

Making A Difference An Abstinence-centered Program

More Evidence of Failure than Success

<i>Making a Difference</i>	School-recruited, held on Saturdays
Study conducted by independent evaluators?	NO , the study was by the program authors
Follow-up at least 12 months after the program to show duration of effect?	YES , follow-up measures were taken at 3, 6, & 12 months after the program
OUTCOMES:	Jemmott, et al., 1998¹
Pregnancy	Not measured
STDs	Not measured
Sexual Initiation	Reduced at 3 months, not at 6 or 12 months
Consistent Condom Use	NO EFFECT
Condom Use Frequency	Increased at 12 months
Unprotected Sex	NO EFFECT
Number of Sex Partners	Not measured
Frequency of Sex	NO EFFECT
Dual Effect: Condom Use & Abstinence	At 3 months, not at 6 or 12 months

Key Findings

Making a Difference (MAD) is an abstinence-centered curriculum that recruits from the school population and is held at the school on Saturdays. One impact study has been conducted, and it was done by the program's developers/authors.¹ A published research review by *The Institute for Research & Evaluation*² found that **this study did not produce sufficient evidence to label MAD an effective school-based program**. There was no long-term reduction in sexual initiation, and the only long-term effect was an increase in condom use frequency. That increase was not considered as evidence of program effectiveness because the more-protective measure of consistent condom use (CCU) showed no positive program effect. However, the increase in condom use frequency, along with the lack of impact on CCU, does provide evidence that abstinence-based programs do not *reduce* teen condom use, as is sometimes claimed.

Summary. Contrary to the U.S. Teen Pregnancy Prevention website,³ *Making a Difference* has shown little evidence of effectiveness in school populations—there was only a short-term reduction in teen sexual initiation and no effect on consistent condom use or unprotected sex. (*Making a Difference* is marketed by ETR, an offshoot of Planned Parenthood.)

1. Jemmott JB, Jemmott LS, & Fong GT. (1998). Abstinence and safer sex HIV risk-reduction interventions for African American adolescents: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*, 279(19), 1529-1536.
2. Ericksen IH, Weed SE. (2019). "Re-Examining the Evidence for School-based Comprehensive Sex Education: A Global Research Review." *Issues in Law and Medicine*, 34(2):161-182.
3. See: <https://tppevidencereview.youth.gov/EvidencePrograms.aspx>