

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (01/24/2025):

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***MAYOR'S OFFICE TO END DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
LAUNCHES RESPECT FIRST: A FREE, CITY-WIDE YOUTH PROGRAM CENTERED
ON HEALING, SELF-REFLECTION AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY***

Restorative justice program targets youth aged 13-21 who have harmed others or been in unhealthy relationships as part of Women Forward NYC, the Adams administration's initiative to make New York City the most women-forward city in the U.S.

NEW YORK, NY – The Adams Administration's steadfast commitment to youth is growing today with the launch of **Respect First**, a groundbreaking program to foster healthy relationships.

Respect First is a **free program** for **ages 13-21** launching with its first cohort of 15 people in The Bronx on Monday, January 27th before it expands into **every New York City borough**. The trauma-informed, restorative justice program is for young people who have caused harm in their relationships. Respect First's goal is to address the root causes behind harmful behaviors and help participants make positive, long-lasting changes early in their lives.

Respect First is overseen by The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) in contract with [Reimagining Intimacy through Social Engagement \(RISE\)](#) at the Center for Justice and Innovation. Together, we're working closely to foster connections with other city agencies and community-based organizations that work with young people to introduce the innovative program. RISE has also been organizing meetings with courts.

Who can [register for Respect First](#)?

- Must be between the ages of 13 and 21
- Must have caused harm in their relationship or been in an unhealthy relationship

What makes Respect First unique?

- Participants receive a stipend
- Participation can be voluntary or court-mandated
- The program focuses on all types of interpersonal relationships
- Resources include a 16-week group experience and one-on-one case management

*****[REGISTER FOR RESPECT FIRST](#)*****

"Launching Respect First is a critical step towards empowering our youth with the tools they need to build healthier relationships, which ultimately creates safer communities. By investing in our youth, we are providing the next generation of New Yorkers the opportunity to change the trajectory of their lives," **said First Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer**. "This program is an important part of our broader commitment to make New York City the most women-forward city in the nation and creating a future where all New Yorkers are supported and empowered."

“Early intervention and support are keys to helping give every person the chance to be healthy and thrive across so many areas in their lives,” **said Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom**. “Respect First is a novel program to assist and support young people ages 13-21 to have healthier relationships through trauma-informed, individualized case management and care that addresses the root causes of violence. It’s a program that will include more and more participants in the coming months and will help them have stronger and better relationships throughout their lives.”

“Respect First honors Mayor Adams’ commitment to keep crime down and maintain New York’s status as the safest big city in the United States,” **said Saloni Sethi, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV)**. “The Adams administration has made one of the largest—if not the largest—investment in free, voluntary programming for people who have been harmful or abusive. These intervention programs are key to interrupting intergenerational cycles of violence, preventing harm and improving public safety.”

“Respect First is an innovative new program that will undoubtedly help reduce youth relationship violence and put more young people in New York City on a path to success,” **said Jess Dannhauser, Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children’s Services**. “We applaud the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence for launching a program that focuses on ending cycles of violence by helping young people who have caused harm in their relationships to take accountability, heal and learn healthy and safe ways to manage stress and conflict. We look forward to working closely together on this initiative.”

“Respect First is the only program in New York City dedicated to gender-based and intersectional violence among youth who have caused harm in their relationships, filling a critical gap in programming to support young people in taking accountability, healing, and making meaningful changes,” **said The RISE Project’s Director, Karolin Betances**. “ENDGBV is leading the way in creating programs that are responsive to the lived experiences of our youth and community members. We are proud to partner with ENDGBV to launch a program that responds to the root causes and complexities of violence.”

Representatives of **Respect First** will be at ENDGBV’s [Intergenerational Healthy Relationship Summit](#) on Thursday, February 13th between 4:00pm and 8:00pm. The program builds on [Respect and Responsibility](#) (R&R), New York City’s first non-mandated Abusive Partner Intervention Program (APIP) for abusive partners in intimate adult relationships.

Respect First is one of many programs included in "[Women Forward NYC: An Action Plan for Gender Equity](#)," a \$43 million dollar investment aimed at making New York City the most women-forward city in the United States by becoming a national leader on gender equity, including for transgender and gender-expansive New Yorkers. Supported through city dollars, private and public partnerships, academic institutions, and federal grant funding, the action plan addresses gender disparities by connecting women to professional development and higher-paying jobs; dismantling barriers to sexual, reproductive, and chronic health care; reducing gender-based violence against women; and providing holistic housing services, including for formerly incarcerated women and domestic and gender-based violence survivors.

About the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

The Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) develops policies and programs, provides training and prevention education, conducts research and evaluations, performs community outreach. We collaborate with City agencies and community stakeholders to ensure access to inclusive services for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence

(GBV). GBV can include intimate partner and family violence, elder abuse, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. ENDGBV also operates the [New York City Family Justice Centers](#), co-located multidisciplinary service centers providing vital social services, civil legal, and criminal justice assistance for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence and their children—all under one roof. For more information, visit nyc.gov/ENDGBV. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).