



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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**BRONX TEENS LEARN THE TRUE MEANING OF A SWEETHEART**

*The New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy is hosting peer education workshops throughout the Bronx during Valentine's Week*

During Valentine's Week the New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy will teach young people how to have healthy relationships and how to avoid unhealthy ones. The Academy will hold peer education workshops in a dozen Bronx locations reaching approximately 600 young people. The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) partnered to create the New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy in 2005 to educate young people and service providers about dating violence.

"With 11% of our New York City high school students reporting being hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend last year, it is so important to teach young people how to recognize an abusive relationship and how to safely leave that relationship," said OCDV Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez. "The Academy allows young people to have an honest discussion with one another about choosing safe and healthy relationships."

"The Department of Youth and Community Development is committed to helping youth in all aspects of their lives, including educationally, emotionally and socially," said DYCD Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav. "We are proud to team up with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence on the New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy, which teaches young people that they have the right to be respected and treated well."

As part of the week-long event, teams of peer educators will facilitate workshops for young people at various locations throughout the Bronx. Participating schools, community organizations, and churches include: University Consolidated Community Center, Girls Educating and Mentoring Services, University Heights High School, Sedgwick Community Center, Arbor Education and Training, Good Shepherd Services Foster Boarding Home Adolescent Services, Good Shepherd Services Young Adult Borough Center at Walton High School, Bronx Community College, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, Inc., DeWitt Clinton High School, Tolentine-Zeiser Community Life Center, Inc., and Saint Simon Stock Church.

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The workshops teach participants the definitions of family domestic violence and teen dating violence, the inappropriate use of power and control tactics, the components of a healthy relationship, and warning signs of an abusive partner. Throughout the workshop, peer educators highlight real-life experiences and encourage participants to evaluate their own lives to recognize models of both unhealthy and healthy behaviors. The curriculum is inclusive of diverse populations, including teen parents, foreign-born youth, runaway and homeless youth, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender youth. The program also stresses the importance of recognizing the warning signs of a relationship that may become violent, along with the characteristics of a healthy relationship.

### **5 Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship:**

Your Partner...

1. Calls/texts/Instant Messages you constantly and/or checks your email.
2. Embarrasses or insults you in front of others.
3. Acts jealously and does not want you to spend time with others.
4. Consistently criticizes your friends, clothes, or interests.
5. Threatens to commit suicide and/or hurt you if you breakup.

### **5 Signs of a Healthy Relationship:**

Your Partner...

1. Treats you as an equal and respects you.
2. Asks your opinion and is comfortable with you having a different opinion from him/her.
3. Apologizes when he/she is wrong and accepts your apology when you are wrong.
4. Does not feel threatened by your friendships with people of either sex.
5. Encourages you in your goals and dreams.

“This program is important because it helps change lives and the perspectives of many individuals,” said Senior Peer Educator Andrea Santana. “The most important thing for young people to know about dating violence is that it can happen to anyone, including you.”

“Teen dating violence is an area of everyday life that is not really spoken of,” said Peer Educator Justice Ramos. “I think it is important for young people to know that there are people who care and help is available.”

The development of the curriculum, originally funded through a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant, was informed by focus groups and by surveying the best practices of peer education dating violence programming. It was further enhanced through feedback from preliminary trial workshops. The finalized curriculum now serves as a national model for dating violence peer education programming. Since its inception, the Academy has provided nearly 90 workshops to over 1,500 young people in the five boroughs.

If you or someone you know is a victim of violence please call 311 or the City’s 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-621-HOPE for more information. In an emergency call 911.

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