

Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Summer 2013

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NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy Newsletter

Roundtable: Examining the Intersection of Bullying and Sexual/Dating Violence

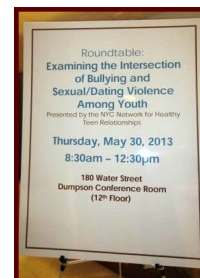
On May 30, over 100 professionals participated in a groundbreaking Roundtable event hosted by the NYC Network for Healthy Teen Relationships to examine the intersection of bullying and sexual/dating violence. The Roundtable began with an energetic presentation by Liz Lasky, a Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) Coordinator at the Center Against Domestic Violence, which set the stage for more in-depth discussions. In addition, attendees viewed two videos that demonstrated some of the experiences that young people have had dealing with [bullying](#) and [sexual/dating violence](#). Attendees then participated in small group discussions exploring three main topics:

1. Where is collaboration already happening?
2. How can bullying and sexual/dating violence strategies be combined?
3. What are the optimal delivery systems for communicating messages about bullying and sexual/dating violence?

In the coming months, a report will be developed highlighting the major discussion points from the event and next steps for collaboration. The Roundtable was an enormous success, bringing together a range of professionals who will hopefully continue to collaborate in the future.

The NYC Network for Healthy Relationships is a group of

representatives from municipal, community, and academic entities with a vested interest in promoting healthy relationships among young people in New York City. Special thanks to OCDV intern Charishma Chotalia, who spearheaded coordinating this event.



Our Latest Numbers

As of June 1, 2013, we have held **1,675** workshops, reaching **32,540** youth since the Academy's inception in 2005.

Workshops are offered year-round! Complete a [Workshop Request Form](#) to schedule one today!

Participating Network Agencies (* denotes steering committee member)

- ♦ [Administration for Children's Services](#), Domestic Violence Policy and Planning
- ♦ [CAMBA](#)
- ♦ [Center Against Domestic Violence](#)
- ♦ [Columbia University, Center for Injury Epidemiology and Prevention](#)*
- ♦ [Day One](#)*
- ♦ [NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault](#)*
- ♦ [NYC Department of Education, Office of Safety and Youth Development](#)*
- ♦ [NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#), Bureau of Epidemiology Services*
- ♦ [NYC Department of Youth and Community Development](#)
- ♦ [NYC Human Resources Administration, Emergency and Intervention Services](#)*
- ♦ [NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence](#)*
- ♦ [Start Strong Bronx, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center](#)
- ♦ [STEPS to End Family Violence](#)

To find out more about the NYC Network for Healthy Teen Relationships, email nyc-healthy-teen-relationships@googlegroups.com.

Follow the Academy on Twitter @NYCteenDV!



The Academy's Twitter homepage

In February 2013, the Academy launched its very own Twitter account in order to connect with others and inform a larger community about topics related to dating violence and healthy relationships among teens. We have over 125 followers, and look forward to getting more! If you or your organization is on Twitter, follow us [@NYCteenDV](#).

STATS BOX:

In 2012, 16% of online teens reported using Twitter, up from 8% in 2009.

([Pew Research Center](#))

NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy

Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

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Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence
Healthy Relationship Training Academy

Love is a POWERFUL word

In the Academy's Signature workshop, Peer Educators talk about [23 Warning Signs of an Abusive Partner](#). The very first item reads:

Gets very serious with boyfriends/ girlfriends quickly—saying “I love you” early on in the relationship, wanting to move in together or get engaged after only a few months, or pressuring partner for a serious commitment.

This warning sign often surprises many people, especially young people, since love is viewed as a desirable affection. However, during workshops we explore how saying “I love you” can affect a relationship.

For example—after dating for a few weeks, Sam says “I love you” to Jesse. Jesse feels compelled to reply with, “I love you too.” Now that love is on the table, Sam could use that as a tool to control Jesse:

“If you loved me, you would return my text messages right away.”

“You don’t want to go to that party? Don’t you love me?”

“If you really loved me, you wouldn’t hang out with those loser friends.”

“We need to think carefully about how we use the word *love*. Rather than using it as a tool, it needs to be an expression of affection and emotion.”

—Kirsten deFur, Director, NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy

Peer Educator Spotlight: Keren Sharon

Keren Sharon joined the Academy in 2008, when she was still in high school. Her interest in becoming a Peer Educator



Keren Sharon, Senior Peer Educator

Jesse may not want to lose Sam’s love, and so does what Sam wants. As demonstrated in the examples above, love can be used alongside other controlling behaviors, such as isolation and threats. The statement of love can mask an unhealthy behavior, making it more difficult to identify.

However, of course “I love you” is an important part of a healthy relationship, and two people should feel comfortable expressing love for one another. It’s when love is used as a tool to gain something—whether that’s control, a favor, or agreement—that it becomes problematic.

So when should a person say, “I love you?” Ideally, when you feel it. Not because you’re supposed to, not because you have nothing else to say, and not because you want that person to remain your partner. This can be confusing for young people, who are learning to navigate the ins and outs of relationships, often with few positive role models. In addition, youth rarely have an opportunity to discuss the appropriate and inappropriate uses of the word love.

How can we help young people understand healthy ways to say “I love you?” First, acknowledge that young people can experience love. While they may not have had as much experience as adults, they are still capable of feeling love. Invite young people to explore what it means to them to feel love for another person, and identify ways to recognize

stemmed from her own experience as a participant in an Academy workshop held at her school. Since joining the Academy, Keren has facilitated 138 workshops and training sessions, and was promoted to Senior Peer Educator in the fall of 2010.

Keren recently graduated from New York University with her Bachelor of Arts in Gender and Sexuality Studies, and has worked with Girls for Gender Equity for the past two years.

Keren’s leadership and passion for helping young people develop healthy

How can “I love you” be a warning sign of an unhealthy relationship? A person may say “I love you” to their partner...

- to get something out of their partner, such as affection, obedience, or compliance.
- to win a partner over in order to control them.
- to keep a person in a relationship.
- to fulfill societal standards of relationship behavior.
- because it’s expected.

those feelings. Suggest optimal situations for expressing love, while also explaining why some uses of the word love may be unhealthy. Provide optional responses to say if a person says “I love you,” and someone does not want to reply with “I love you, too.” Critically examine the ways that other people use the word love, such as in TV shows or among peers. Encourage young people to be mindful of their expression of love, and also willing to take that step in their relationships, for the right reasons. In addition, Peer Educator Bella Tabassum points out, “Teens need to learn that the word love in a relationship does not mean that they lose their right as an individual.”

Love should result in positive feelings of appreciation, affection, and intimacy. If it results in anxiety, pressure, or stress, that relationship may not be as healthy as love would suggest.



★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
★ One workshop host commented, ★
★ “Keren was helpful due to her gentle ★
★ nature and thoughtful comments.” ★
★ —It Takes a Village Academy ★
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

relationships is evident in her facilitation skills. Rachel Dart, the Academy’s Senior Trainer, sums it up well:

“Keren is a great peer educator because she’s as hilarious as she is well-informed—she’s totally on top of workshops logistically and information-wise, but also obviously loves the material and loves teaching!”