



NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy Newsletter

7 Highlights from 7 years of the Academy

The NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy was established in 2005 to provide workshops for at-risk youth on dating violence and healthy relationships. We'd like to take a moment to reflect on key accomplishments of the past 7 years.

1. The Academy has received funding from the [Avon Foundation for Women](#) since 2008, allowing the program to increase its reach significantly.
2. We expanded from **one** Signature workshop to **four** different workshop types for young people ages 13-24.
3. The Academy now offers workshops to **parents, staff, and young people ages 11-13**. In addition, our Signature workshop is also available in Spanish.
4. Academy Peer Educators were featured in a series of **videos** posted on mark's [m.powerment website](#).
5. The Academy's Director accompanied mark spokeswoman Lauren Conrad on a **tour of three college campuses** in order to increase awareness of dating violence.
6. The Academy launched a [Facebook page](#) featuring information about warning signs and tips on healthy relationships.
7. A total of **42** young people have worked with the Academy as Peer Educators since 2005. Most educators work with the Academy for two years, or more!

Our Latest Numbers

As of June 1 2012, we have held **1,402** workshops, reaching **27,361** youth since the Academy's inception in 2005!



 ★ "We've succeeded at teaching people
 ★ relevant and realistic skills that they can
 ★ use to better communicate with their
 ★ partners. We don't just point out warning
 ★ signs or unhealthy behaviors, we actually
 ★ think together about ways to foster
 ★ positive and respectful relationships."
 ★
 ★ - Keren Sharon, Senior Peer Educator
 ★

Call for Jr. Peer Educator Applications!

Quick quiz!

- ✓ Do you want to help your peers learn about dating violence and healthy relationships?
- ✓ Are you interested in peer education?
- ✓ Do you enjoy working with a team and have a go-getter attitude?
- ✓ Are you a fast learner and able to communicate effectively?
- ✓ Do you want to meet other young people throughout the five boroughs of NYC?
- ✓ Are you between the ages of 17 and 22 and legally able to work in the U.S.?

Yes? You should apply today!

The Academy is now accepting applications for Junior Peer Educator positions. This is an exciting and competitive opportunity for young people ages 17 - 22. Selected candidates will be invited to participate in an informative training program that will take place June 30—August 9, 2012. Following the training program, up to 5 participants will be selected to become Jr. Peer Educators, and start facilitating workshops

in September 2012. Peer Educators facilitate on average 3—5 workshops/month, and are paid per workshop. Our educators enjoy working together to help make a difference. Michael Wallace, says, "As a Peer Educator, I am able to inspire and to transform the way people think about dating violence as a whole."

Interested individuals should submit a completed [application](#) and a current resume by **Friday, June 15, 2012**. Have more questions? Check out our [FAQs](#) about the positions.

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Partner, Significant Other, Babe: Using gender-neutral language

The NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy teaches young people that anyone can experience unhealthy relationships, regardless of gender. One way that we make sure this message is communicated is by using gender-neutral language. That means when our educators refer to people in a dating relationship, they refrain from gendered-terms, such as boyfriend/girlfriend. Instead, we use terms such as partner, significant other, boo, etc.

Why is it so important that we are gender neutral? Traditionally, dating violence has been seen as a 'women's issue', and educators, parents, politicians and advocates have insisted on violence prevention programs for girls. However, girls are not alone in the dating world. Both girls and boys are affected by this issue, and both need to learn about healthy relationships. In fact, research indicates that more high school boys report having been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a dating partner in the past year (12%) than girls (10%), according to the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Peer Educator Spotlight: Bella Tabassum

Bella Tabassum joined the Academy as a Junior Peer Educator in the Spring of 2011, and was quickly promoted to Peer Educator in the fall. Since starting with the Academy, Bella has facilitated 47 workshops and 3 staff training sessions, often taking on 2 or more workshops in

administered at NYC schools. Given this data, we need to be reaching all young people, not just girls.

Using gender neutral language creates a learning environment in which no one gender is pre-labeled as 'abusers' or 'victims', which allows for more open dialogue about the nuances of relationships. By talking about the fact that anyone can be abusive or abused, young people are encouraged to think more critically about their own actions and relationships behaviors. Peer Educator Jorge Espinosa shares, "it removes presumptions and pointing a finger at which sex is guilty for doing bad things and which sex is responsible for doing good things."

In addition, many young people are in same-sex partnerships. Using gender-specific language excludes them from the learning environment and communicates the message that individuals who are LGBTQ do not experience abuse, when in fact they do. Using gender-neutral language not only includes this population in the discussion, it helps reinforce the message that abuse can happen to anyone, and everyone deserves a healthy relationship.

one day! Her coworkers describe her as reliable, engaging and trustworthy, and she knows her curricula inside out and backwards! As Rachel Dart, Senior Trainer, says, "When you're in one of Bella's workshops, you know you're in good hands!"

When she is not traversing the 5 boroughs of NYC to teach young people about healthy relationships, Bella is a student at Hunter College. Originally from the Bronx, Bella attended Brooklyn

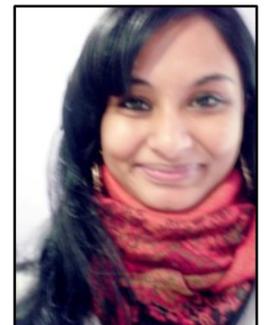
How do we maintain gender neutrality during Academy workshops?

- ✓ When establishing ground rules, our educators describe what gender neutral language means, and encourage participants to remain neutral during the workshop.
- ✓ When describing potential scenarios, our educators use gender-neutral names, such as Sam, Jesse, Drew, and Alex.
- ✓ When participants describe a heterosexual relationship or a relationship in which the male is abusive, our educators provide alternative scenarios with the gender roles switched, or using gender-neutral terms.

Tips for Being Gender-Neutral:

- ✓ Consistently use terms such as significant other until you know the gender of the partner.
- ✓ When providing examples, use gender-neutral names, or terms such as Person A and Person B.
- ✓ Remain open-minded about who is engaging in unhealthy relationship behaviors.
- ✓ Remember that anyone can be abusive, or abused!

Technical High School. Bella is an integral part of the Academy, sharing her enthusiasm and bright spirit.



Bella Tabassum, Peer Educator

One workshop host commented, "Bella is very professional and dynamic, and made the workshop very interesting."
—Manhattan Alternate Learning Center