

NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy Newsletter

Resources are available for your community

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence has a variety of resource material available to share with your community. Printed materials are an important way of informing individuals about how to recognize abusive behaviors, assess their level of risk, and seek reliable services.

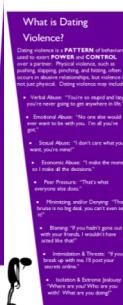
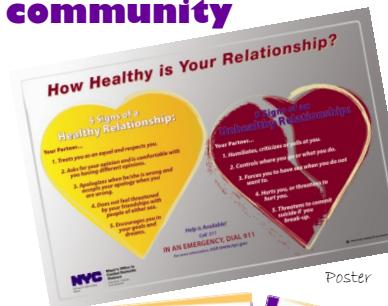
The Academy developed a poster with five signs of a healthy relationship and five signs of an unhealthy relationship, available in English on one side and Spanish on the other. These "5 signs" are also available on our 5 Signs cards, a 5.5 by 4 inch card that is easily handed out at public events. We also have a tri-fold educational brochure, which defines both healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors, offers tips for

breaking up and strategies for helping a friend in need.

In addition to these print materials designed for young people, OCDV has general posters, palm cards, and brochures on the topics of domestic violence as well as financial fraud. To order these print materials, please complete a [Material Order Form](#).

OCDV also has several lists of services available including:

- ★ [An online searchable Resource Directory](#)
- ★ [Resource Guide for Teenage Victims of Family Domestic Violence and Dating Violence](#)
- ★ [Quick List of Dating Violence Services for Teens in New York City](#)



Our Latest Numbers

As of January 1, 2013, we have held **1,550** workshops, reaching **31,251** youth since the Academy's inception in 2005.



STATS BOX:
In 2011, 10.4% of New York City teens reported that they have been hit, slapped, or hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
(NYC Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011)



February is Dating Violence Awareness Month

What can you do to raise awareness?

- Attend an event
- Put up a poster at your school/organization
- Post a link on your social media page to www.teendvmonth.org
- Distribute educational materials about dating violence
- Invite a guest speaker to share information about services available
- Organize a [workshop](#) on dating violence or healthy relationships

This is the time of year when pink and red hearts can be seen decorating storefronts, restaurants, and web banners. Boyfriends and girlfriends panic to make sure they have plans for Valentine's Day, and singles look for friends to hang out with or a fun first date. However, it is also the time of year when we can reflect on how dating relationships

can go wrong, and focus on ways to make sure they go right.

February is Dating Violence Awareness Month, and there are lots of ways you can participate as an individual or with your school, faith community, or community organization. Use this month as an

opportunity to educate young people about recognizing abusive behaviors, maintaining healthy relationships, and services available throughout the City.

NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy

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Communication is the Key

When we ask participants in our workshops what it takes to maintain a healthy relationship, the term **communication** almost always comes up. It is important to communicate about all sorts of things, such as relationship expectations, likes and dislikes, deal breakers, trigger points, feelings, and hopes and dreams. The way people communicate can really make or break a relationship.

However, individuals rarely have an opportunity to learn good communication skills. During Academy workshops, our peer educators describe both unhealthy and healthy ways that people communicate, and emphasize the value of using **assertive** communication techniques. In addition, participants have an opportunity to observe a demonstration of each style of communication, as well as practice using assertive communication.

One effective strategy for communicating, especially during disagreements, is by using 'I statements'. An 'I statement' emphasizes an individual's perspective and feelings

Tips for Teaching Healthy Communication

- * Consistently model assertive communication.
- * Demonstrate active listening by re-stating or paraphrasing what was heard.
- * Identify specific examples of unhealthy communication on a regular basis.
- * Use role plays as an opportunity to practice.
- * Recognize the potential for improvement in everyone's communication skills.

without placing blame on the other person. The formula for an 'I statement' is as follows:

I feel ___ when you do ___.

For example, instead of saying,

You don't love me because you are putting me down.

Try saying,

I feel upset when you embarrass me in front of our friends.

'I statements' encourage open dialogue about feelings and behaviors, rather than making assumptions and placing blame. Senior Peer Educator Jordana Schacht-Levine says, "I statements remind you that your feelings and emotions matter and that others should respect that."

In particular, healthy communication can be challenging to maintain when using technology, such as cell phones, email, or social media platforms. It can be easy to become upset when someone does not reply, or replies in a way you do not understand. When using technology, communication can be more easily misunderstood since there is a lack of tone, non-verbal cues, and/or additional context. If there is a miscommunication, it may be more productive to speak either in person or over the phone.

Communication skills can be taught in a formal educational setting, however, many individuals learn effective communication from having healthy models in their lives. Demonstrating assertive communication



Styles of Communication

Aggressive communicators...

- ◆ overpower other people and are loud, bossy, and dominating.
- ◆ blame others and use "you" statements.
- ◆ convey the message, "I count; you do not count."



Passive communicators...

- ◆ avoid dealing with problems and do not speak up for their rights.
- ◆ try hard to please and do not express their feelings, needs, or opinions.
- ◆ convey the message, "You count; I do not count."



Passive Aggressive communicators...

- ◆ do not directly address conflicts, but will "get back at" the person in a sneaky, underhanded way.
- ◆ appear cooperative while purposefully doing things to annoy and disrupt.
- ◆ convey the message, "I count; you do not count; but I make you think that you count."



Assertive communicators...

- ◆ are clear, confident, cool and in control of themselves most of the time.
- ◆ stand up for their rights without stepping on other people's rights.
- ◆ convey the message, "I count; you count, too."

consistently can help youth and young adults develop their own skills. Peer Educator Natalie Marrero shares, "The most powerful tool we have is our words. In order to be understood we must take a step back and let ourselves appreciate fully what our words mean and what responsibility they hold."

The Academy's Communication Skills activity is included in our TechnoLOVE or Healthy Relationships workshop. The handout, "Wait, What?! Communication 101" is posted on our [website](#).

Peer Educator Spotlight: Michael Wallace, Jr.

Michael Wallace, known as 'Wallace', joined the Academy as a Junior Peer Educator in September 2010, and was promoted to Peer Educator the following year. He has



Michael Wallace, Jr., Peer Educator

facilitated almost 100 workshops with teens and parents, and makes time in his busy schedule to facilitate at least a few times a month. His coworkers describe him as funny, sincere, helpful, and reliable. His favorite activity to facilitate is *Boundaries and Balance* in our Healthy Relationships workshop because "it's fun, and participants can actually see what a boundary means."

Wallace is originally from Queens, and he attends City College of New York, studying African American Studies and Secondary Education. One day he hopes to be a high school principal.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
★ One workshop host commented,
★ "Wallace does an excellent job of
★ using humor and popular culture to
★ engage his audience."
★ -Covenant House
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Wallace is extremely dedicated to the work of the Academy and shared that "One of the successes of our work as educators is the fact that we have been able to inspire and to transform the way people think about dating violence as a whole."