

# OCDV IN FOCUS:

## Survey Findings from the New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy – Participation in the Academy Leads to Significant Improvement in Knowledge and Attitudes Around Healthy Relationships

### Key Takeaway:

Since 2005, the Healthy Relationship Training Academy (the Academy) has reached thousands of young people across New York City and has led to statistically significant improvements in their understanding of teen dating violence and healthy relationships..

### Highlights:

- Since the Academy's inception in 2005, it has conducted 3,449 youth workshops with 63,200 youth participants
- In the past Fiscal Year (July 2016-June 2017), the Academy conducted 666 youth workshops with 10,616 youth participants
- Youth participants' knowledge and attitudes around teen dating violence and healthy relationships significantly improved after participating in a workshop as demonstrated by pre- and post-workshop surveys.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy (the Academy) is an initiative of the New York City Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) that was established in 2005 to provide educational and skills-building training for adolescents, parents, and organizations that provide services to young people. The Academy is a prevention-based model that offers workshops to raise awareness about the issue of teen dating violence, educate youth to recognize unhealthy relationships, and engage youth in activities to build skills around healthy relationship development. Academy workshops are facilitated by peer educators who encourage discussion and critical thinking about these challenging topics. Academy peer educators receive extensive training on the subjects of teen dating violence, healthy relationships, and peer education.

The Academy offers five different workshops to its youth participants: the Signature Workshop on Dating Violence and Healthy Relationships, the Beyond the Basics: Dating Violence and Healthy Relationships Workshop, the TechnoLOVE Workshop, the Healthy Relationships Workshop, and the Navigating Consent and Healthy Relationships Workshop. On average, the Academy provides 60 workshops every month for approximately 800 youth participants in settings such as after-school programs, faith communities, juvenile detention centers, GED programs, schools, community programs, and runaway homeless youth programs. Workshops are typically one to one-and-a-half hours in length. To further its work in educating New York City youth in healthy relationship development, in 2016 the Academy launched the Creating Awareness about Relationship Equality (CARE) program to reach young people in the City's foster care system.

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As mentioned above, the Academy aims to improve participants' knowledge and understanding of teen dating violence and healthy relationships. These anticipated improvements are short-term given the limited time peer educators spend with workshop participants. In order to measure these short-term changes in knowledge and attitudes, the peer educators conduct surveys before and after every workshop. The surveys consist of the same thirteen questions about teen dating violence and healthy relationships with response options True/False/I Don't Know. Specifically, these questions measure participants' understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics, how to identify teen dating violence, and what types of help is available. The surveys also collect some demographic information. Participant responses are anonymous, but pre- and post-workshop surveys are matched at the participant level to allow for analyses of individual improvements in knowledge and attitudes. In the present report, we provide a summary of the results from youth participant surveys conducted before and after the Academy's Signature Workshop.

## II. SURVEY RESULTS

### Since program inception

Since the Academy's inception in 2005 through the end of Fiscal Year 2017 (June 30, 2017), the Academy has conducted 3,449 youth workshops with 63,200 youth participants. The majority of these workshops were Signature Workshops. For this section of the report, we have collected and analyzed the survey responses for 12,338 young people who participated in a Signature Workshop since the start of the program and completed a pre- and post-workshop survey. If a participant completed only a pre-workshop survey or only a post-workshop survey, then we were unable to match their responses and excluded them from the analysis.

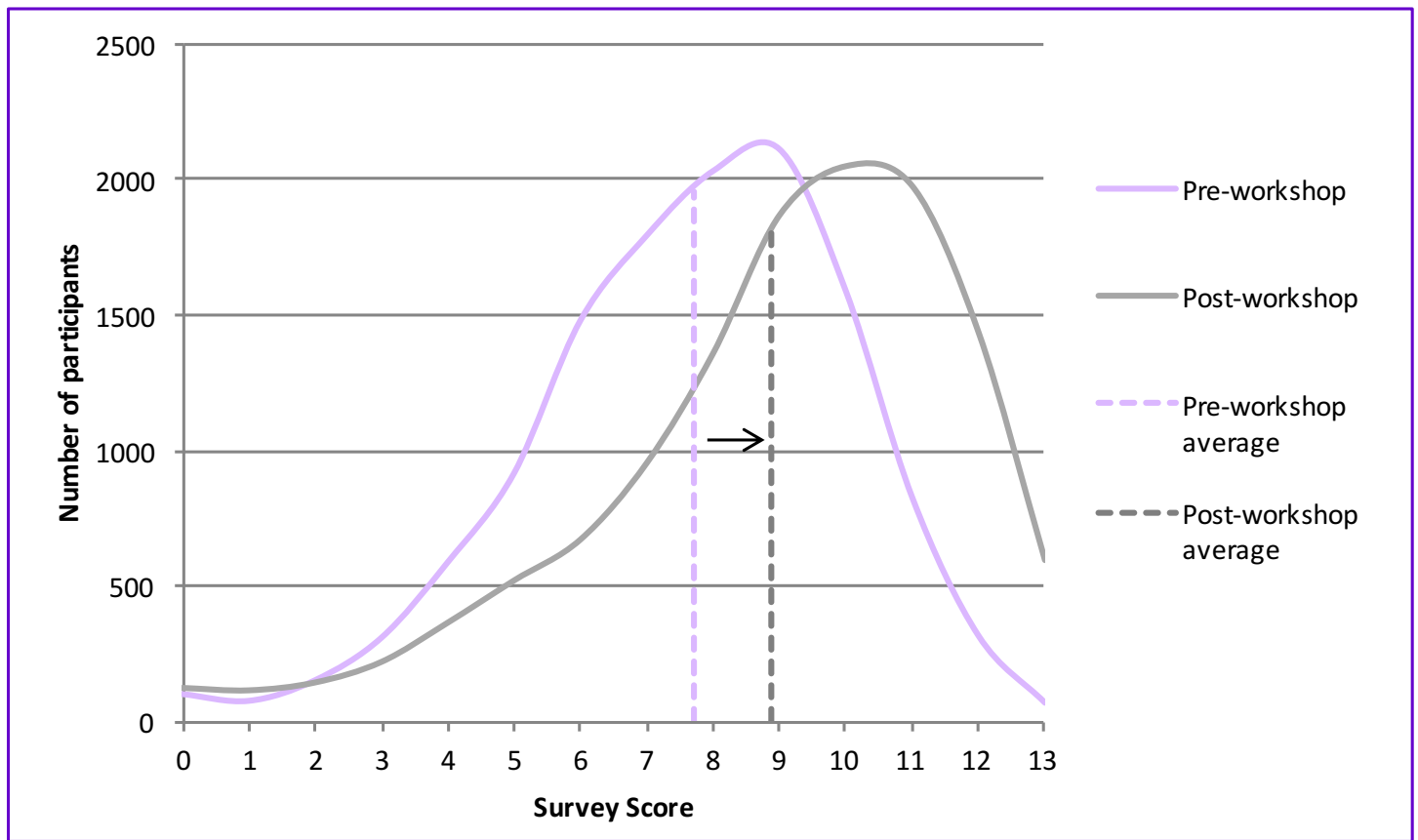
The Signature Workshop is intended for young people age 14-24. There may be some participants under the age of 14 and over the age of 25 if they participated in a mixed-age group. The workshop covers the definitions of intimate partner violence and dating violence, tactics an abusive partner may use to gain power and control over a partner, characteristics of a healthy relationship, warning signs of abusive partners, and resources available. The structure of the workshop is interactive and invites participants to share their ideas around healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships.

Table A in the Appendix displays a breakdown of demographic characteristics of these participants. Just over half of the participants (55%) were women. Half (50%) of participants were between the ages of 13-17 and another 30% were between 18-20 years old. Regarding special populations, 10% of participants self-identified as pregnant or parenting; 13% self-identified as foreign-born; 3% reported having experienced sexual exploitation; 11% self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ); and 3% self-identified as runaway or homeless youth.

An analysis of the matched pre- and post-workshop survey data over this 12-year period shows that Academy workshops significantly improved knowledge and attitudes around teen dating violence and healthy relationships. Of the 12,338 participants analyzed, 8,129 (66%) had a higher score on the post-workshop survey compared to the pre-workshop survey. Among all participants, the average score on the thirteen-question survey improved from 7.7 before the workshop to 8.9 after the workshop. This improvement in average score is statistically significant based on the results of a paired t-test<sup>1</sup> ( $t=61.6, p<0.001$ ). Figure 1 shows the distribution of pre- and post-workshop survey scores in bell curves.

<sup>1</sup><http://libguides.library.kent.edu/SPSS/PairedSamplestTest>

**Figure 1. Distribution of pre- and post-Signature workshop survey scores since Academy's inception (N=12,338)**

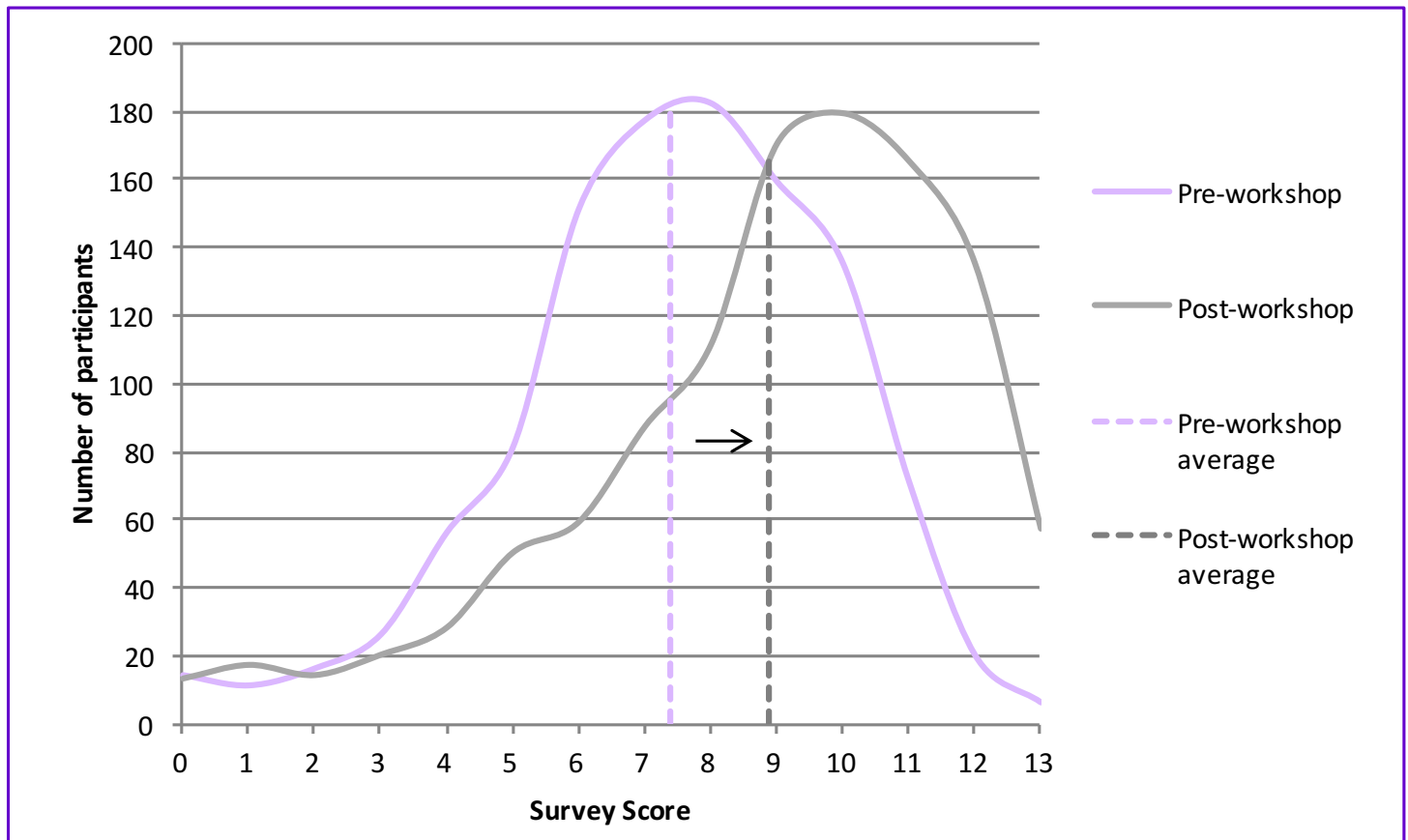


### **Closer look at Fiscal Year 2017**

The following section is focused on the past fiscal year. In Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017), the Academy conducted 666 youth workshops with 10,616 youth participants. The majority of these workshops were Signature Workshops. For this section of the report, we have collected and analyzed the survey responses for 1,105 young people who participated in a Signature Workshop in this past fiscal year and completed a pre- and post-workshop survey. Table A in the Appendix displays a breakdown of demographic characteristics of these participants. This sample of participants is similar to the total sample described above except that there is a higher percentage of 13- to 17-year olds (67% vs. 50%).

An analysis of the matched pre- and post-workshop survey data over this past fiscal year again shows that Academy workshops significantly improved knowledge and attitudes around teen dating violence and healthy relationships. Of the 1,105 participants analyzed, 722 (65%) had a higher score on the post-workshop survey compared to the pre-workshop survey. Overall, the average score on the thirteen-question survey improved from 7.4 before the workshop to 8.9 after the workshop. This improvement in average score is statistically significant based on the results of a paired t-test ( $t=18.5$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Figure 2 shows the distribution of pre- and post-workshop survey scores in bell curves.

**Figure 2. Distribution of pre- and post-Signature workshop survey scores in Fiscal Year 2017 (N=1,105)**



### III. CONCLUSION

Since 2005, the Academy has reached thousands of young people across New York City and has led to statistically significant improvements in their understanding of teen dating violence and healthy relationships. OCDV is currently expanding the Healthy Relationship Training Academy and will continue measuring changes in knowledge and attitudes around these challenging topics.

The pre- and post-workshop surveys currently capture change in knowledge immediately after a workshop and it is not anticipated that a one- to one-and-a-half-hour workshop alone will have a long-term impact on a young person's behavior. However, OCDV is redesigning the pre- and post-workshop surveys so that they can be administered to participants who take part in more than one workshop in the Academy series and capture change after multiple treatments over a period of six months or less.

This is the first in a series of reports on the work of the New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy. Over the next 12 months, report briefs will delve deeper into the survey data to determine outcomes based on demographic factors and program components such as the CARE program.

## ABOUT THE MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) formulates policies and programs, coordinates the citywide delivery of domestic violence services and works with diverse communities and community leaders to increase awareness of domestic violence. OCDV collaborates closely with government and nonprofit agencies that assist domestic violence survivors and operates the New York City Family Justice Centers.

For more information on intimate partner violence programs and services in New York City, please visit the OCDV website at [nyc.gov/domesticviolence](http://nyc.gov/domesticviolence).

## APPENDIX

Table A. Demographic characteristics of surveyed Signature Workshop youth participants

	Total participants (N=12,338)		FY 2017 participants (N=1,105)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>				
Woman	6,786	55.0%	609	55.1%
Men	5,260	42.6%	474	42.9%
Transgender	10	0.1%	5	0.5%
Missing	282	2.3%	17	1.5%
<b>Age</b>				
9-12 <sup>2</sup>	185	1.5%	3	0.3%
13-17	6,203	50.3%	736	66.6%
18-20	3,641	29.5%	213	19.3%
21-24	1,658	13.4%	110	10.0%
25+	351	2.8%	23	2.1%
Missing	300	2.4%	20	1.8%
<b>Pregnant or parenting</b>				
Yes	1,191	9.7%	52	4.7%
No	9,375	76.0%	881	79.7%
Missing	1,772	14.4%	172	15.6%
<b>Foreign-born</b>				
Yes	1,645	13.3%	181	16.4%
No	8,872	71.9%	750	67.9%
Missing	1,821	14.8%	174	15.7%
<b>Victims of sexual exploitation</b>				
Yes	320	2.6%	26	2.4%
No	10,112	82.0%	902	81.6%
Missing	1,906	15.4%	177	16.0%
<b>LGBTQ</b>				
Yes	1,347	10.9%	118	10.7%
No	9,159	74.2%	811	73.4%
Missing	1,832	14.8%	176	15.9%
<b>Runaway or homeless</b>				
Yes	398	3.2%	19	1.7%
No	10,081	81.7%	911	82.4%
Missing	1,859	15.1%	175	15.8%

<sup>2</sup> The Signature Workshop is intended for participants age 14-24. The Academy offers a Signature Workshop specifically catered toward middle school students. The survey results from the middle school workshop are not included in this report