

Participants in marriage education request attention to sexual intimacy, finances, and the impact of children on marriage

Brief provided by Texas Tech University and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

African-American and Hispanic participants discuss their experiences in marriage education classes and make recommendations on course content.

Summary

Researchers conducted a variety of interviews with African-American and Hispanic participants in *Twogether in Texas* sponsored marriage education classes in the greater Houston, Texas area. Participants were favorable in their reactions to the classes but they also had recommendations on content that could be included to make the classes even more effective and pertinent. All participants in these interviews were taught from the *Within My Reach* and *Within Our Reach* (PREP-based) programs.

- Overall, African-American and Hispanic participants had more similarities than differences in their responses.
- When asked why they participated in the program, both groups indicated a desire to learn specific skills for marital- and self-improvement, hoping this would then translate into better relationships.
- Both groups reported a positive experience in the program, and that the program met their goals.
- For the workshops to reach their instructive potential, both groups touted the importance of educators creating an open, safe, and collaborative environment.
- Both African-American and Hispanic par-

ticipants wanted additional content:

African-American participants wanted to go into greater depth within the PREP curriculum; whereas,

Hispanic participants wanted the workshops to cover sex, finances, and the impact of children on marriage.

- Each group reported gaining insight into both their ineffective and effective problem solving behaviors, and that this insight would be helpful during future conflict resolution.
- Both groups of participants reported leaving the workshops more committed to their relationships.

These participants had good experiences in their classes and left the classes feeling a renewed dedication to their relationship. They also left the classes somewhat wanting...wanting more content on areas that were not directly addressed by the facilitators or within the curriculum. We recommend that group facilitators consider adding content (where possible) that addresses successfully negotiating physical intimacy, finances, and child rearing responsibilities within a committed relationship.

For more information, please contact:

Steven M. Harris, Ph.D., Chair

Texas Healthy Marriage Initiative
Research Advisory Group
steve.harris@ttu.edu

Contributors to this Brief:

Steven M. Harris, Ph.D.
Texas Tech University

Andrew P. Daire, Ph.D.
University of Central Florida

Nivischi Edwards
University of Central Florida

Austin Houghtaling
Texas Tech University

James Drake
Texas Tech University

March 2009

