

**Updated Modified Prevent Alcohol and Other Risk-related
Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y.) Program Results
12-Months Post-Program Analysis
by Gender, Location, and Risk-taking on injury prevention
knowledge, safety behaviours, and opinions and attitudes
towards safety**

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**Updated Modified Prevent Alcohol and Other Risk-related Trauma in Youth
(P.A.R.T.Y.) Program Results from 12 Months Post-Program**

Development of the Evaluation Instrument and Pilot testing

The evaluation project for the Modified P.A.R.T.Y. Program (hereafter referred as the P.A.R.T.Y. Program) began in March 2005. Over the next 2 years, the researchers developed an instrument to measure the impact of the P.A.R.T.Y. Program on attitudes and beliefs about safety and risk taking, on specific measures about injury experience, and on reactions to the P.A.R.T.Y. program components. Several iterations of the instrument occurred, and various stages of pilot testing took place with groups of students, key informants, informal groups of students in the age range of the eventual target population. The instrument was also translated into French. The Nova Scotia Department of Education was asked to review the French translation prior to using the instrument in Nova Scotia Schools. The translation was not returned to the researchers so no data were collected from Francophone students nor students in French immersion programs.

The research instrument consisted of a combination of original questions and of modifications to previously published scales that were used to assess the variables/outcomes of the program. Ethics approval was sought from the Dalhousie Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board (REB). Pilot testing of the instrument commenced in May 2007 with students similar in characteristics to the eventual research participants (similar age range, grade level, language levels and geographic location). Following factor and additional analyses the instrument was modified; it was shortened to allow survey completion in a 20-minute period.

Second Stage Ethics Approval

As required by Dalhousie protocol, the final research instrument was again submitted to the REB for ethics approval of this second stage. Ethics approval was also sought from the Regional School Boards where the participating schools and students were located. Once approval was received from these various entities, informed consent procedures were initiated in conjunction with scheduling of the P.A.R.T.Y. program in

the various schools. The P.A.R.T.Y. program intervention with this evaluation research component took place over a three-month period from December 2007 to March 2008.

Data Collection

Data were collected at 4 time periods for each participant: one at least one week prior to the P.A.R.T.Y. Program intervention (the pretest), the second at 3 months post-program and the third and fourth at 6 and 12 months post-program. Data collection had to coincide with when the schools offered the P.A.R.T.Y. program; therefore, data were not collected simultaneously at the various research sites. Due to the differing dates of P.A.R.T.Y. Program intervention, the total 12-month post-program data were not completed until March 2009. Data across most schools were analyzed at 3-months post-program. This subsequent report captures the 12-month post-program data.

Research Participants

A total of 575 students aged 14-18 completed the pretest. A complete set of data (4 sets) was available for 71.8% (N=413) of the participants. Of the remaining 28.1% of the subjects (N=162), 32 missed the P.A.R.T.Y. Program intervention (becoming a small control group); a further 26 either transferred to other schools, becoming ineligible for the research project, or withdrew from the project (attrition rate of 4.5%). The remaining 104 students completed the pretest and 2 of the 3 post-test instruments.

Table 1 Distribution of Subject Participation in the P.A.R.T.Y. Program from Pre-test to 12-month post-test.

	Pretest	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months	Total
Yes	575	445	388	436	1844
No		32	34	28	94
Withdrew		10	23	26	59
Ill or Absent		42	35	7	84
No Answer		10	10	37	57
TOTAL	575	539	490	534	2,138

Participant Demographics

Approximately 95% (N=392) of the participants were 15-16 at the pretest, and 16 -17 at the 12-month posttest. Slightly more subjects were female (54.4%) than males (45.6%) although this difference was not significant. Participants were also located in different geographic regions. 85 participants attended school in an urban setting, 212 in a suburban setting, and 116 in a rural setting.

Analyses from Pretest to 12-Month Posttest

The following sections report details the 12-month responses from the 413 participants who completed the research instrument at all four time periods. While these 413 participants completed all four questionnaires, they did not necessarily complete all sections of the survey. As a result the number of participants varies by question.

1. Attitudes Towards Risk-taking and Risk-taking Behaviour

One of the research instrument subscales was used to assess attitudes towards safety and risk-taking. A second scale assessed participants' beliefs and their own self-reported risk-taking behaviours.

(a) Overall

Overall, there were no significant changes in either attitudes towards risk-taking behaviours or Risk-Taking (Safety) behaviours themselves from pretest to 12-month posttest. However, there were some important changes at both the 3-month and 6-month post-test periods. Students indicated that had become more aware of the importance of safety behaviours. In particular students were more likely to wear a helmet when riding a motorcycle and wear a seatbelt while riding in a car. Unfortunately, by the 12-month period, these differences were no longer significant.

Given that very few participants at the beginning of the study rode motorcycles (because they were too young) it is unlikely that these differences have any practical significance. The differences at the 3 and 6

month marks likely represent an increase in the number of participants riding motorcycles.

Attitudes and opinions about safety and risk taking had improved significantly from pretest to the 3-month period. These changes were maintained through the 6-month post-test but had largely disappeared by 12 months. There were some important changes maintained at 12 months; participants demonstrated more awareness about taking time to do things safely, and being upset when others acted dangerously.

Unfortunately, although some attitudes toward being safer improved over the course of 12 months, some negative safety behaviours increased. Engaging in distracted driving behaviour increased from 14.5% to 27%. This may be reflective of the increase in the number of students who now have their driving license.

(b) By High and Low Risk takers

When analyzed by risk-taking, there were no differences between pre- and 12-month posttest responses for those identified as high risk-takers or those identified as low risk-takers. There were, however, differences at both pre-test and post-test between groups, these differences were the basis upon which participants were categorized. Specifically, when asked about wearing bicycle helmets, there were no changes to behaviour between pre- and posttest results for students overall or between high and low risk takers.

(c) By Gender

There were significant differences between risk-taking behaviour and attitudes towards risk taking by gender at pre-test and each of the testing intervals. In each instance, females were lower risk-takers than were males. At 12 months post program, females were still more likely than males to wear helmets, when riding a motorcycle, when skateboarding or in-line

skating, when playing sports, and when working . As well, at 12 months, as through the other testing periods, girls were likely to state that “doing the safest thing possible is always the best thing”.

However, there were no differences within groups at any of the time periods, i.e. females did not significantly change their attitudes or behaviours from pretest to 12-month post-test and neither did males.

(d) By School location (urban, suburban, rural)

Although there some trends towards differences by school location at the 3-month period these differences were no longer apparent at the 12-month period. There were no differences among groups (urban, suburban, rural) nor were there differences within groups from pretest to posttest at 12 months on safety attitudes and opinions.

2. Knowledge About Injury, Driving Sober, and Good Decision-Making (Crossing the Stupid Line)

There was a significant difference across all groups from pretest to posttest about “Injury as the leading cause of death in the 13-19 year old age group”, the importance of “driving sober”, and what “the stupid line” meant. Females across school location and at each of the data collection periods were more knowledgeable than males.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although there were a few differences across groups at the 12-month posttest by gender, school location, and risk-taking behaviours there were more important trends at the 3-month posttest. These data need to be interpreted with caution given the introduction of a second injury prevention program in one of the largest test sites prior to the 3-month post-test and, in a second school, the widespread discussion of a new injury prevention program proposed for the school.

Nevertheless, these data suggest that an additional intervention (a booster) may be valuable in reinforcing the P.A.R.T.Y. program message 3-months after the

P.A.R.T.Y program is first introduced to the students. There were some important differences between males and females at all time periods with females demonstrating more safety conscious attitudes, opinions and behaviours than males. This is consistent with other published data about safety and injury prevention behaviours.

Most significantly, the P.A.R.T.Y program changed student knowledge about good decision-making around injury prevention. In particular, females appear to be more likely to receive safety messages than males.