

# Familyhood

## Statewide Training

### Within My Reach

Background and Overview  
Galena Rhoades, Ph.D.



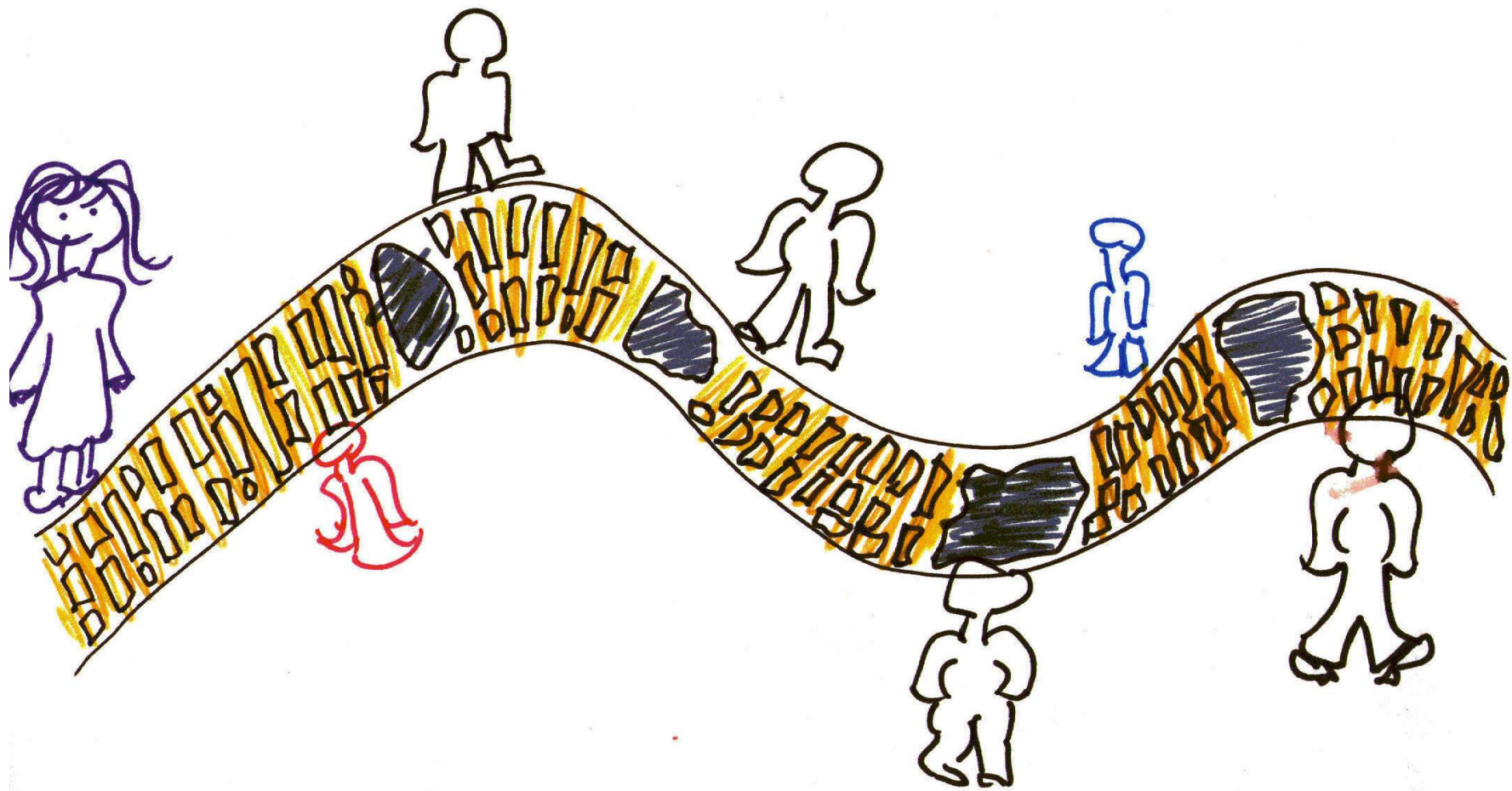
WITHIN

*My Reach*®

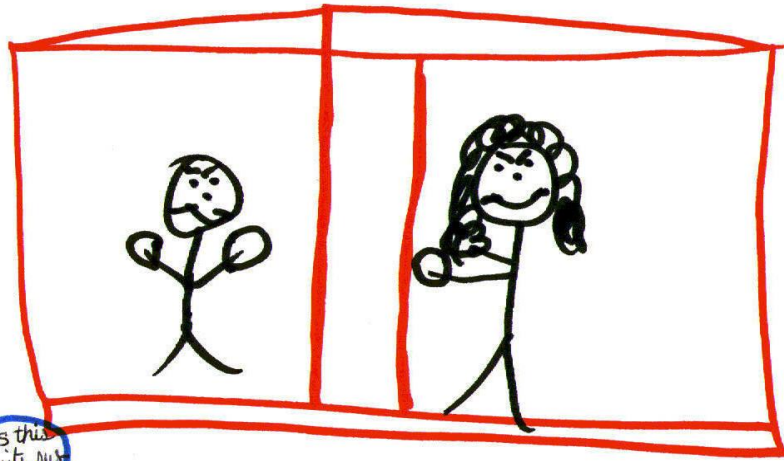
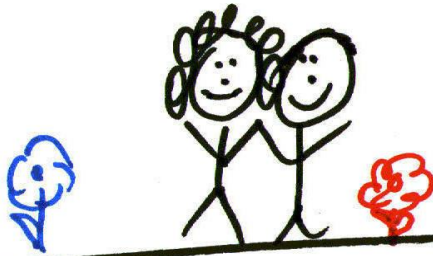
Version 3.0

*Background and Overview*  
Galena Rhoades, Ph.D.

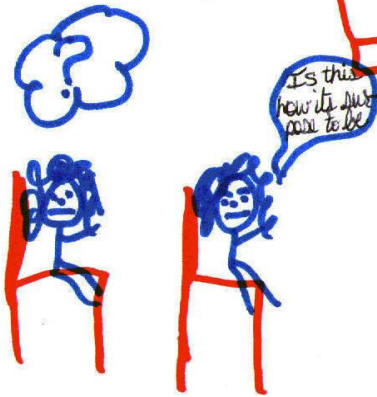
“Relationships/marriages today are like...”



One sunny day



3 months  
later



# Traditional Relationship Education

- Provided to committed couples, often in healthy relationships
- Components:
  - Relationship assessment
  - Communication skills
  - Personality differences

# Current State of Relationships in the U.S.

First births born to unmarried parents:	48%
Unmarried parents together child's 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday:	44%
Unmarried relationships with aggression:	48%
Cohabit before marriage:	70%
Cohabit with someone besides future spouse:	39%
Have sex with someone besides future spouse:	77%
Median age at first marriage:	29 for men; 27 for women
Divorce rate:	36 to 60%, by education

# Gaps in Relationship Education

## Services for:

- Individuals (vs. couples)
- Individuals not in relationships
- Unhealthy or violent relationships
- Populations with low-income levels
- People from minoritized groups



## Goal

- Reduce family instability and the negative impact on children

## Key

- *Early* education about relationship development and relationship skills

# Targets for Early Relationship Education

- What is a healthy relationship?
- Safety
- Planning for the future
- Making decisions about partners and relationships
- Communication skills
- Expectations for relationships
- Impact of adult relationships on child well-being
- Managing children and new relationships
- Barriers to marriage
- The positive role fathers can play
- Building social support

# Benefits of Working with Individuals

- Access
- Applicable to high risk and low income populations
- Education on violence
- Education on the transitions and decisions that come *before* a commitment to marry
- Education on children's well-being
- Communication skills apply to many relationships

# Within My Reach: Overarching Goals

- Help those in viable relationships to cultivate, protect, and stabilize their unions, and to marry if desired.
- Help those in damaging relationships to leave safely, at some point.
- Help those desiring a romantic relationship and/or marriage in the future to choose future partners wisely.

# Core Philosophies

- “Our love lives aren’t neutral.”

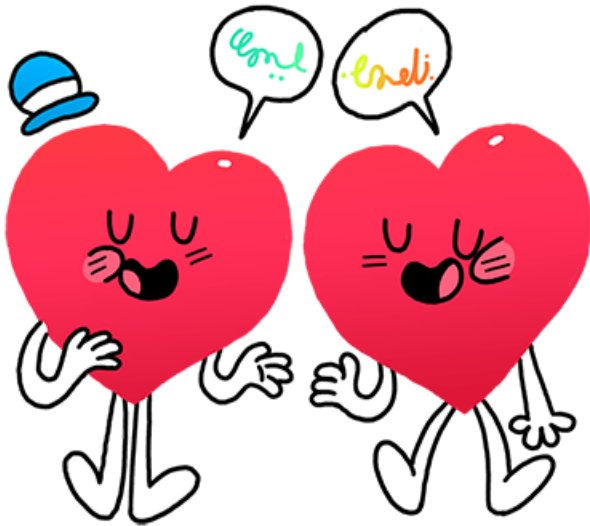
“The decisions you make in romantic relationships will affect every other aspect of life—especially your child’s well-being, your mental and physical health, and your work success.”

- “Sliding vs. Deciding”

# Sliding vs. Deciding

- Premise: expect better outcomes when we make decisions rather than slide into new relationship experiences
- Based on:
  - Theories of commitment and distinction between dedication and constraint
  - Social psychology research regarding decision-making and follow-through

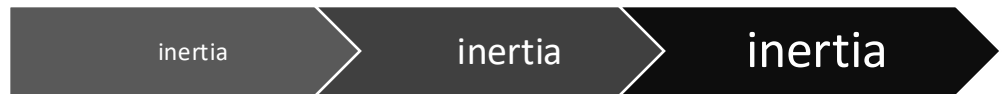
# Relationship DUI: Is it Love?



Sliding:



Deciding:





# Initial Target Population

- Women in TANF programs
  - Children
  - High financial stress, chaos
  - Threats to personal safety (neighborhoods and partners)
- Now used with other populations
  - E.g., Men, correctional systems, college students, religious organizations, government assistance programs
- Revised and expanded for U.S. Army and Air Force

# Theoretical Basis for Within My Reach

- Based on a cognitive-behavioral model
- Assumes that it is important to change both behaviors (e.g., conflict management, stay/leave behavior) and cognitions (e.g., self-esteem, expectations for healthy relationships) to improve relationship experiences
- Includes research-based content on partner selection, the impact of relationships on children, strategies for making wise decisions in relationships, co-parenting, aggression and violence, and communication skills

# Basis for Domestic Violence Content

Within My Reach follows recommendations from Capaldi and Kim's (2007) theoretical model (Dynamic Developmental Systems Model of Partner Violence):

- 1) Identify problem behaviors and risks for violence in current and potential future partners
- 2) Identify and reduce one's own risks for violent behavior (e.g., substance use, depression)
- 3) Support leaving violent relationships safely
- 4) Teach skills that improve interactions between partners, such as how to recognize escalation, use time-outs, and employ good communication and problem-solving skills.
- 5) Highlight the negative effects of exposure to intimate partner violence for children

# Structure of Curriculum

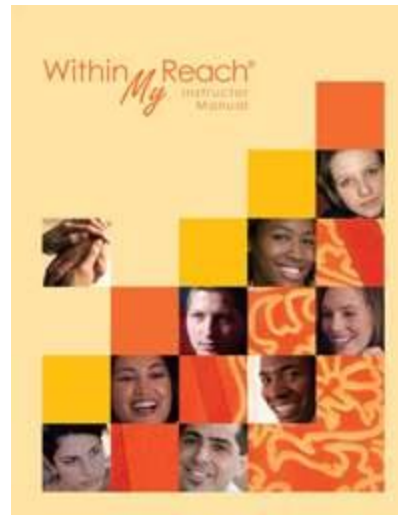
15 hours of core material:

1. Understanding Healthy Relationships, Risks, and Making Decisions
  - Sliding vs. deciding
2. Building and Maintaining Healthy Relationships
  - Safety
  - Communication skills
3. Moving Forward toward Goals “Within My Reach”
  - Planning for the future
  - Managing children and relationships
  - Infidelity
  - Barriers to marriage

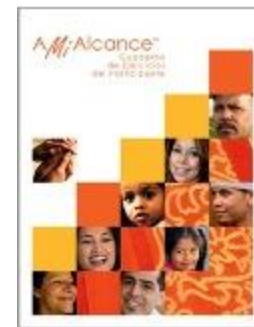
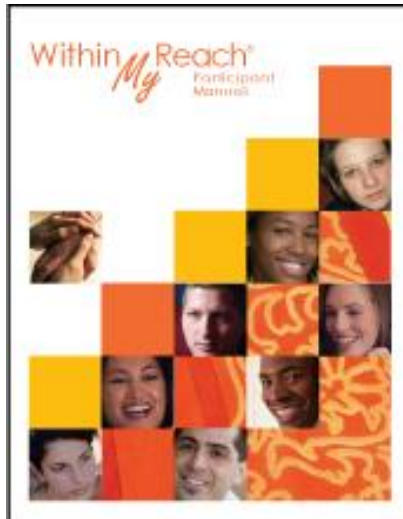
# Safety

- Messages about safety throughout
  - Keeping workbooks safe
  - Leaving safely
  - Help for domestic violence
- Unit on domestic violence
  - Arguments-that-get-physical vs. intimate terrorism
  - Recognizing warning signs
  - Getting help and support

# Instructor Materials



# Participant Materials (Spanish versions available)



# Structure of Units

- Lecture
- Discussion
- Group activity
- Workbook activity

# Evidence of Curriculum Effectiveness

Seven published reports with four different samples:

- Increased knowledge of healthy relationship patterns
- Decreased psychological distress
- Improved communication skills and conflict resolution
- Increased relationship confidence and quality
- Reductions in domestic violence
- Improvements in child wellbeing





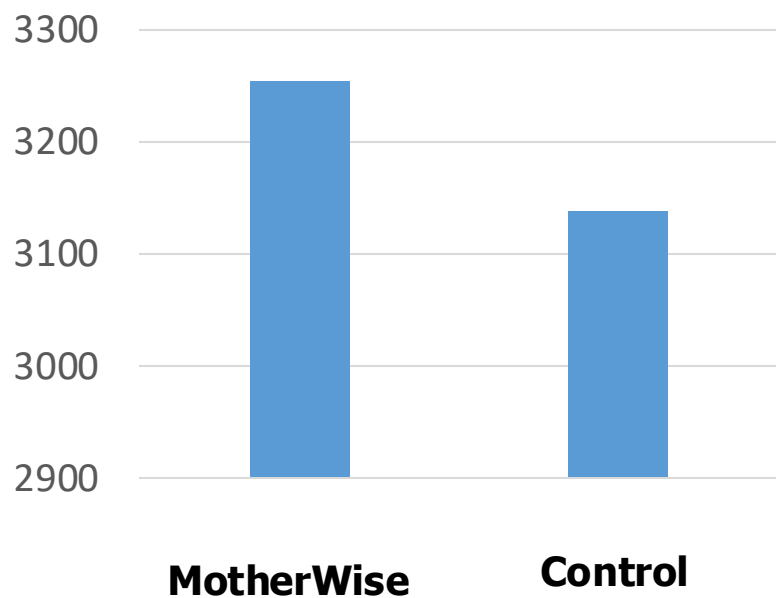
# MotherWise Program

- For pregnant and post-partum women
- Evidence-based curriculum: **WITHIN My REACH**
  - Healthy, safe family relationships
  - Communication skills
  - Decision making
  - 6 weeks, 4-hour sessions
- Infant care and parenting
- Case management, coaching
- All services available in English and Spanish
- Participation support
  - Childcare
  - Transportation (Uber)
  - Meals





## Birthweight (grams)

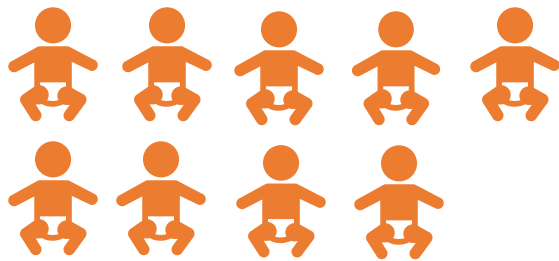


$N = 136$ ,  $p = .08$ , one-tailed,  $d = .24$



# Preterm Birth

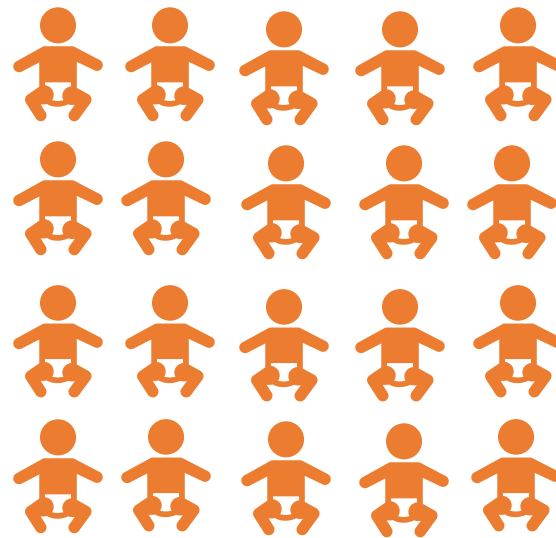
(among those < 18 Weeks Gestational Age at Enrollment)



9  
%



$N = 136$ ,  $p = .04$ , one-tailed



20  
%

**Control**

# WITHIN My Reach...In Action





# Familyhood

## Statewide Training