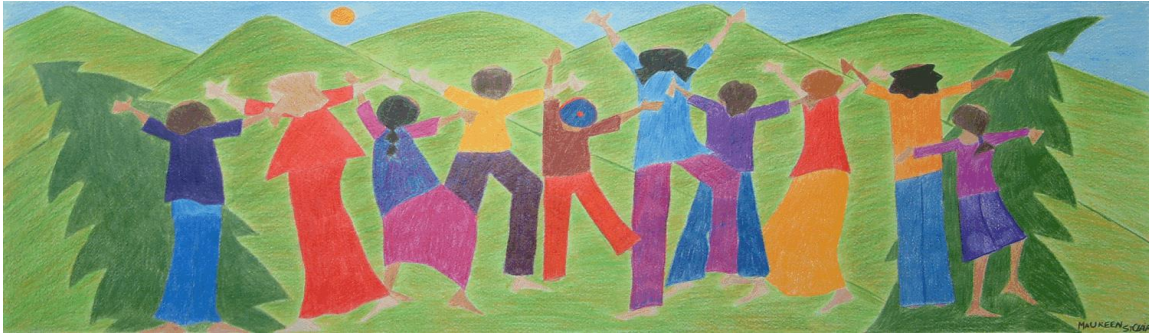


# *Healthy Relationships for Youth Program Evaluation Report 2009/2010*



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***Healthy Relationships for Youth Program  
Evaluation Report 2009/2010***

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# **The Healthy Relationships for Youth (HRY) Program**

## **Introduction**

The Healthy Relationships for Youth (HRY) Program is a school based violence prevention program which includes youth as peer educators in the classroom and throughout their schools. The HRY Program delivers a series of twelve cumulative sessions within the Grade 9 Health curriculum. The program is offered in all ten high schools in the Strait Regional School Board. The HRY curriculum focuses on facilitating youth learning about developing and maintaining healthy relationships. It has been approved by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

The Healthy Relationship for Youth Program highlights the different forms of violence and focuses on violence prevention. Sexism, racism and homophobia are forms of oppression which may contribute to violence. The HRY Program is based on the belief that through enhancing awareness of the social context of their lives and providing skill development to promote healthy interpersonal communication, youth can make positive decisions about their own behaviour and reduce violence.

## **Program Goal**

The goal of the HRY Program is to reduce the risk of violence for youth through building skills and knowledge related to developing and maintaining healthy relationships.

## **Program Objectives**

- to engage Grade 9 students in ten school sites within the Strait Regional School Board of Nova Scotia in a series of classroom sessions designed to promote healthy and respectful relationships
- to assist youth in developing the attitudes, values and skills they need to build and maintain healthy relationships
- to increase students' understanding of racial/cultural diversity specifically relating to the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities
- to increase students' awareness of issues related to violence prevention and social inequities from a gender based perspective
- to foster youth development which includes: peer support, youth empowerment, youth-adult partnerships, meaningful contribution and experiential learning

## Delivery of HRY Program

During this fourth year of funding through the Canadian Women's Foundation, the HRY Program has continued in the ten schools of the Strait Regional School District. This year, 12 teachers, one community-based adult facilitator, and 85 youth facilitators delivered the program to a total of 632 students in 28 grade nine classes.

The HRY teachers and one community-based facilitator were trained on September 11, 2009 at the Mulgrave Professional Development Centre. Leaside Transition House for abused Women and their Children was again able to support the HRY Program by providing a worker to co-facilitate the program at SAREC for the fourth consecutive year. Cape Breton facilitation teams were trained at Dalbrae Academy on September 23, and 25. Mainland facilitation teams were trained at Guysborough Academy on September 18, and 19. Separate training sessions were offered for youth facilitators who were unable to attend regularly scheduled training: East Antigonish Academy on Sept. 29, John Hugh Gillis Regional High on the October 5, and St. Mary's Academy on October 9.

A youth facilitator's role requires facilitating one or more of the 12 cumulative HRY sessions in one or more classes, individual preparation time, meetings with the PDR teacher, and seven monthly HRY Team meetings with the Co-ordinator. Also, the youth facilitation teams are encouraged to take on organizing one event, big or small, to bring the message of violence prevention outside the classroom to the broader student population. This message can be on any issue the HRY Program youth facilitation team feel is relevant to their school. Examples of events include morning announcements identifying facts about violence against women for International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, help organize and participate in school activities for International Day against Homophobia, and host a school-wide day for violence prevention addressing a wide range of issues at once.

## HRY Participation for 2009-2010

Participating Schools	Total # of Students Per School	Number of Grade 9 Classes	Number of Grade 9 Students
Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School	870 (9-12)	9	209
East Antigonish Academy	482 (P -12)	2	50
St. Mary's Academy	147 (9-12)	1	33

Canso Academy	80 (9-12)	1	18
Guysborough Academy	335 (P -12)	1	20
CBHA - Cape Breton Highlands Academy	392 (P -12)	2	31
Inverness Academy	298 (P -12)	1	29
Dalbrae Academy	268 (9-12)	3	62
SAERC - Strait Area Education & Recreation Centre	339 (9-12)	4	96
Richmond Academy	395 (9-12)	4	84
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3606</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>632</b>

*\* East Antigonish Academy delivered the HRY Program within the grade 9 English class.*

All Antigonish Women Resource Centre programs are evaluated on a regular basis. The HRY Program evaluates annually its three main components, namely: grade nine student participants, youth facilitators, and teachers/adult facilitators. Teachers were responsible for the administration of the surveys to the grade nine students. These three evaluation components have been compiled to create “*The Healthy Relationships for Youth Evaluation Report for 2009/2010.*”

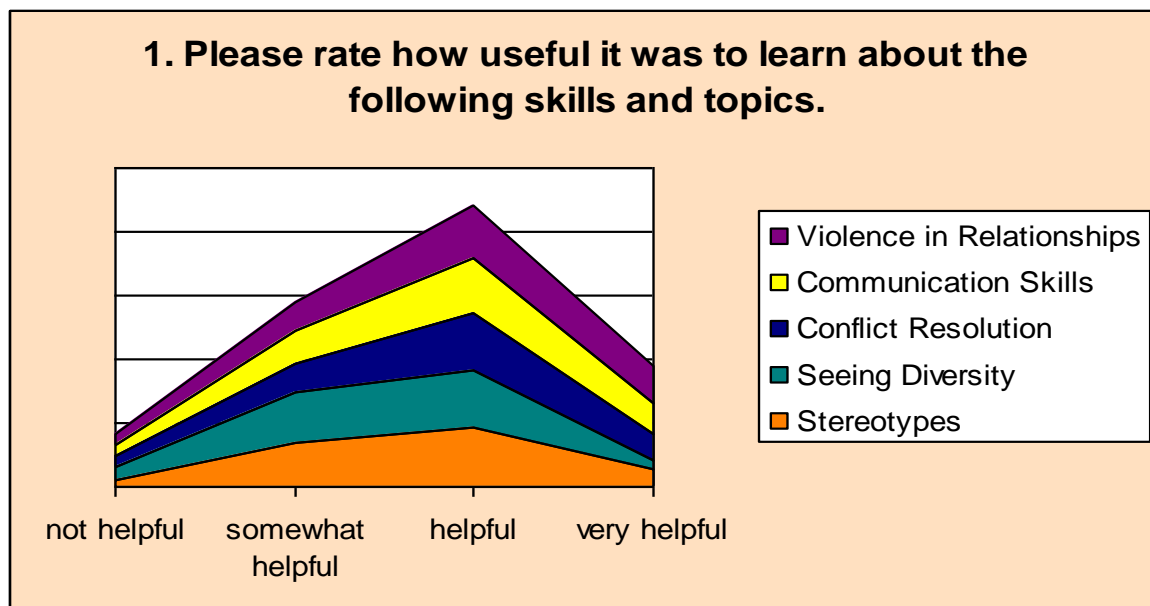
## Healthy Relationships for Youth Program Student Survey Report 2009/2010

The HRY Program is evaluated by surveying the participating grade 9 students. The student surveys were delivered to all ten schools in February of 2010. This year, 166 student surveys from seven schools were completed and returned to the HRY Program Co-ordinator. Administration of the surveys required about 30 minutes. Due to time pressures, not all participating schools administered the student surveys. Efforts made by the teachers to have the student surveys completed and returned is greatly appreciated as it helps us demonstrate the effectiveness of the program, continue to improve the program, and learn from our experiences. The student survey report is a review and analyses of each of the nine survey questions.

The student survey was three pages long, and composed of a series of multiple choice and short answer questions. The multiple choice questions asked students to rate a topic by circling a number from 1 to 4; 1=not helpful, 2=somewhat helpful, 3=helpful, 4=very helpful. Below each scale, students were given space to write about what they learned as a result of the discussion.

**Question 1: Please rate how useful it was to learn about the following topics and provide an example of what you learned.**

The five key topics evaluated included: stereotypes affecting boys and girls, awareness of diversity in your school and community, conflict resolution, healthy communication skills, and violence in relationships



The chart above demonstrates that most students rated the discussions between somewhat to very helpful, with the majority of students rating all discussions as helpful.

### **A) Stereotypes**

Of the 166 completed student surveys, 59% percent of student felt it was *helpful* to *very helpful* to learn about stereotypes while only 6% expressed it was *not helpful*. There was a difference in responses to discussions on the topic of gender stereotyping according to gender; 52% of girls found it *helpful* ( $n=39$ ), while 41% of boys ( $n=35$ ) found it *helpful*, and 9% of girls( $n= 7$ ) found it *very helpful*, while 16 % of boys did ( $n=14$ ).

Stereotypes are identified by the students as an inaccurate form of judgement that is harmful. Students express the understanding that there are many forms of stereotyping.

- *“I know that stereotypes don’t mean a certain group is a certain way”*
- *“That stereotyping is wrong and it’s just a judgement that isn’t well developed”*
- *“Stereotypes are not accurate sources of information about people”*

Students frequently reflected on gender stereotyping and identified learning that gender stereotypes affect both boys and girls.

- *“I learned that it affects both male and female”*
- *“some guys are as self conscious as some girls”*
- *“that both genders have stereotypes about other genders that are not right”*

Not all students are at the same place on the continuum of learning and awareness of gender stereotypes. Some students reported no new learning about stereotypes, as one girl explained, “What I already know. We’re still stereotyped”. Other students expressed already learning about stereotyping in previous grades. One student summed this reality up in the following learning, “That not all girls and boys fully understand these stereotypes.” This supports the need to continue to include discussions on stereotyping in the HRY Program.

### **B) Awareness of diversity in your school and community**

The HRY Program is structured on the belief that increasing respect for diversity is one aspect of violence prevention among youth. Almost half (45%) of students expressed that seeing diversity in your school and community was *helpful* to *somewhat helpful*. Identifying diversity is the first step to building respect for diversity as invisibility is one of the challenges of groups that have been oppressed or marginalised.

- *“About the multitude of different cultures and traditions form our school”*
- *“That there are many different cultures and groups in school”*
- *“There’s diversity in places where it doesn’t seem very diverse”*

Many students expressed the need for respecting the differences diversity brings.

- *“No matter where we are, there will always be someone with different beliefs and we should accept that”*
- *“To recognize and respect the diversity around you”*

- *“To respect all cultures”*

The activity in the HRY curriculum used to help stimulate discussions on diversity is identified as being helpful for the development of empathy.

- *“How some people feel when others are mean to them now through the card game”*

Empathy is built upon the recognition of the common experiences we share along with our differences. It also is necessary to recognize our equality.

- *“Everyone is equal”*
- *“Everyone is different, yet the same”*

### **C) Conflict resolution**

The majority (89%) of students surveyed rated the HRY Programs presentation of conflict resolution and problem solving to be helpful to some degree: *somewhat* (23%), *helpful* (46%), *very helpful* (22%). Many students identified that we can have a positive influence on a problem by how we communicate and behave. Some of those communication skills identified by the students were:

- *“ You both need to talk it out and agree, not just one person ”*
- *“That being assertive is the best way to handle things ”*
- *“That it is important not to let your temper get the best of you or you may say/do something you regret”*

Identifying forms of violence is important to preventing and responding to conflict and violence. Some youth gave clear examples of this form of learning to resolve conflict.

- *“That any unwanted touches are harassment”*
- *“I learned not to hit people”*
- *“That you don’t have to do what some do to be cool”*

In order to prevent violence, youth need to believe that conflict can be resolved peacefully and that they do not have to face problems or conflicts alone. Many youth commented that getting help or talking to someone can be an important part of conflict resolution.

- *“That there are ways to resolve fights and that there’s always people to talk to”*
- *“That if your boyfriend /girlfriend is hurting you, to go tell someone”*

### **D) Healthy communication skills**

Healthy communication skills are the building blocks for healthy relationships. They are required in order to be successful at resolving problems and conflicts. Most students found this skill development helpful in some way: 23% found it *very helpful*, 42% found it *helpful*, and 26% found it *somewhat helpful*. Students surveyed expressed the importance of healthy communication and were able to identify key elements of communications skills learned during the HRY Program sessions:



- *“How to listen to people when they talk”*
- *“Eye contact, listening”*
- *“Ways to communicate with people without hollering or being angry”*

The ability to express your thoughts and feelings to others is an essential part of good communication skills. One student expressed that learning in the following statement:

- *“That holding in what you want to say isn’t always the best thing”*

The following comments demonstrate how students are using communication skills to build and maintain respectful relationships:

- *“That you need to include everyone’s thoughts and opinions”*
- *“How to talk about what I’m feeling and how to convey my emotions”*
- *“How to communicate better with friends and family”*

## **E) Violence in relationships**

The majority of students surveyed (70%) responded that learning about violence in relationships was *very helpful* (29%) or *helpful* (41%). According to the survey, 18% more girls considered it *very helpful* to learn about dating violence, 39% of girls ( $n = 30$ ) compared to 21% of boys ( $n = 18$ ). Despite this difference, boys still rate learning about dating violence highly, almost half of all boys (47%;  $n = 40$ ) reported learning about dating violence as *helpful*. Also, violence in relationships consistently has higher ratings when compared to the other four elements of communication skills, conflict resolution, seeing diversity, and stereotyping. Student comments identify what they learned about violence in relationships:

- *“That nothing justifies violent behaviour in a relationship!”*
- *“That it is a crime and should not be done”*
- *“How relationship violence starts and the cycle of relationship abuse”*
- *“Violence in a relationship is not okay and should be recognized and reported and dealt with”*
- *“That it is wrong and no one deserves it”*

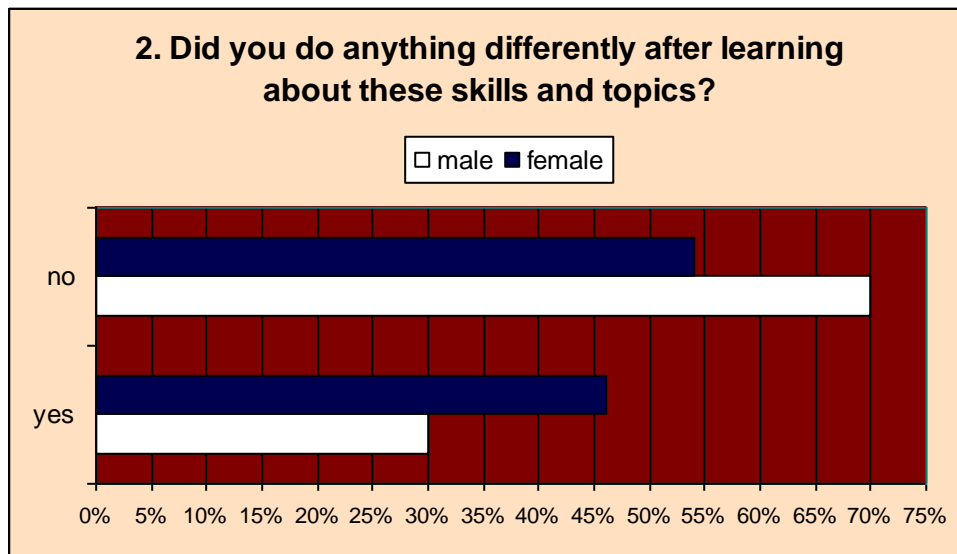
In the HRY Program, a clear emphasis is placed on reporting violence and abuse as an important step in getting help and ending the violence, however, it is also acknowledged that leaving an abusive relationship can be more complicated for some.

- *“It can be difficult to escape violent relationships”*

Also, students are encouraged to realize some secrets are too serious to carry and the information should be passed on to someone who can help. The following comment:

- *“It’s not okay, you should tell someone that can help with it. Even if it’s not you, and a friend wants to keep it secret”*

**Question 2: Did you do anything differently after learning about these skills and topics?**



When asked if they did anything differently after learning about these skills, over a third of students (37%) reported a change while over half (63%) of the youth said they didn't do anything differently. More females identified that they did something differently after learning about skills and topics; 46% of girls compared to 30% of boys.

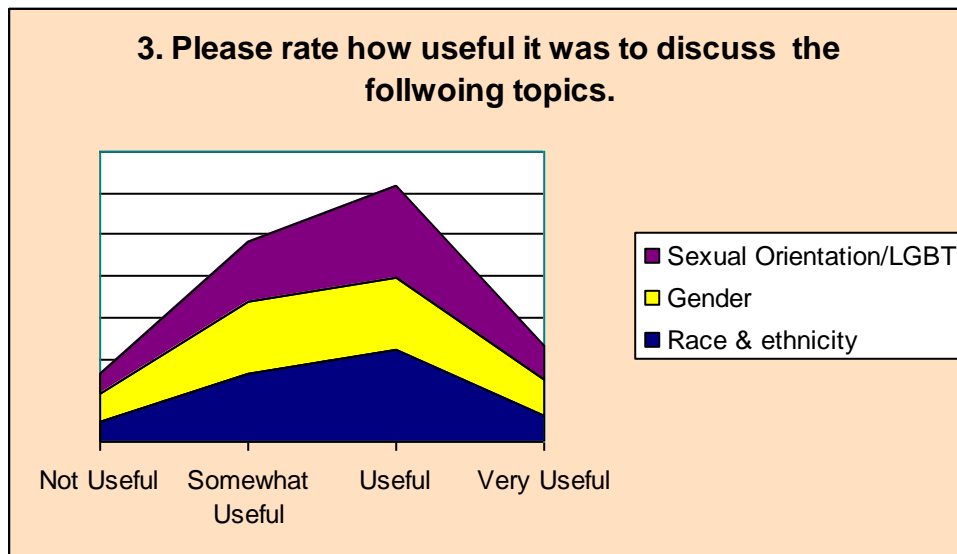
Examples of how the HRY Program influenced the behaviour of grade 9 students can be grouped according to communication skills, conflict resolution, gender stereotyping and sexual orientation. Students reported a change in how they handle conflict:

- *“I stopped yelling at my parents when we're fighting”*
- *“I took into consideration about solving problems instead of just not caring”*
- *“I found it easier to be a mediator between my cousins and their arguments”*

Other students reported a change in how they perceive and that these changes often translate into how they communicate.

- *“I changed the way I look at my classmates”*
- *“Yes, I used to make some racist jokes but now I don't”*
- *“I don't stereotype genders as much”*

**Question 3: Please rate how useful it was to discuss the following topics.**



The above chart displays how useful students rated the discussions about a) race/ethnicity, b) gender and, c) sexual orientation.

**A) Race/ethnicity**

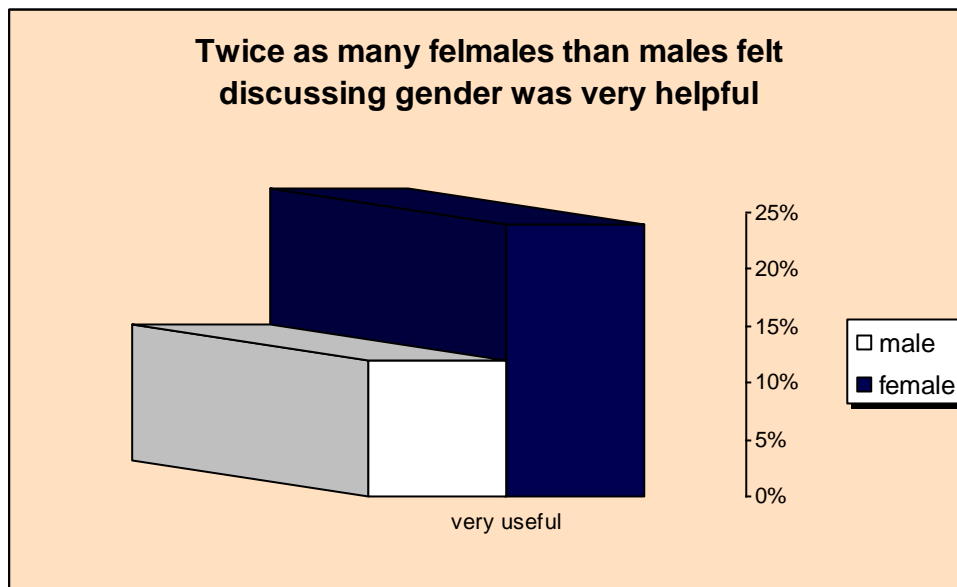
Racial diversity is present in all schools in the Strait Regional School Board. Part of respecting diversity is being aware of the social impact of intolerance. Intolerance of racial diversity is racism. In order to address racism we must be able to recognize how it is still a problem. This enables us to address racism. Ninety-one percent (90%) of students surveyed, expressed that discussing racism in the HRY Program was *very useful* to *somewhat useful*. Ten percent (10%) of students did not find discussing race and ethnicity useful. The student comments below express the impact of discussing race & ethnicity:

- *“It made me proud of who I am”*
- *“That everyone has a different type of background and not to judge”*
- *“It’s important to recognize and be knowledgeable about yourself and background”*
- *“That quite a few people (more than I thought) judge people by their race and/or ethnicity”*

**B) Gender**

The topic of gender was discussed throughout the HRY Program sessions. Two sessions give students the opportunity to explore how society can place expectations and pressures upon us based on our perceived gender. Seventy percent (70%) of students rated discussing gender as *somewhat useful* (35%) or *useful* (35%). A smaller percentage of

students (17%) rated the gender discussion as *very useful*. Twice as many females than males rated discussing gender as *very useful*; 24% of females compared to 12% of males.



The gender discussions helped students have the space and facilitated discussions to learn about themselves and others. Some were able to see the unique perspectives between genders.

- *“How the opposite gender feels about my gender and differences of ideas about each other we have”*
- *“That not all boys think the same way we always thought they did”*
- *“Boys have different sides to them that the girls didn’t know of”*
- *“That males and females have different wants and needs”*

The separate gender sessions have been valued by students for the past four years of the HRY Program.

- *“I loved it being just girls for a bit”*

Transgender awareness is also an aspect of discussing gender. The following comment captures one student’s learning:

- *“It’s who you’re born to be, and sometimes you can be in the wrong body”*

This improved understanding leads to the development of empathy among the genders as some youth expressed. Discussing gender often leads youth to see the underlying similarities that exist in all of us.

Equality was also identified by numerous students as a result of the gender discussions:

- *“That girls are just as good as boys”*
- *“That all genders are equal”*
- *“To respect the other gender”*

### C) Sexual Orientation/LGBT

One HRY Program session presents information on LGBT terminology and seeks to normalise diversity of sexual orientation and gender within the high school population and beyond.

When asked to rate the usefulness of this discussion, students responded positively: 20% found it *very helpful*, 35% found it *helpful*, and 34% found it *somewhat helpful*.

Comparing gender differences in responses, 9% more females responded that the discussion on sexual orientation was *helpful*, 7% more females reported the discussion *somewhat helpful*. More males than females responded that discussion was *not helpful*, with a difference of 13%.

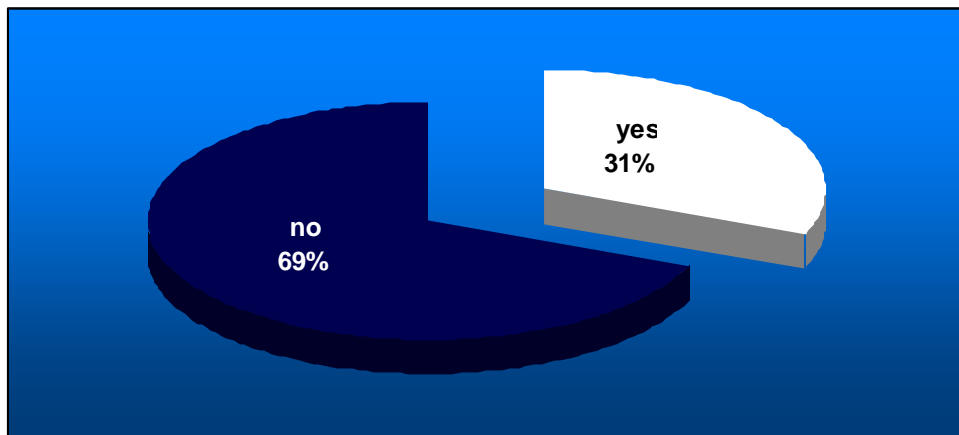
When asked what they learned from this discussion, many students reported more understanding of terminology.

- *“The proper term to call LGBT”*

The discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is an issue of which many students reported being more aware. Other comments reflect respect for diversity of sexual orientation:

- *“That people who are gay or bi face a lot more than people think they do”*
- *“People shouldn’t be treated differently because of their sexuality”*
- *“LGBT people may have a hard time being accepted”*
- *“That it’s not a decision, it just happens”*

#### 4. Thinking about race, gender and sexual orientation, did any of these discussions affect how you think and feel about others?



When asked if discussion about race, gender, and sexual orientation affected how you think or feel about others, 31% of students responded *yes*, and 69% responded *no*. Those

who answered yes were asked to give an example of how it changed how they thought or felt. Students gave examples which demonstrated positive changes in attitudes. The following comments were chosen to illustrate the identified changes in thoughts and feelings in relation to gender and sexual orientation:

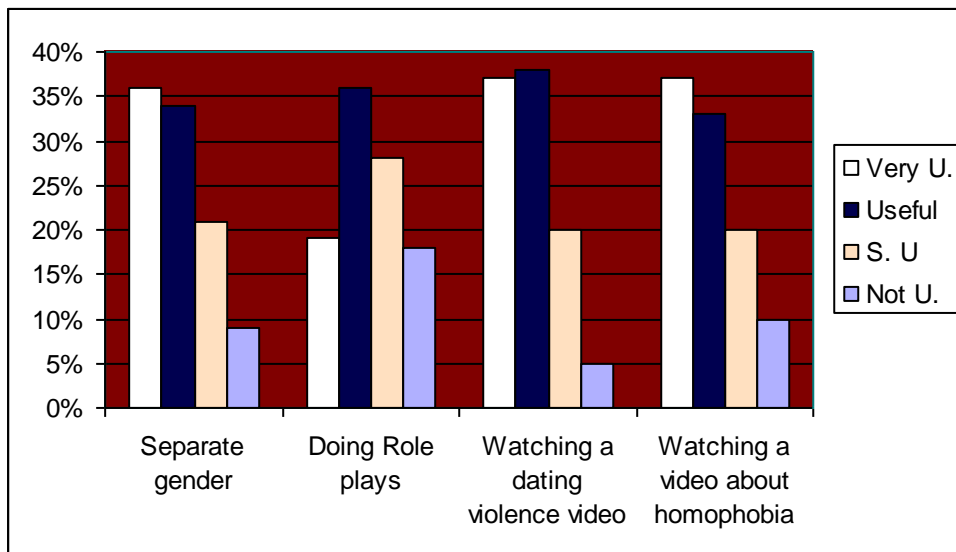
**Sexual Orientation**

- *“I can accept myself for me and others for being like me, bi, gay or transgender.”*
- *“Not make fun of gays or people who don’t know.”*

**Gender**

- *“I learned that the opposite gender doesn’t have the same ideas as I do and take them into consideration.”*
- *“I now believe that girls are just as good as boys and boys are definitely not better no matter what they say.”*
- *“I learned not to sell myself short because I’m a female.”*
- *“I feel like I have a better understanding of the opposite sex.”*
- *“When talking about gender, it made me glad to be a woman.”*

**5. Circle the number which best describes how you would rate each of the following:**



The above chart displays the feedback from students on the usefulness of four HRY Program components: separate gender discussion, role plays, watching a dating violence video, and watching a video about homophobia.

### Separate Gender

The two separate gender sessions in the HRY Program curriculum were viewed as positive; 36% rated them as *very useful* and 34 % rated them as *useful*. Slight gender differences were observed between those who thought separate gender discussion was *very useful*. Although there was a high rating overall for separate gender discussion, 39% of girls reported finding it *very useful* while 33% of males did. This is a small difference of 6%. The more significant difference was in the percentage of boys and girls who rated the separate gender sessions as *useful*; 43% of girls rate the separate gender sessions as useful compared to 26% of boys, which is a difference of 35%.

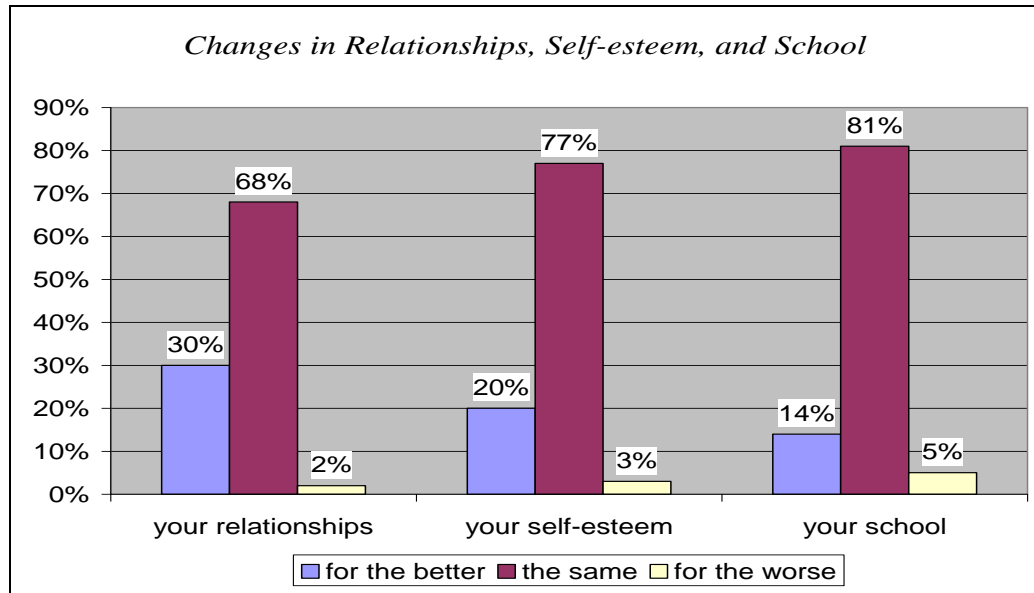
### Role Plays

Role Plays are used in several HRY Program sessions including conflict resolution and communication styles. Just over half, or 55%, of the students surveyed rated the role plays as *very useful* to *useful*.

### Dating Violence and Homophobia Videos

Two videos are used in the HRY Program curriculum. One video is about dating violence and the other is about homophobia. The St. Mary's Academy students did not watch the videos so this section of question 5 was not relevant to them. Both videos were rated well by the students with 37% of students identified watching the HRY Program videos as *very useful*, 30% rated them as *useful*, 17% as *somewhat useful* and 3 % rated the videos as *not useful*. More girls than boys rated watching the dating violence video as useful to very useful 10% more girls thought it was useful, while 13% more thought it was very useful.

**Question 6: Please check the answer which best describes changes in the following:**



Students were able to rate perceived changes in relationships, self-esteem, and school by ticking one of three boxes: for the better, the same, the worse. Students were also asked to explain their answers.

**A) Your relationships:**

Most students (68%) reported their relationships had not changed. Students who noticed a change for the better in their relationships (30%) expressed that they now had increased respect, understanding and improved communication in their relationships.

- *“I no longer blame myself for my boyfriend’s violence”*
- *“I learned how to be more confident with others”*
- *“Because I’m more aware of healthy and unhealthy relationships”*

**B) Your self-esteem:**

Twenty percent (20%) of students reported a change for the better in their self-esteem. Students who reported an increase in self-esteem expressed that they felt more aware of rights and have an improved self image. The following are a selection of those comments:

- *“I see myself with more rights now”*
- *“I feel way better about my body”*
- *“I learned to believe in myself more”*
- *“I now think of myself as an individual who is very unique and beautiful”*



### C) Your School:

Fourteen percent (14%) of students who answered this question said they thought there was a change for the better in their school after the HRY Program. A large majority (81%) of the students identified that there was no change in their school while 5 % reported a change for the worse. Examples of changes in school climate for the better include:

- *“People still use LGBT insults, which I dislike”*
- *“It doesn’t change anybody else who hasn’t taken the course”*

Some students took this opportunity to record that although the HRY Program sessions did not change the overall climate of the school, they did feel it had a positive impact on the classroom environment.

- *“Not our entire school changed, not the entire school did HRY. I’d say our class got better though.”*

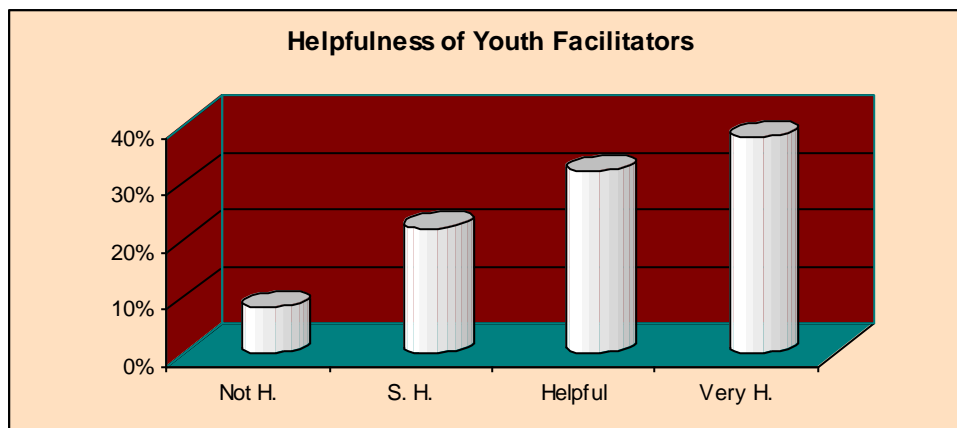
Some personal and environmental changes for the better were reported.

- *“I’m doing my homework and study now”*
- *“People don’t bully as much”*

It is not clear if all of the changes can be attributed to the HRY Program due to the broad wording of the question and/or responses.

### Question 7:

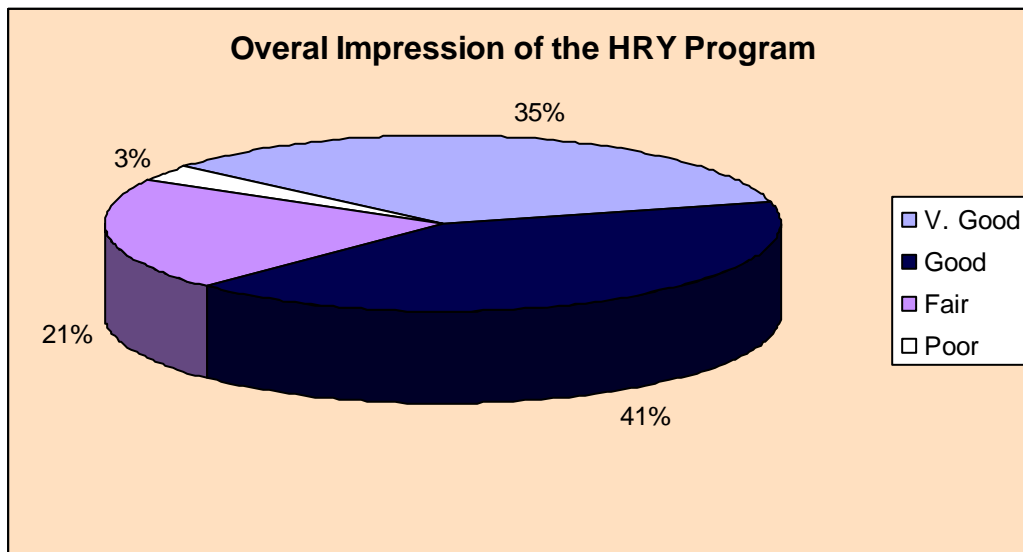
Circle the number which best describes how you rate having youth facilitators.



Youth facilitators are trained to present the HRY Program sessions with the support of their teachers when needed. This peer education element is considered a best practice for

youth violence prevention programs as identified by the Canadian Women’s Foundation. Peer education stands out as a very successful element of the HRY program according to the majority of grade 9 students in the Strait Regional School Board; 84 % rate it as *helpful* or *very helpful*; 13% rated them *somewhat helpful*, and only 3% rated them as *not helpful*.

### 8. What is your overall impression of the Healthy Relationships for Youth Program?



Students were asked to rate their overall impression of the HRY Program by circling a number from 1 to 4; 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good. The vast majority of students surveyed (82%) reported their overall impression of the HRY program to be either good to very good ( $n=97$  good;  $n=69$  very good). Fourteen percent (14%) rated the impression of the program as *fair*, and 4% rated it as *poor*.

### 9. What is one thing that you learned or took away from the HRY Program?

Students responded to this question with a wide variety of responses. Final comments from students about the HRY Program can be categorized into the following groups: the experience of having youth facilitators in the classroom, information, communication skills, empathy, and self-esteem. Here is a selection of comments from the 166 surveys:

#### Youth facilitators

- *I liked when we got split up and really talked about all the things with Nikki.*

- *I think that having kids from older grades come in and teach in place of the teacher is a very, very good approach.*
- *I learned it is easier to talk to or discuss as a class with the youth facilitators, seeing how some of the subjects covered aren't something I would talk to a teacher about.*
- *I learned how beneficial it is to be taught by students.*

### **Communication Skills**

- *I learned how to communicate better. -Eye contact -Listening*

### **Information**

- *I learned the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship because before I would be too naïve to point out these signs.*
- *Learning about the cycle of relationship violence really made me think.*
- *Sexual orientation and the different types.*
- *What healthy and non healthy relationships I have and what needs to be changed.*

### **Empathy**

- *That boy's feel stereotyped too.*
- *To treat the opposite/same gender with respect*

### **Self Esteem**

- *This program brought my self esteem up for the most part, because I learned a lot about how the opposite gender feels and reacts.*
- *One thing I learned from the HRY Program is that it's okay to be yourself, and no matter what you should always say "I can do this" to the things you didn't think you could before.*
- *That violence is never okay, and it's never your fault! Being pressured into something or pressuring someone into something is wrong. You can say No! Girls are just as good as boys in every way.*

It is clear that the students surveyed felt they had learned valuable information in relation to the development of healthy and respectful relationships from the series of twelve HRY sessions. The HRY Program can impact individuals differently and the results of the student survey answers demonstrate a range of ways it has affected the grade 9 students across the Strait Regional School Board district.

## HRY Program Youth Facilitator Evaluation Report 2009-2010

The role of youth facilitator can be demanding and also rewarding. Youth facilitators are required participate in two days of training in September. The youth are trained to facilitate two or more of the 12 cumulative HRY sessions in one or more classes. There are also requirements of individual preparation time, meetings with the PDR teacher, and several monthly HRY Team meetings with the Program Co-ordinator. Along with facilitating, the youth facilitators develop a “youth action” event to encourage violence prevention among the larger school population. The youth facilitators evaluated their experience with the HRY Program by participating in focus groups during the spring of 2010. During the focus groups, youth facilitators were asked to evaluate their experiences as a youth facilitator and reflect on the overall HRY Program.

The youth facilitators identified many of their personal strengths

- *Being able to speak in front of people I don't know that well.*
- *Helps us as facilitators develop our leadership skills and become more social, and comfortable with and around other people.*

Others talked about the importance of being able to relate to the students and supporting them:

- *Can relate to the students about a lot of what they're going through at their age because I've been through it.*
- *Giving support to those affected by the topics we cover.*
- *I know what its like to be in gr. 9, I understand*

The youth facilitators identified the value of the information they deliver to the grade 9 students over the series of twelve HRY sessions.

- *The program talks a lot about many of the teen issues that people may not know how to deal with without some help. The program seems to give the students info on things they care about.*
- *The program: brings awareness; makes kids think, gets students to question negative things*

When asked if there were any opportunities for change the youth facilitators wanted more information on some topics and more methods for classroom management. One youth facilitator suggested they could learn form what other youth facilitators in others schools are doing:

- *More input on the other schools teaching strategies.*
- *More focused lesson on “LGBTQ”*

Some youth facilitators expressed having difficulty getting access to the movies required to present two of the HRY sessions. The youth also presented a useful solution for the problem; to locate the curriculum and its resources in a central area, such as the library,

so youth facilitators will always be able to access the information they need to present the HRY sessions. This will be implemented in the upcoming 2010 – 2011 school year.

When asked to identify their favourite sessions to present, the youth facilitators most frequently reported as Power and Violence Part 1 & 2 which explore teen dating violence and stereotyping in the media. Another favourite was Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

## **Healthy Relationships for Youth Program Teacher Survey Report 2009-2010**

This year only 3 out of 12 teachers completed and returned the HRY Teacher Survey. However, teacher feedback was also collected during the youth facilitator focus groups where the teachers were also present as well as during monthly school visits. Teacher feedback has been positive both in regards to the engagement of youth facilitators and the content of the HRY curriculum.

- *Sessions are organized, conversation/questions flow well. Each student is given an opportunity to speak about as little or as much as they want.*
- *The circle concept. (referring to the circular seating arrangement used for the HRY sessions)*

Comments about youth facilitator reported by the teacher in the survey were very positive and reinforce the valued role of the youth facilitators:

- *The facilitators were very committed to the program.*
- *Having energetic leaders who grabbed the students attention, as well as leaders who would talk to the grade 9's outside of classroom time... such as hockey games, lunch, between classes... there was no "superior" feeling of being in grade 11/12 versus 9.*
- *The students have great deal of respect for the facilitators*
- *The students said their favourite part of PDR was having the HRY students come into the classroom.*

Teachers requested more separated gender sessions

- *More separate gender discussions. The girls really took a lot from these and you could see them grow throughout the year, and really that's what it's all about*

Another recommendation that will be considered is to have facilitation training done on the school site where the youth are based.

- *The training days should be done at the school, where the HRY program would be facilitated, so that students get a feel of what it would be like to sit in front of a group of students in the room that they will be teaching.*

The HRY Program would not be successful without the support and input from teachers. Their feedback is extremely important in creating a school based violence prevention program.

## **HRY Program Evaluation Conclusion**

The HRY Program is achieving its program objectives based on the information gathered from participating grade 9 students, teachers, and youth facilitators. In the 2009/2010 school year, the majority of students (82%) rated the HRY Program as *good* to *very good*, 14% rated the program as *fair* and 4% rated it as *poor*. The most valued learnings commonly reported were in relation to information about healthy and unhealthy relationships, improved relationships, increased empathy and self-esteem. Thirty percent (30%) of students surveyed reported an improvement in their relationships which is a significant impact. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of students surveyed reported a change in their behaviour as a result of the HRY Program discussions on dating violence, conflict resolution, communication skills, stereotypes and diversity awareness.

Teachers continue to be supportive of the HRY Program as it completed its fourth year in-school programming. Suggestions for improvements include wanting more of the most successful elements of HRY Program such as separate gender sessions and an additional session on sexual orientation and gender identity. This idea was echoed by some of the youth facilitators and grade 9 students.

Youth facilitators continue to enjoy their volunteer role with the HRY Program. Many express improved communication and leadership skills as a result of their involvement with the program.

The HRY Program thanks all those who have participated in the evaluation. With this feedback we are able to make improvements to the 2010 -2011 HRY Program year.