



Student feedback on an online, media literacy-based sexual health program.

Welcome back to the Community College Health Study newsletter! In this issue, we provide an overview of the content and activities included in a new, evidence-based, online sexual health education program AND a first look at students' feedback on the program.

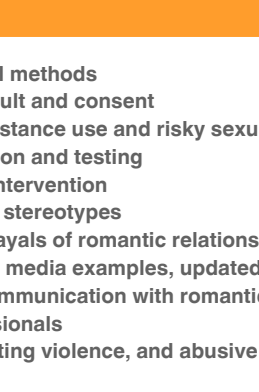
In order to reach young adults with information about sex, relationships, and violence prevention, sexual health education must be accessible, inclusive, and highly engaging. **Media Aware is an online, evidence-based program designed to meet these student needs to promote sexual and relationship health and prevent sexual violence.**

As part of the Community College Health Study, some community college students were randomly assigned to take the *Media Aware* program. In the previous issue, we provided information about how students who took *Media Aware* had more positive attitudes towards safe sex behaviors, greater confidence in their abilities to practice safe sex behaviors, and healthier normative beliefs about their peers compared to students who did not take the course.

In this newsletter, more information is provided about how *Media Aware* was designed to make sex and relationship education more accessible to colleges and students. And, **this newsletter takes a deeper dive into what actual community college students thought of the program – did they find the program helpful? What did they like? What did they dislike?** Read below to find out.

What is Media Aware?

Media Aware is an online, self-paced program that provides students with information regarding safe sex practices and teaches important skills like how to identify healthy and unhealthy relationships.

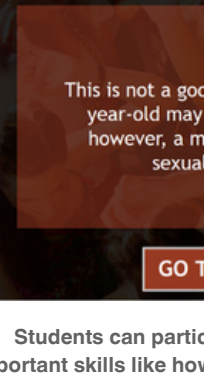
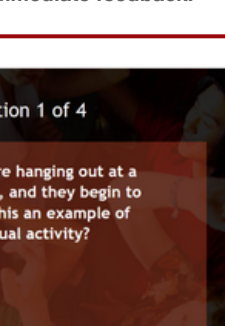


The only evidence-based sexual health promotion program designed specifically for 18-19 year olds and young adults.



Media Aware consists of **4 modules and 10 total lessons**. The estimated time to complete the program is **~2-3 hours**.

Media Aware is **online and self-paced**. Students can save their progress and continue the program at any time.



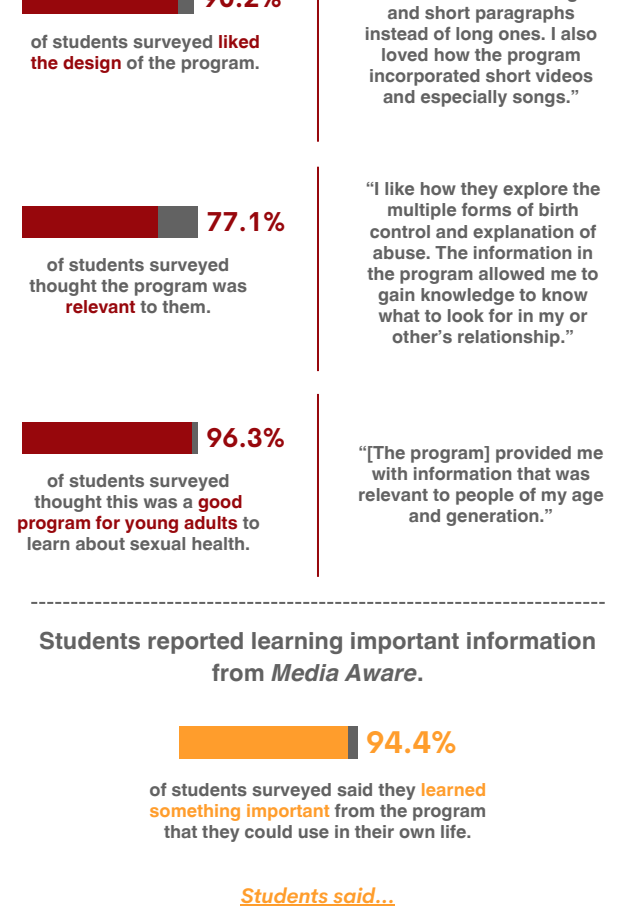
Media Aware **complies with sexual assault prevention mandates** such as Title IX and the Campus SaVE Act.

Media Aware is comprehensive and covers the following topics:

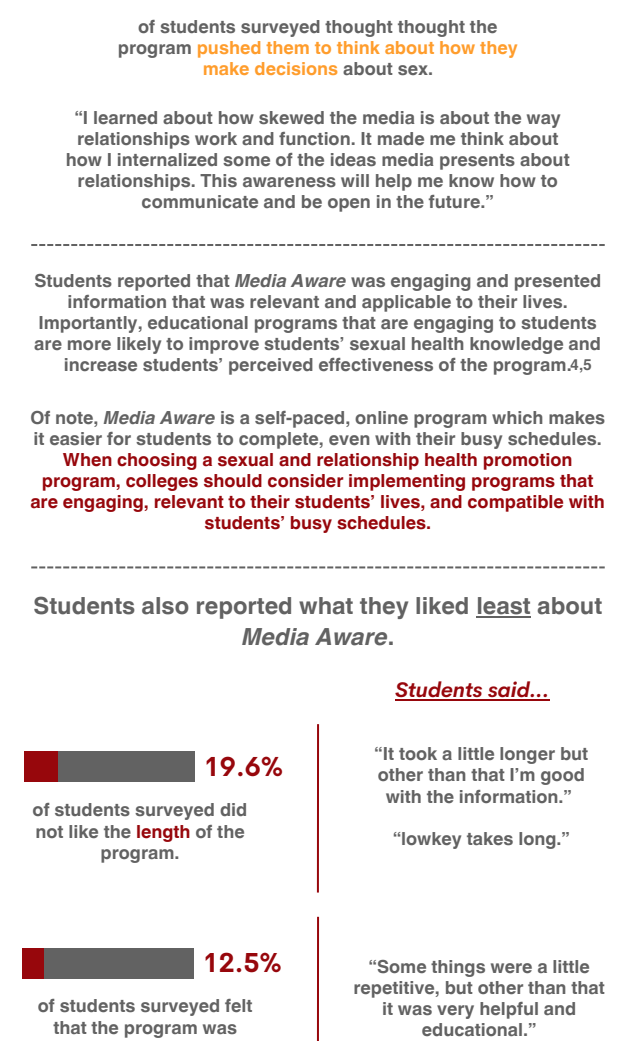
- ✓ Birth control methods
- ✓ Sexual assault and consent
- ✓ Alcohol/substance use and risky sexual activity
- ✓ STI prevention and testing
- ✓ Bystander intervention
- ✓ Gender role stereotypes
- ✓ Media portrayals of romantic relationships
- ✓ Present-day media examples, updated in 2022
- ✓ Effective communication with romantic partners and health professionals
- ✓ Stalking, dating violence, and abusive relationships

Media Aware employs several strategies to keep students engaged and encourage learning.

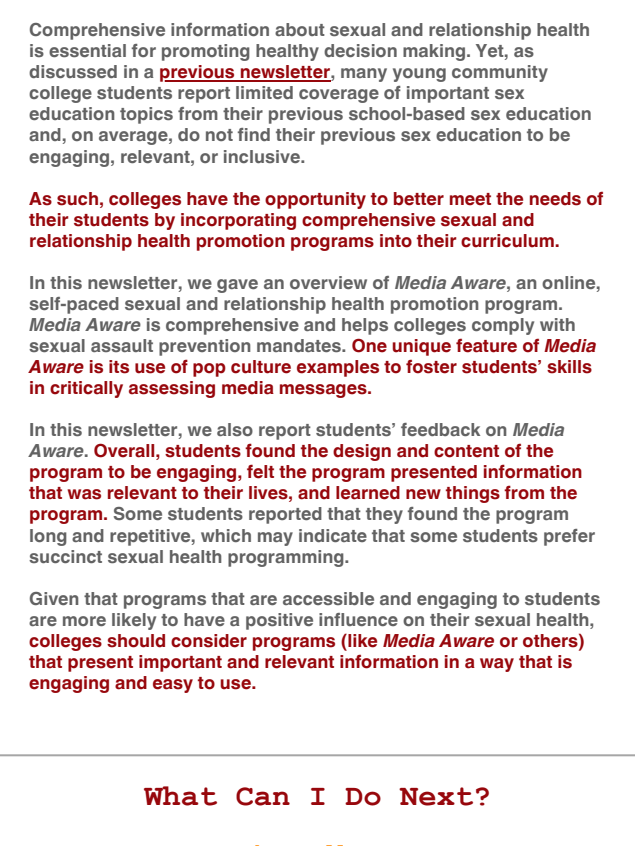
Students can create a profile, set goals, and reflect on their own values.



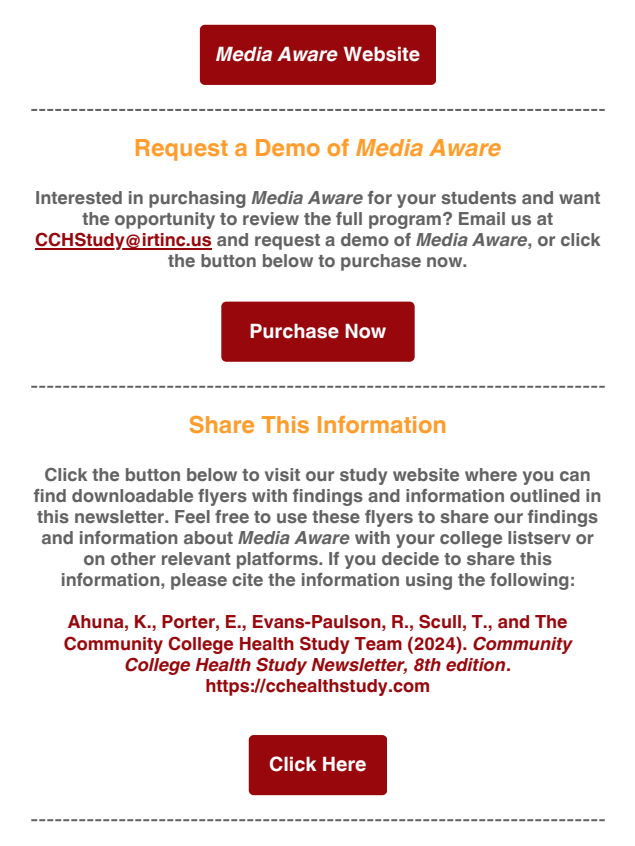
Media Aware's interactive design allows students to complete knowledge tests and receive immediate feedback.



Students can participate in simulations and practice important skills like how to talk with their doctors about their sexual health.



Media Aware uses pop culture examples to teach students how to critically assess media messages about sexual and relationship health.



Notably, *Media Aware* teaches students how to think critically about messages in media. This is important because young adults regularly use media and often seek out health information online or via media sources. As such, it is vital that students are able to determine when sources are unreliable, misleading, or inaccurate.^{1,2,3}

For more information about *Media Aware*, please visit <https://mediaawarecollegeprograms.com/>.

Student Feedback on Media Aware

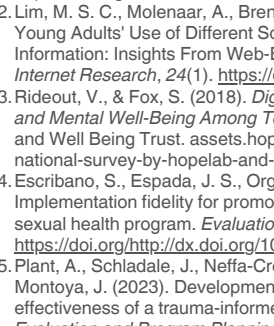
Students provided feedback by rating their experiences with statements about their experiences with the program (e.g., "I felt engaged while completing the program"). Students also answered free response questions about what they liked and disliked about the program and what they learned from the program. Quotes from these free response questions are included below.

Students found *Media Aware* highly engaging and relevant.

Students said...



"[I like] how it engages you with quizzes in order to keep learning and not get boring."



"I like how interactive it was, easy to use, kind of fun too with different color designs and short paragraphs instead of long ones. I also loved how the program incorporated short videos and especially songs."

"I like how they explore the multiple forms of birth control and explanation of abuse. The information in the program allowed me to gain knowledge to know what to look for in my or other's relationship."

"[The program] provided me with information that was relevant to people of my age and generation."

Students reported learning important information from *Media Aware*.

Students said...

"I definitely learned more about contraceptive methods, as well as how to get tested. [I] was never taught some of those things before."

"I learned a lot regarding consent and examples of how to speak my mind. I've always been the shy type and seeing examples really helped me..."

"I learned about how skewed the media is about the way relationships work and function. It made me think about how I internalized some of the ideas media presents about relationships. This awareness will help me know how to communicate and be open in the future."

Students reported that *Media Aware* was engaging and presented information that was relevant and applicable to their lives. Importantly, educational programs that are engaging to students are more likely to improve students' sexual health knowledge and increase students' perceived effectiveness of the program.^{4,5}

Of note, *Media Aware* is a self-paced, online program which makes it easier for students to complete, even with their busy schedules. **When choosing a sexual and relationship health promotion program, colleges should consider implementing programs that are engaging, relevant to their students' lives, and compatible with students' busy schedules.**

Students also reported what they liked least about *Media Aware*.

Students said...

"It took a little longer but other than that I'm good with the information."
"lowkey takes long."

"Some things were a little repetitive, but other than that it was very helpful and educational."

Some students reported that the length and repetitive information within the program were the aspects of *Media Aware* that they liked the least. These findings indicate that some students may feel more engaged with sexual health programming that is not only interactive and relevant to them but also delivers information in a brief and succinct way.

Key Takeaways

Comprehensive information about sexual and relationship health is essential for promoting healthy decision making. Yet, as discussed in a [previous newsletter](#), many young community college students report limited coverage of important sex education topics from their previous school-based sex education and, on average, do not find their previous sex education to be engaging, relevant, or inclusive.

As such, colleges have the opportunity to better meet the needs of their students by incorporating comprehensive sexual and relationship health promotion programs into their curriculum.

In this newsletter, we gave an overview of *Media Aware*, an online, self-paced sexual and relationship health promotion program. *Media Aware* is comprehensive and helps colleges comply with sexual assault prevention mandates. **One unique feature of *Media Aware* is its use of pop culture examples to foster students' skills in critically assessing media messages.**

In this newsletter, we also report students' feedback on *Media Aware*. Overall, students found the design and content of the program to be engaging, felt the program presented information that was relevant to their lives, and learned new things from the program. Some students reported that they found the program long and repetitive, which may indicate that some students prefer succinct sexual health programming.

Given that programs that are accessible and engaging to students are more likely to have a positive influence on their sexual health, **colleges should consider programs (like *Media Aware* or others) that present important and relevant information in a way that is engaging and easy to use.**

What Can I Do Next?

Learn More

To learn more about the Community College Health Study, click below.

Explore Media Aware

Learn more about the program and how to implement it at your college!

Request a Demo of Media Aware

Interested in purchasing *Media Aware* for your students and want the opportunity to review the full program? Email us at CCHStudy@irtinc.us and request a demo of *Media Aware*, or click the button below to purchase now.

Share This Information

Click the button below to visit our study website where you can find downloadable flyers with findings and information outlined in this newsletter. Feel free to use these flyers to share our findings and information about *Media Aware* with your college listserv or on other relevant platforms. If you decide to share this information, please cite the information using the following:

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Questions? You can email our study team at: CCHStudy@IRTinc.us.

Meet the People Behind This Newsletter

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Kyliya Ahuna completed her Masters of Public Health with a concentration in health behavior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May 2024. She has experience in conducting research in behavioral neuroscience and maternal and pediatric health. Her current research interests involve developing and evaluating health interventions and programs, and she is particularly passionate about making research more accessible.

Elizabeth Porter
Content Marketing Specialist
Elizabeth Porter studied communication media, rhetoric, and professional writing at North Carolina State University, and she is passionate about creating content that is relevant, engaging, and helpful for others. She has experience in marketing, writing, social media management, web content creation, email design, and editing.

Tracy Scull, PhD
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Over the past 16 years, Dr. Scull has conducted rigorous research on child, adolescent, and family health, with specific focus on promoting sexual health and preventing substance abuse. Dr. Scull has secured over 10 million dollars in federal funding for her research and has published her work in esteemed peer-reviewed journals such as *Pediatrics*, *Developmental Psychology*, and the *Journal of American College Health*. She holds a doctorate in developmental psychology from Duke University.

Reina Evans-Paulson, PhD
Senior Author and Project Director
Dr. Evans-Paulson conducts research related to adolescent and young adult health with a focus on implementation and evaluation of sexual health interventions, parent and family influences on adolescent sexuality, and sexual communication. Dr. Evans-Paulson has published in esteemed peer-reviewed journals such as *JAMA Pediatrics*, *Journal of Sex Research*, and *Pediatrics*. She received her doctorate in applied social and community psychology from North Carolina State University.

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