

# Early RAPP

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July 2021



Mayor's Office to  
End Domestic and  
Gender-Based Violence

## Key Takeaway:

Middle school participants in Early RAPP workshops had statistically significant increases in their knowledge of dating violence and healthy relationships.

## Highlights:

Among all participants:

- The average percentage of correct answers increased from 67% in pre-surveys to 85% in post-surveys.
- The average number of correct answers on a fourteen-question survey improved from 9.42 before the workshop to 11.96 after a workshop.

# BACKGROUND

In a 2019 NYC Department of Education (DOE) survey, 81% of students in grades 6 through 12 reported that students harass, bully and intimidate their peers.<sup>i</sup> With older students, 1 in 10 New York City public high schoolers reported experiencing physical dating violence in the past year; that number increases to 1 in 5 for LGBTQ-identified youth and 3 in 10 for pregnant/parenting teens.<sup>ii</sup> To address harassment and all forms of abuse, our most effective tools are prevention, education, and engagement. New York City funds several programs to provide teen dating violence prevention and education through engagement with youth. The NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) funds three community-based organizations – Day One, the Urban Resource Institute, and STEPS to End Family Violence at Rising Ground – to provide the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) in which social workers designated to NYC Department of Education (DOE) middle and high schools, provide direct clinical and educational services to students, and training for the entire school community; and the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence’s (ENDGBV) Healthy Relationship Training Academy (the Academy) provides free, interactive educational workshops for students, staff, and parents at schools and youth programs citywide.

In 2018, building upon the success of RAPP, New York City engaged Day One, the Urban Resource Institute, and STEPS to End Family Violence at Rising Ground to implement the Early Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (Early RAPP) that uses a new healthy relationship training model to expand youth prevention education to DOE middle schools.<sup>iii</sup>



## EARLY RAPP PROGRAM

The Early RAPP program seeks to help middle schoolers identify unhealthy behaviors to prevent them from forming patterns of abuse while learning to build healthy relationship skills at a critical time in their development. Importantly, Early RAPP works to create a school culture that supports those respectful relationships, and creates safe spaces for young people to seek help for themselves and their peers. Community Educators facilitate interactive workshops for students, parents, and community members, as well as trainings to school staff. The workshops provide students with foundational skills and tools to build and maintain healthy and safe relationships, covering topics such as healthy relationships, consent, gender, and dating violence. Workshops are tailored to the specific needs of each school or classroom community, and include interactive activities that engage a variety of learning styles. In addition to conducting workshops, Community Educators connect students and families to critical support services in the community.

Since its inception, the program has provided 4,101 workshops to 54,860 middle school students.

## MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY RAPP

The Early RAPP program aims to improve student knowledge and understanding of the types of abuse and healthy relationships. In order to measure the changes in knowledge and attitudes resulting from their workshops and trainings, Community Educators conduct surveys before and after workshops. Every school year, Community Educators are required to conduct at least three workshops in the fall semester and at least three workshops in the spring semester, in which pre- and post-workshop surveys are conducted. Participant responses are anonymous.

The Early RAPP pre- and post-workshop surveys are identical, consisting of fourteen standard questions about teen dating violence and healthy relationships with response options: Agree/Disagree (10 questions) and Healthy/Not Sure/Unhealthy (4 questions).<sup>iv</sup> The questions aim to measure each participant's understanding of the topics covered in the workshop. This report provides a summary of pooled results from 1,325 pre- surveys and 1,093 post- surveys from workshops conducted with middle school students between January 30, 2019 and January 21, 2021.<sup>v</sup>

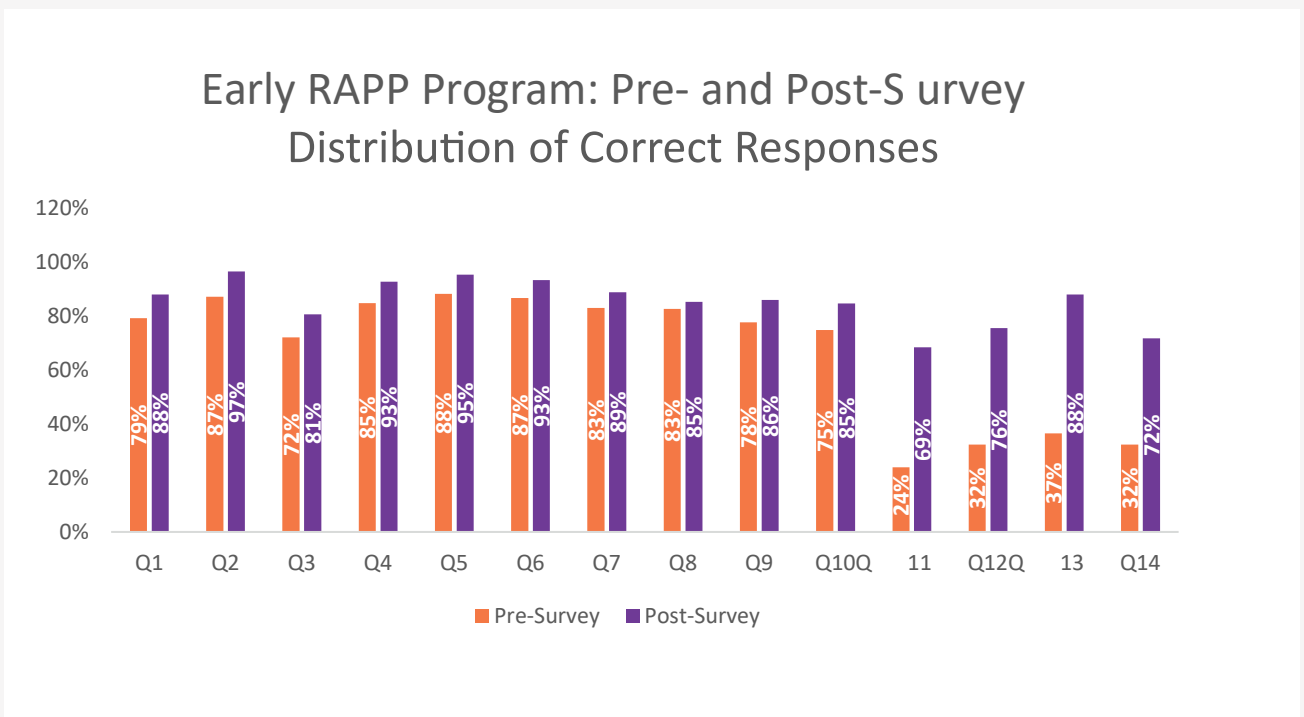
**ANALYSIS OF PRE- AND POST- WORKSHOP SURVEY DATA SHOWS THAT PARTICIPATION IN THE EARLY RAPP PROGRAM IMPROVED PARTICIPANT UNDERSTANDING OF DATING VIOLENCE AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.**

Among all participants, the average score on the 14-question survey improved from 9.42 before the workshop, to 11.96 after the workshop—with average scores increasing from 67% in pre- surveys, to 85% in post-surveys. Figure 1 shows the pre- and post-workshop survey distribution of correct responses for questions 1-14.<sup>vi</sup>

While participants showed statistically significant change in knowledge across all questions, they showed most improvement on the following questions :

- (11) Checking a dating partner’s phone to see who they’re texting – a 45 percentage point increase in the percentage of participants correctly identifying the behavior as unhealthy—from 24% in the pre-survey, to 69% in the post-survey.
- (12) Having close friends of any gender while in a dating relationship – a 43 percentage point increase in the percentage of participants correctly identifying the heavier as healthy—from 32% in the pre-survey, to 76% in the post-survey.
- (13) Continuing to ask someone to do something until they say yes – a 51 percentage point increase in the percentage of participants correctly identifying the behavior as unhealthy—from 37% in the pre-survey, to 88% in the post-survey.

Participants also increased their understanding around learning how to help others who may be experiencing harm. Specifically, the number of participants who said that they knew “how to help a friend who may be in an unhealthy relationship” increased 8 percentage



## ABOUT STEPS AT RISING GROUND

STEPS to End Family Violence - Rising Ground's anti-intimate partner violence program - offers a variety of healing-centered, anti-oppressive programming for survivors of every age who are impacted by abusive partner behavior; training intended to increase awareness regarding the epidemic of gender-based violence and services focused on the prevention of abuse. To this end, STEPS has deliberately created a collection of diverse and complementary programs. STEPS' prevention programming includes the school-based Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) and Early Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, which works exclusively with adolescents in 64 middle schools. Early RAPP values compassionate prevention education for youth related to Consent, Gender Identity, Healthy Boundaries and Bullying Prevention as they begin to explore different types of relationships. Using a healthy relationship training model, Early RAPP Community Educators provide workshops for students, school staff, parents, and community members during the academic year, and facilitate summer programming for students throughout NYC. RAPP and Early RAPP work closely with community partners and public-private organizations. For more information, visit [www.risingground.org/program/steps](http://www.risingground.org/program/steps)

## ABOUT THE URBAN RESOURCE INSTITUTE

The Urban Resource Institute (URI) helps transform the lives of domestic violence survivors and homeless families, with a focus on communities of color and other vulnerable populations, to end cycles of violence, poverty, and trauma. As the largest provider of domestic violence shelter services in the U.S., and a leading provider of homeless services, URI's innovative programs impact more than 40,000 individuals annually through prevention, intervention, education, and direct services in both residential and non-residential settings. With a trauma-informed approach to program development and service delivery, URI is uniquely equipped to provide solutions to the challenges affecting New York City's most vulnerable populations while influencing service delivery in other parts of the U.S. and the world. For more information, visit [www.urinyc.org](http://www.urinyc.org)

## ABOUT DAY ONE

Day One provides therapeutic counseling, case management, and legal advice and representation to survivors of IPV, aged 24 and under. All their direct services programming is specialized to address the patterns of abuse, youth dynamics, and relief available within their target age group. Day One specializes in assisting students, minors, and young parents navigating abusive relationships. They help clients obtain criminal and family court orders of protection and related orders for custody, visitation, and child support. They also provide crisis counseling, therapy, case management, and support groups, in English and Spanish to survivors 24 years of age and under, at no cost. Day One's preventive program uses role-plays and interactive tools to educate youth and train adults to respond to dating violence. Workshops teach teens about controlling behavior and gender dynamics that could lead to abuse. Day One builds skills among adults—teachers, parents, law enforcement, and social workers—to identify risk factors for dating abuse, conduct safety planning, make appropriate referrals, and offer supportive guidance to youth. For more information, visit: [www.dayoneny.org](http://www.dayoneny.org)

## APPENDIX A: EARLY RAPP PRE-/POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY QUESTIONS AND STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

QUESTION	ANSWERS	STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE
(1) Abuse is not always physical violence	Agree/Disagree	t(1,411)=18.6, p=2.41E-69
(2) Relationship abuse can happen in LGBTQ relationships	Agree/Disagree	t(2,116)=9.4, p=9.02E-21
(3) People should always dress in a way that makes their dating partner comfortable	Agree/Disagree	t(2,421)=5.4, p=7.92E-8
(4) If someone stays in an abusive relationship, then it probably means they are okay with the abuse	Agree/Disagree	t(2,388)=6.9, p=7.03E-12
(5) In general, men should have more control than women	Agree/Disagree	t(2,300)=7.2, p=7.08E-13
(6) Friends who trust each other must share their social media passwords with each other	Agree/Disagree	t(2,394)=6.2, p=8.14E-10
(7) I can solve problems with people without using violence or insults	Agree/Disagree	t(2,433)=4.7, p=2.52E-6
(8) If I saw another student getting bullied, I would tell an adult at school	Agree/Disagree	t(2,398)=2.3, p=0.024
(9) I know how to help a friend who may be in an unhealthy relationship	Agree/Disagree	t(2,433)=5.8, p=7.68E-9
(10) Agreement is necessary to engage in any act (physical or non-physical) with our partners and our friends	Agree/Disagree	t(2,244)=24.5, p=1.4E-117
(11) Checking a dating partner's phone to see who they're texting	Unhealthy/Not Sure/Healthy	t(2,398)=23.8, p=1.4E-112
(12) Having close friends of any gender while in a dating relationship	Unhealthy/Not Sure/Healthy	t(2,354)=31.5, p=6.5E-182
(13) Continuing to ask someone to do something until they say yes	Unhealthy/Not Sure/Healthy	t(2,366)=21.3, p=4.66E-92
(14) Hanging out with friends without your dating partner there	Unhealthy/Not Sure/Healthy	t(2,433)=6.5, p=7.42E-11

# ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> New York City 2019 School Survey Results (<https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/school-quality/nyc-school-survey/survey-archives>). The survey question was: 8a. At this school students harass, bully or intimidate other students, to which 18.5% of respondents indicated none of the time; 37.6% indicated rarely; 31.6% indicated some of the time; and 12.1% indicated most of the time.

<sup>ii</sup> New York City Youth Risk Behavior Survey (NYC YRBS) 2017: The NYC YRBS is a self-administered survey conducted in NYC public high schools by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the NYC Department of Education. For more details, visit this page for youth related violence: <https://a816-health.nyc.gov/hdi/epiquery/visualizations?PageType=ts&PopulationSource=YRBS&Topic=5&Subtopic=1> and data can be download from this page for all Youth Risk Behavior Survey topics: <https://a816-health.nyc.gov/hdi/epiquery/visualizations?PageType=ps&PopulationSource=YRBS>

<sup>iii</sup> Early RAPP was announced by First Lady Chirlane McCray during Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October 2017.

<sup>iv</sup> The post survey also includes a 15th question: “Share your opinion: Why is it important to learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships?” This is an open end question that was not analyzed for this report.

<sup>v</sup> Due to New York State on PAUSE, the Early RAPP program transitioned to remote services in April 2020. The dates reflect the date on which program data was entered into the program’s data system.

<sup>vi</sup> The average pre- and post-workshop scores were determined to be statistically different at the 99% confidence level for all the questions, except question 8, using a two-sample T-Test with unequal variance. Question 8 was determined to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level using a two-sample T-Test with unequal variance.

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