td>1334</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>2.78 (0.70)</td>
<td>3.35 (0.57)</td>
<td>29.39**</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>1063</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>2.70 (0.71)</td>
<td>3.32 (0.60)</td>
<td>23.45**</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>2.29 (0.75)</td>
<td>3.35 (0.57)</td>
<td>20.06**</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>2.52 (0.68)</td>
<td>3.41 (0.55)</td>
<td>27.29**</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>1454</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>2.62 (0.74)</td>
<td>3.28 (0.61)</td>
<td>26.10**</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 7</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2.74 (0.68)</td>
<td>3.46 (0.52)</td>
<td>12.87**</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 8</td>
<td>1708</td>
<td>1281</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>2.68 (0.75)</td>
<td>3.36 (0.61)</td>
<td>30.81**</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 9</td>
<td>1485</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>2.65 (0.73)</td>
<td>3.25 (0.69)</td>
<td>25.52**</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 10</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2.50 (0.77)</td>
<td>3.36 (0.60)</td>
<td>12.57**</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 11</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>2.87 (0.80)</td>
<td>3.42 (0.65)</td>
<td>15.47**</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 12</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2.69 (0.81)</td>
<td>3.47 (0.62)</td>
<td>11.11**</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See next page for lesson descriptions. *p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01
*Percentages reflect youth who responded “very helpful”, “helpful”, or “somewhat helpful”

Youth felt more confident, better about themselves, and that they would use the skills learned. Of the 2135 youth who provided evaluation data, 1183 (55%) received at least four lessons (covering goals/values, characteristics of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships and communication strategies) and completed the overall program evaluation survey. This survey was designed to assess perceived changes in how confident they felt in applying the skills learned and various other attitudes and aspirations. Overall, the majority of youth felt that they were more confident than before the program in establishing healthy relationships with family/friends (78%) and dating partners (84%), listening (76%) and handling conflict (77%), and expressing their feelings and wants in a relationship (77%). As well, 74% of the participants felt better about themselves after the program and 93% reported they were likely to use the skills learned (see figure).

Example comments from youth regarding how the program helped:
- **Helped me learn how to communicate better in my relationships.**
- **This program has helped me a lot. When someone is pressuring me to have sex I can remember to wait until I’m married.**
- **I can handle conflicts in a more sensible way.**
- **It gives me confidence in my relationships with people.**
- **It makes me realize I don’t always listen to other people’s point of view and [I] need to be more considerate of others feelings.**
- **I feel that it helped me realize the importance of my future and how it is affected by the choices I make now.**
- **I feel that everything I learned will be used in my everyday life.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 1: A FOUNDATION FOR UNDERSTANDING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1: Who Am I and Where Am I Going? | • Increase awareness of teen’s identity and possible selves  
• Identify future goals and dreams as well as steps teens can begin taking now to reach these goals  
• Practice resisting peer pressure and staying true to one’s self |
| 2: Maturity Issues and What I Value* | • Explore physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of maturity  
• Reflect on values and determine which ones are important to teens  
• Identify personality and character qualities teens find important in others |
| 3: Attractions and Infatuation* | • Awareness of the building blocks and characteristics of healthy relationships  
• Understand the impact that sex can have on a developing relationship  
• Gain knowledge about what infatuation is and how it affects decision making  
• Understand the difference between infatuation and genuine love |
| 4: Love and Intimacy | • Become familiar with the concepts of love and lust and understand the difference between the two  
• Learn to identify the three dimensions of love and recognize relationship problems that arise when these are unbalanced  
• Develop an understanding of true intimacy and how it develops over time |
| **SECTION 2: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DATING RELATIONSHIP PROCESSES** | |
| 5: Principles of Smart Relationships | • Help teens recognize smart and not-so-smart relationship attitudes, behaviors, and choices  
• Offer concrete guidelines for having “smart relationships”  
• Explore the importance of compatibility for relationships and offer a list of key areas to consider |
| 6: The Low-Risk Approach to Relationships: Decide, Don’t Slide!* | • Learn the difference between a high-risk “sliding” vs. a low-risk “deciding” approach to developing relationships  
• Gain insight about what’s important to learn about another person and oneself when developing a romantic relationship  
• Practice identifying steps to make wise decisions about the person you are attracted to |
| 7: Is It a Healthy Relationship? | • Learn to use a three question guide to decide if a relationship is healthy or unhealthy  
• Understand what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like in the real world  
• Learn how unmet needs can lead to poor relationship choices  
• Foster communication about healthy relationships with trusted adults |
| 8: Breaking Up and Dating Abuse* | **Part I:**  
• Understand when it is time to end a relationship  
• Identify better and worse ways to break-up with someone  
• Learn how to deal with break-ups in a healthy way  
**Part II:**  
• Raise awareness of early warning signs and behaviors of abuse  
• Practice setting boundaries at the first sign of disrespectful behavior  
• Understand the consequences of dating abuse |
| **SECTION 3: COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND MARRIAGES** | |
| 9: A Foundation for Good Communication* | • Evaluate communication patterns learned while growing up  
• Explore the impact anger has on one’s ability to communicate effectively  
• Gain practice with the time-out skill as the Speaker-Listener Technique |
| 10: Communication Challenges and More Skills | • Understand negative patterns of communication that damage relationships including the four most damaging patterns  
• Reduce negative communication patterns by practicing how to raise complaints effectively  
• Assess communication patterns within one’s own relationship |
| **SECTION 4: MARRIAGE AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE** | |
| 11: Through the Eyes of a Child* | **Part I:**  
• Understand why healthy and stable parental relationships matter for a child  
• Gain awareness of child outcomes and risks to babies of young and unmarried parents  
• Understand child developmental needs  
**Part II:**  
• Identify the characteristics of positive fathering and the unique contributions fathers can make to a child’s well-being  
• Understand how a healthy relationship or marriage helps men become good fathers |
| 12: Looking Toward the Future | • Understand the impact of a risky partner selection versus a wise partner selection  
• Awareness of research findings on cohabitation, marital success, and skills-based prevention programs.  
• Learn the “success sequence” for achieving future life and family goals and reduce one’s chances of poverty |
| 13: Follow Your North Star | • Review the core concepts and skills of the curriculum  
• Develop a personal success plan drawing on the skills and knowledge teens have learned |

* This is one of the six core Relationship Smarts lessons. For a detailed overview of the RS+ curriculum, visit The Dibble Institute at [http://www.dibbleinstitute.org](http://www.dibbleinstitute.org).
## 2008-2014 Evaluation Summary of UGA Extension Outputs and Short-Term Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>OUTPUT</th>
<th>OUTCOMES - IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What we invested to develop, deliver &amp; evaluate the program</td>
<td>What we did to carry out the program.</td>
<td>What we yielded and/or who we reached.</td>
<td>The short term results of the program (Learning).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Funding (e.g., state and county level support; grants)</td>
<td>• Training FACS/4H agents on RS+</td>
<td>• Youth improved in their understanding of Their own identity (71%) Maturity and personal values (69%) Infatuation versus genuine love (72%) Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships (76%) Low-risk strategies to developing healthy relationships (70%) Signs of dating abuse (70%) Foundations of good communication (67%) Dealing with conflict (74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff/Faculty Effort (content specialists, FACS/4H county agents, clerical support)</td>
<td>• Supplemental training and updates on RS+</td>
<td>• County Extension agents deliver RS+ program to youth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partners (e.g., Georgia middle and high schools, communities, agencies, faith-based and social service organizations)</td>
<td>• Establish partnerships with schools or other youth organizations where program will be implemented</td>
<td>• Program delivered across 33 counties through middle schools, high schools, youth organizations, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Time (e.g., designing, coordinating, delivering, documenting, evaluating)</td>
<td>• County Extension agents deliver RS+ program to youth</td>
<td>• 3445 youth reached through 119 program offerings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Space (e.g., program delivery)</td>
<td>• Retrospective pre then post-test completed after each lesson</td>
<td>• 2135 youth completed lesson evaluations to document knowledge gained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Materials (curriculum, handouts, activity supplies, attendance sheets, lesson evaluations, post evaluations, attendance sheets)</td>
<td>• Overall program evaluation completed by those attending 4 or more “core lessons”</td>
<td>• 1185 youth completed the overall program evaluation to document confidence and skills gained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepare outcome/impact report for each county as well as a full state report for the year</td>
<td>• 69 county reports prepared for agents to share with community partners, and prospective funders.</td>
<td>• 74% of youth felt better about themselves • 94% of youth reported that they were likely to use the skills learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth increase in their practice of positive communication and conflict management skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth exhibit lowered levels of risky sexual behaviors</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Maintain healthy peer and intimate relationships</td>
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<td>• Youth avoid or remove self from abusive relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Avoid premarital pregnancy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Establish healthy and stable future marriages</td>
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</tbody>
</table>