

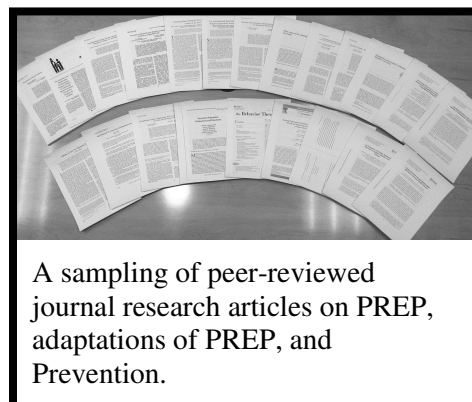
Research Background for PREP (The Prevention and Relationship Education Program¹)

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The following summary is available at this link:

<http://www.box.net/shared/eerhvl6vh4cstn59bdt2>

The Prevention and Relationship Education Program (PREP) is an empirically informed and rigorously tested model for teaching couples how to communicate effectively, work as a team to solve problems, manage conflicts without damaging closeness, and preserve and enhance commitment and friendship. PREP is used in many settings around the world, including community service settings, government programs, and religious institutions. To date we have trained over 19,000 individuals to become PREP Instructors in 28 countries.



The PREP Approach is based on over 30 years of basic science and outcome research in the field of marital health and success, including many studies conducted at the University of Denver and funded by the National Institute of Mental Health or the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (in the form of various grants awarded to Dr. Howard Markman, Dr. Scott Stanley, Dr. Galena Rhoades, and their colleagues).

Overview of Research Background

The extensive history of evaluation research on PREP focuses on curricula for couples (e.g., PREP 7, PREP for Strong Bonds, Within Our Reach, Fearless Marriage). There is less research focused on the new and emerging field of individually oriented relationship education, though studies are emerging in that field. Studies on With My Reach (a curriculum from PREP for individuals) are listed separately below.

- PREP has been reviewed by the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) and is listed in the U. S. Government's (SAMHSA) registry of evidence-based programs and practices. PREP has been listed in the registry for years, and NREPP re-reviewed the evidence basis for PREP in 2013 and updated the information in the registry.
<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=326>
- PREP is one of only a few programs to be rated as efficacious in reviews of evidence on relationship education approaches (Jakubowski, Milne, Brunner, & Miller, 2004).ⁱ

¹ Formerly, The Prevention and Relationship *Enhancement* Program

- PREP is empirically informed, meaning that, to the extent possible, the strategies of PREP are based on sound, basic research on marital and family health.
- PREP is empirically tested in outcome evaluations. PREP has been evaluated by many research teams (at least 7) in numerous countries (at least 4).
- PREP is regularly refined based on new knowledge gained in the field.
- In many peer-reviewed, published outcome studies, couples receiving PREP have demonstrated benefits on a variety of dimensions, especially in communication quality and conflict management, but also on other dimensions such as confidence in their relationships and positive connection.
- A number of published outcome studies show that couples who took PREP had a lower rate of divorce or break-up compared to those not taking PREP. Such findings are rare in this field.

Evaluation Studies of PREP: Peer Reviewed, Published Papers on Evaluations that include variations of PREP.

[In all but two of these studies, there was evidence of gains in relationship quality, family functioning, or stability (lower divorce) for couples taking a variation of PREP. Some studies show greater impact on relationship quality (e.g., communication) and some show greater impact on relationship stability. A wide variety of samples, methods, and providers are reflected here.]

Allen, E. S., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., Loew, B., & Markman, H. J. (2012). The effects of marriage education for Army couples with a history of infidelity. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26, 26-35.

Allen, E. S., Stanley, S. M., Rhoades, G. K., Markman, H. J., & Loew, B. A. (2011). Marriage education in the Army: Results of a randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*, 10(4), 309-326.

Beach, S. H., Hurt, T. R., Fincham, F. D., Franklin, K. J., McNair, L. M., & Stanley, S. M. (2011). Enhancing marital enrichment through spirituality: Efficacy data for prayer focused relationship enhancement. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 3(3), 201-216.
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Braithwaite, S., & Fincham, F. (2007). ePREP: Computer based prevention of relationship dysfunction, depression and anxiety. *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, 26(5), 609-622.
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Braithwaite, S., & Fincham, F. (2009). A randomized clinical trial of a computer based preventive intervention: Replication and extension of ePREP. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(1), 32-38.
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Braithwaite, S. R., & Fincham, F. D. (2011). Computer-based dissemination: A randomized clinical trial of ePREP using the actor partner interdependence model. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 49, 126-131. doi:10.1016/j.brat.2010.11.002

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- Markman, H. J., Whitton, S. W., Kline, G. H., Stanley, S. M., Thompson, H., St. Peters, M., Leber, B. D., Olmos-Gallo, P. A., Prado, L., Williams, T., Gilbert, K., Tonelli, L., Bobulinski, M., and Cordova, A. (2004). Use of an empirically-based marriage education program by religious organizations: Results of a dissemination trial. *Family Relations*, *53*, 504-512.
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- Owen, J., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2011). The role of leaders' working alliance in premarital education. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *25*(1), 49-57.
- Renick, M. J., Blumberg, S., & Markman, H. J. (1992). The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP): An empirically based preventive intervention program for couples. *Family Relations*, *41*(2), 141-147.

Rhoades, G. K. (in press). The effectiveness of the Within Our Reach relationship education program for couples: Findings from a federal randomized trial. *Family Process*.

Rienks, S. L., Wadsworth, M. E., Markman, H. J., Einhorn, L., & Moran Etter, E. (2011). Father involvement in an ethnically diverse low-income sample: Baseline associations and changes resulting from preventive intervention. *Family Relations*, *60*(2), 191-204.

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Van Widenfelt, B., Hosman, C., Schaap, C., & van der Staak, C. (1996). The prevention of relationship distress for couples at risk: A controlled evaluation with nine-month and two-year follow-ups. *Family Relations*, *45*, 156-165.

Wadsworth, M., Santiago, C., Einhorn, L., Etter, E., Rienks, S., & Markman, H. (2011). Preliminary Efficacy of an Intervention to Reduce Psychosocial Stress and Improve Coping in Low-Income Families. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *48*(3/4), 257-271. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9384-z

Studies Focused on Derivatives of PREP that Focus on Individuals (e.g., Within My Reach)

Antle, B., Sar, B., Christensen, D., Ellers, F., Barbee, A., & van Zyl, M. (2013). The impact of the Within My Reach Relationship training on relationship skills and outcomes for low-income individuals. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, *39*(3), 346-357. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0606.2012.00314.x

Antle, B. F., Karam, E., Christensen, D. N., Barbee, A. P., & Sar, B. K. (2011). An evaluation of healthy relationship education to reduce intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Social Work, 14*(5), 387-406.

Sparks, A. (2008). Implementation of 'Within My Reach:' Providing a relationship awareness and communications skills program to TANF recipients in Oklahoma. Working paper of The National Poverty Center. Ann Arbor. Available at:
http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/working_papers/?publication_id=161

Visvanathan, P.D., Richmond, M., Winder, C., & Koenck, C.H. (2014). Individual-Oriented relationship education: An evaluation study in community-based settings. *Family Process, x*(x), xx-xx. doi: 10.1111/famp.12116
[early, online version, without final volume number and page numbers]

Large-Scale Government Trial of Relationship Education and Support Programs to Low Income Couples

The citations below present evidence of positive impacts for variations of PREP used in two large federal studies. These are government publication rather than a peer reviewed journal publication. NOTE: While the overall results across sites in these multi-site studies were mixed, there is substantial evidence of effectiveness for adaptations of PREP in these large, randomized trials. If you have any detailed questions about these or other studies, you can inquire of Dr. Stanley, who knows the study details and findings, in depth.

Devaney, B., & Dion, R. (2010). 15-Month impacts of Oklahoma's Family Expectations Program. Washington DC: Mathematica Policy Research.

Hsueh, J., Alderson, D. P., Lundquist, E., Michalopoulos, C., Gubits, D., Fein, D., & Knox, V. (2012). The Supporting Healthy Marriage Evaluation: Early Impacts on Low-Income Families. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Washington D. C.

Lundquist, E. Hsueh, J., Lowenstein, A. E., Faucetta, K., Gubits, D., Michalopoulos, C., & Knox, V. (2014). A family-strengthening program for low-income families: Final impacts from the Supporting Healthy Marriage evaluation. OPRE Report 2014-09A. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Wood, R. G., Moore, Q., Clarkwest, A., Killewald, A., & Monahan, S. (2012). The long-term effects of Building Strong Families: A relationship skills education program for unmarried parents. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Washington D. C.

Papers on Best Practices or Innovative Strategies in the Field of Couples Education by Scholars Associated with PREP

Halford, K. W., Markman, H. J., Kline, G. & Stanley, S. M. (2003). Best practice in couple relationship education. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 29*, 385 - 406.

Halford, W. K., Markman, H. J., & Stanley, S. M. (2008). Strengthening couple relationships with education: Social policy and public health perspectives. *Journal of Family Psychology, 22*, 497 - 505.

Markman, H. J., & Rhoades, G. K. (2012). Relationship education research: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 38*, 169-200. doi: 10.1111/j.1752-0606.2011.00247.x

Markman, H. J., Stanley, S. M., Jenkins, N. H., Petrella, J. N., & Wadsworth, M. E. (2006). Preventive education: Distinctives and directions. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy, 20*, 411 - 433.

Rhoades, G. K., & Stanley, S. M. (2009). Relationship education for individuals: The benefits and challenges of intervening early. In H. Benson and S. Callan (Eds.), *What works in relationship education: Lessons from academics and service deliverers in the United States and Europe* (pp. 45 – 54). Doha, Qatar: Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development.

Rhoades, G. K., & Stanley, S. M. (2011). Using individual-oriented relationship education to prevent family violence. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy, 10*, 185-200.

Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2009). Working with cohabitation in relationship education and therapy. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy, 8*, 95-112.

Stanley, S. M., & Rhoades, G. K. (2009). Marriages at risk: Relationship formation and opportunities for relationship education. In H. Benson and S. Callan (Eds.), *What works in relationship education: Lessons from academics and service deliverers in the United States and Europe* (pp. 21 - 44). Doha, Qatar: Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development.

Stanley, S. M. (2001). Making the case for premarital education. *Family Relations, 50*, 272–280.

Papers on Key Issues in the Field of Couples Education by Scholars Associated with PREP

Hawkins, A. J., Stanley, S. M., Blanchard, V. L., & Albright, M. (2012). Exploring programmatic moderators of the effectiveness of marriage and relationship education programs: A meta-analytic study. *Behavior Therapy, 43*(1), 77-87. doi:10.1016/j.beth.2010.12.006

Markman, H., Floyd, F., Stanley, S. & Lewis, H. (1986). Prevention. In N. Jacobson & A. Gurman (eds), *Clinical Handbook of Marital Therapy*. NY, NY: The Guilford Press.

Markman, H., Rienks, S., Wadsworth, M., Markman, M., Einhorn, L., Moran, E., Mead Glojek, N., Pregulman, M., & Gentry, L. (2009). Adaptation Fatherhood, Individual, and Islamic Versions of PREP. In H. Benson and S. Callan (Eds.), *What works in relationship education: Lessons from academics and service deliverers in the United States and Europe* (pp. 67 - 74). Doha, Qatar: Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development.

Rhoades, G. K., & Stanley, S. M. (2011). Using individual-oriented relationship education to prevent family violence. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy, 10*, 185-200.

Stanley, S. M., Amato, P. R., Johnson, C. A., & Markman, H. J. (2006). Premarital education, marital quality, and marital stability: Findings from a large, random, household survey. *Journal of Family Psychology, 20*, 117-126.

Stanley, S. M. (2004, May 5). *Testimony On Healthy Marriage before the Committee on Finance, Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy, United States Senate*. Washington D. C.

Stanley, S. M., Blumberg, S. L., & Markman, H.J. (1999). Helping Couples Fight for Their Marriages: The PREP Approach. In R. Berger & M. Hannah, (Eds.), *Handbook of preventive approaches in couple therapy* (pp. 279-303). New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Stanley, S. M., Markman, H. J., & Jenkins, N. H. (2002). *Marriage education and government policy: Helping couples who choose marriage achieve success*. Denver, CO: PREP, Inc.

Stanley, S. M., Pearson, M., & Kline, G. H. (2005, November). *The development of relationship education for low income individuals: Lessons from research and experience*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington DC.

Stanley, S. M., & Rhoades, G. K. (2009). Marriages at risk: Relationship formation and opportunities for relationship education. In H. Benson and S. Callan (Eds.), *What works in relationship education: Lessons from academics and service deliverers in the United States and Europe* (pp. 21 - 44). Doha, Qatar: Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development.

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Examples of Studies that Empirically Inform Strategies Used in PREP

There are hundreds of studies that have been used to inform strategies built into PREP and adaptations of PREP. Not only has PREP been tested in rigorous evaluations by various research teams, but PREP is regularly updated and refined based on ongoing research in the field. A list sampling some of the studies that have informed strategies and refinements in PREP and related curricula is available upon request.

Researchers associated with studies on PREP and prevention at the University of Denver include Dr. Howard Markman, Dr. Scott Stanley, and Dr. Galena Rhoades. They and colleagues are very active in research on the basic science of relationships, authoring many peer-reviewed publications on factors such as communication, risk for divorce, commitment, cohabitation, family of origin risks, and so forth. Such research is used to inform the prevention strategies used in relationship education interventions.

We keep a growing and broad list of studies by those on our team and scores of other scholars. The list includes both outcome studies related to this field and all manner of basic science studies of the sort we find useful in our ongoing work (including, of course, the citations for all our basic science research). That list can be obtained at the link below. If you are interested in knowing about citations in our work on communication, commitment, cohabitation, etc., just search for

our names within this list. If there is a particular citation of ours that you cannot obtain and would like a copy of, just send a note to Scott Stanley at sstanley@du.edu.

Big reference list here: <https://app.box.com/s/2l23r2i48brkn19b8ie9>

ⁱ Jakubowski, S. F., Milne, E. P., Brunner, H., & Miller, R. B. (2004). A Review of Empirically Supported Marital Enrichment Programs. *Family Relations*, 53(5), 528-536.