



University of California, Santa Barbara Gevirtz Graduate School of Education

Program Evaluation

What is LOVE partnered with our research team at UC Santa Barbara, in the Center for School-Based Youth Development, to evaluate the effectiveness of the What is LOVE program. Our research team is a multi-disciplinary team of scholars and practitioners specializing in evaluating school-based and community-based programs for youth.

Our research team and What is LOVE collaborated to conduct a multi-year, independent, quasi-experimental evaluation of the What is LOVE curriculum and outcomes using a wait-list control group. We recruited students from local high schools to participate in the What is LOVE program and evaluation activities. From this group, we randomly selected 8-10 students at each school, per session, to participate in 6 (50-minute) workshops by trained undergraduate students from UC Santa Barbara. Our research team conducts pre- and post- online surveys with participating students and a control group. The surveys ask students about their experiences with dating and sexual violence, their knowledge and attitudes about dating violence, healthy relationship skills, bystander intervention skills and socioemotional strengths.

Findings from our evaluation showed good adherence to program curriculum and increases in socioemotional strengths in students who participated in the workshops. District-wide results from the surveys suggest that students significantly increased in the psychological strength areas of:

- ☐ Self-Efficacy
- ☐ School Support
- ☐ Persistence
- ☐ Emotional Regulation
- ☐ Empathy
- ☐ Gratitude
- ☐ Optimism

When followed with fidelity, responses to dating abuse awareness items taught in the What is LOVE curriculum improved by an average of 38.9% and all content items showed at least a 70% retention rate after completion of the workshops.

Dr. Sharkey and Dr. Reed, “... **endorse this curriculum based on evaluation evidence. What *is* LOVE should be considered a promising program for “raising awareness about dating abuse and building skills for healthy relationships.”**

For more information about this evaluation research, please contact:

Lauren Reed, MSW, PhD, Evaluation Coordinator Lauren.A.Reed@asu.edu (734) 751-6122