



Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association

**Healthy Relationships for Youth Program
Evaluation Report 2014-2015**

Strait Regional School Board

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1. Introduction

1.1 About HRY

Healthy Relationships for Youth (HRY) is a school-based, peer-facilitated, violence prevention program developed by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association and offered in partnership with schools locally and across the province. Grade 11 and 12 students are trained to deliver a series of twelve HRY sessions to Grade 9 students with the support of the Healthy Living classroom teacher. The interactive sessions are designed to reduce the risk of violence for youth through developing their skills and knowledge about creating and maintaining healthy relationships.

HRY has been cited as a promising practice program for the way it involves youth as peer educators in the classroom, schools and communities. The program has been offered to 10 local high schools since 2006. Since then HRY has continued to grow and is offered in **25 schools** in communities spreading from the Yarmouth area to Springhill to the South Shore. HRY has reached approximately **6,000 grade nine students** and has trained **1,290 youth facilitators** around the province.

HRY uses a strength-based approach which encourages students to develop a deeper understanding of diversity and to both recognize and challenge sexism, racism and homophobia as forms of violence that impact personal and social relationships. HRY is evaluated each year to assess effectiveness and to ensure materials remain relevant for youth.

HRY Schools for the 2014-2015 school year:

- 10 schools in the Strait Regional School Board,
- 5 schools in the Chignecto-Central School Board,
- 3 schools in the Tri-County Regional School Board,
- 4 schools in the South Shore Regional School Board,
- 2 schools in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, and
- 1 school in the Halifax Regional School Board.

1.2 About This Report

This report presents an analysis of data collected throughout the 2014-15 school year in participating schools in the Strait Regional School Board district. Grade 9 students, youth facilitators and teachers were asked to complete surveys about their experience with the HRY program. The report shares the findings of this evaluation process, highlighting gendered differences in experience and learning (for grade 9 students) and growth in skills and knowledge throughout the program (for youth facilitators). It encompasses the period from September 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

1.3 Program Objectives

The following are the objectives of the HRY program:

Grade 9 student engagement

- To implement the HRY curriculum in Grade 9 classes in participating schools in Nova Scotia
- To assist youth in developing the attitudes, values and skills they need to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- To increase students' understanding of racial and cultural diversity specifically related to the Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian and Acadian communities
- To increase students' awareness of issues related to violence prevention and social inequities from a gender-based perspective.
- To foster youth development through peer support, critical thinking, open dialogue and experiential learning.

Peer facilitation and leadership development

- To provide a youth-centred peer facilitated program that engages Grade 11 and 12 youth in developing facilitation and leadership skills, deepening their understanding of violence prevention, and promoting healthy relationships.
- To integrate a youth-centred approach that fosters youth to take a leadership role within their school.

Program support and capacity building

- To build an understanding of the HRY youth-centred approach, peer facilitation model, program goals and curriculum, and roles among coordinators, teachers and guidance counselors.
- To develop and maintain support systems for the HRY program delivery.

Community-school partnerships

- To build, strengthen and maintain relationships between community and school partners in order to deliver the program.
- To have adequate resources to ensure sustainability of the program.
- To respond to requests for the program as identified by schools and communities.

Planning and evaluation

- To monitor and assess the effectiveness of the HRY program.
- To ensure the HRY curriculum reflects the relevant Department of Education outcomes.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

Based on the updated HRY program logic model and evaluation recommendations developed by external evaluator Peggy Mahon in conjunction with HRY staff in September 2014, the HRY program designed a series of evaluation tools that would help assess the impact of the program using the abovementioned objectives as a framework.

1.4.1 Evaluation Tools

This year the following evaluation tools were used in participating schools:

- Pre and Post surveys of youth facilitators
- Post survey of grade 9 students
- Focus groups with youth facilitators

Surveys were distributed to youth facilitators, students and teachers in either paper or electronic form. Data from paper surveys was inputted electronically and consolidated with data that had already been entered by respondents via computer.

Grade 9 post-survey

The grade 9 student survey (completed after program completion) included basic demographic information (school and gender); overall learning, personal impact of participation in the HRY program; group experience; and knowledge in specific topic areas: violence and relationships, communication and personal boundaries, diversity and gender, and stereotypes and sexual orientation.

Youth Facilitator surveys

The youth facilitator pre- and post-surveys included basic demographic information (school and gender); level of confidence in facilitation and knowledge of subject matter; and knowledge in specific topic areas: healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships, diversity, Mi'kmaq culture, African Nova Scotian culture, assertive communication, personal boundaries, hypersexualization, hypermasculinity, gender stereotypes, relationship violence, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Youth facilitator focus groups

Focus groups with youth facilitators were optional, and were therefore conducted in some but not all schools. Focus group questions were aimed at gathering feedback on the HRY curriculum, youth facilitator training, facilitation, support from teachers and the HRY coordinator, and overall reflections on the program.

1.4.2 Data Analysis

Data gathered using the abovementioned evaluation tools has been analyzed using a combined qualitative and quantitative method. The qualitative component consists of data coding of free-form responses to survey questions, with attention paid to emerging patterns. The quantitative component includes an analysis of student and youth facilitator responses on a Likert scale. A gender analysis has been applied to the grade 9 student responses, and a comparison of pre and post responses was conducted with the youth facilitator data.

1.4.3 Evaluation Limitations and Challenges

This year our evaluation process was limited in the following ways:

- Grade 9 students in one of the schools (Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre) did not complete post-surveys; therefore the overall data does not reflect these students' experiences.
- This year the HRY program did not have an external evaluator. The 2014-15 HRY program evaluation process has therefore been entirely staff-led. This has required us to limit the scope of our approach:
 - Based on our evaluation recommendations for 2014-15 we distributed a grade 9 post-survey but not a pre-survey; therefore we do not have data to compare students' growth in knowledge and skills over the course of the program.
 - We have not measured indicators related to program implementation, program support/capacity-building, community-school partnerships, and planning and evaluation.
- Due to an unresolved glitch with the survey technology, a small number of responses (9) from other schools was included with in the data for the Strait Regional School Board schools. These responses represent about 3% of overall participant responses – enough to marginally skew the data, but not enough to significantly impact the overall data trends, analysis and conclusions.
- A teacher survey was not distributed to SRSB teachers this year; therefore there is no teacher response data included in this report.

Despite these limitations we have conducted a rigorous analysis of data representing the majority of participating students and youth facilitators. This analysis has produced insights that are meaningful and critical to the HRY program's development.

2. Program Implementation and Outputs

2.1 Youth Engagement: Grade 9 Students and Youth Facilitators

This year in the Strait Regional School Board district the HRY program was delivered in all 10 high schools (see Table 1 below). HRY program activities consist of recruitment, training, 12 session delivery, regular meetings with youth facilitators and pre/post program evaluation.

Table 1: SRSB schools participating in the HRY program

School	Number of youth facilitators	Number of grade 9s participating in HRY
Cape Breton Highlands Academy/ Education Centre	10	30
Inverness Academy/ Education Centre	12	20
Dalbrae Academy/ Education Centre	10	26
Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre	12	40
Richmond Academy/ Education Centre	22	45
East Antigonish Academy/ Education Centre	5	35
Guysborough Academy/ Chedabucto Education Centre	12	27
Canso/Fanning Academy/ Education Centre	12	15
St. Mary's Academy/ Education Centre	14	22
Dr. J.H Gillis Regional High School	60	86
Total	169	346

2.2 Leadership Development: Youth Facilitator Recruitment, Training and Support

In early September, contact with the Strait Regional School Board and participating schools was initiated by the SRSB coordinator and thus began recruitment for the youth facilitators (YF). Once recruitment was done for the 10 participating schools in the region, training of both teachers and facilitators took place in late September and early October.

Trainings are broken into three parts to ensure the YFs are prepared to begin facilitating to the Grade 9 students. Incorporating feedback from both students and previous coordinators, we changed the format of training to include a half day pre training, which was an introduction to the HRY program and expectations of YFs for the year, followed by a one-full day regional training, where schools came together for a full day workshop on key themes, this year focusing on Violence, Sexual Orientation and Gender, and Hypersexualization. The full day training was then followed up with another half day training at each school to prepare them for the first session and strengthen facilitation skills. In addition, monthly check-ins between coordinators and youth facilitators unfolded as planned, and as in previous year some schools required more hands-on support and thus demanded an increase of flexibility of their coordinators.

2.3 Teacher Involvement

This year the HRY program engaged 10 lead teachers (one per school) in supporting the delivery of the HRY curriculum to grade 9 students. These teachers were trained along with youth facilitators and played a key role in scheduling and helping YFs prepare for the 12 curriculum sessions. At Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School, the region's largest school, an additional seven (7) teachers provided in-class support to youth facilitators and students.

3. Grade 9 Student Evaluation Results

The HRY program's evaluation of grade 9 students was organized around the following objectives:

- To assist youth in developing the attitudes, values and skills they need to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- To increase students' understanding of racial and cultural diversity specifically related to the Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian and Acadian communities
- To increase students' awareness of issues related to violence prevention and social inequities from a gender-based perspective.
- To foster youth development through peer support, critical thinking, open dialogue and experiential learning.

A total of **336 grade 9 students** within the Strait Regional School Board district completed the 2014-15 HRY post-survey. Students in all schools except one (Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre) completed the survey; therefore, the survey results are representative of students in nine (9) schools.

Of these students, 46% identified as male, 50% identified as female and 4.5% identified as Trans, Other, or Not Sure.

This section presents an analysis of student responses to survey questions based on the abovementioned objectives.

3.1 Develop attitudes, values and skills to build and maintain healthy relationships

This objective aims to help students identify and practice skills for making and maintaining healthy relationships. The students have an opportunity to practice assertive communication, active listening, setting boundaries and conflict resolution skills. They do this through a variety of participatory activities and discussion. The success indicators for this objective are:

- Can identify and explain the different forms of violence
- Understand and can explain the cycle of relationship violence
- Can identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship
- Can express my needs and expectations for healthy relationships
- Knows where to get help or send others for help if they experience violence
- Understand the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication
- Able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts
- Practice respecting others personal boundaries
- Can communicate my personal boundaries to others

3.1.1 Student Response to Indicators

Students were asked two sets of questions based on the abovementioned objective and indicators: one to gauge their knowledge related to violence and relationships, and another to self-assess their skills in practicing healthy boundaries and communication (see tables below).

In the first cluster of questions, the strongest positive responses were to statements specific to healthy relationships. 86% of students indicated that they could identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship “always” or “most of the time”, while slightly fewer (85%) said they could express their needs and expectations for healthy relationships. A slightly smaller proportion of students (83% and 82.5% respectively) reported that they could identify and explain the different forms of violence, and that they know where to get help or send others for help if they experience violence, “always” or “most of the time.”

The weakest response was to the statement “I understand and can explain the cycle of relationship violence”; 80% said “always” or “most of the time”. This was also the statement to which the most students (20%) responded “sometimes” or “never”. Although the vast majority still agreed with the statement, the response was slightly more mixed/uncertain than with the other questions.

“I learned the most from the topic on abuse, where I found out there are many more forms of abuse than I previously thought.”
– Grade 9 Student

In the cluster of questions about communication and boundaries, as with the first cluster, the majority of students responded in a positive way. Approximately 85% said that they could both understand the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication; and practice respecting others’ personal boundaries; “always” or “most of the time.” Slightly fewer – 80.5% and 78.5% respectively – reported that they can communicate their personal boundaries to others, and that they are able use assertive communication to resolve conflicts, “always” or “most of the time.”

The statement that received the largest percentage of ambivalent or negative responses (“sometimes” or “never”) was “I am able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts” (21%). However, more students (5%) responded “never” to the statement “I practice respecting others’ personal boundaries” than to any other statement.

Table 2: Grade 9 Students Response to Violence and Relationships

Statement	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I can identify and explain the different forms of violence	44.79% 146	38.04% 124	14.11% 46	3.07% 10	326
I understand and can explain the cycle of relationship violence	43.56% 142	36.20% 118	16.56% 54	3.68% 12	326
I can identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship	53.09% 172	33.02% 107	12.96% 42	0.93% 3	324
I can express my needs and expectations for healthy relationships	51.08% 165	33.75% 109	13.62% 44	1.55% 5	323
I know where to get help or send others for help if they experience violence	51.09% 164	31.46% 101	14.02% 45	3.43% 11	321

Table 3: Grade 9 Students Response to Communication and Personal Boundaries

Statement	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I understand the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication	55.11% 178	29.72% 96	13.00% 42	2.17% 7	323
I am able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts	39.75% 128	38.82% 125	19.25% 62	2.17% 7	322
I practice respecting others personal boundaries	57.01% 183	27.73% 89	10.59% 34	4.67% 15	321
I can communicate my personal boundaries to others	41.19% 131	39.31% 125	16.98% 54	2.52% 8	318

3.1.2. Discussion of Student Responses

Students' responses to these indicators demonstrate an overall strong understanding of violence and relationships and confidence in practicing assertive communication and boundaries. The proportion of positive responses ("always" or "most of the time") ranged from 78.5% to 86%, indicating that either students started off with a high level of knowledge and skill, students gained a good deal of knowledge and skill through the HRY program, or a combination of the two.

In the category of violence and relationships, students reported the most confidence in being able to identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship. Conversely, they appeared somewhat less confident in their understanding of and ability to explain the cycle of relationship violence. This area may require more attention in curriculum design and facilitator training.

With regard to communication and boundaries, students demonstrated a positive attitude toward these healthy relationship skills, but varying levels of confidence in actually using them. For instance, while 85% of students can differentiate between passive, assertive and aggressive communication, only 79% feel able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts. Likewise, while many students (85%) reported that they practice respecting others' personal boundaries, fewer (80.5%) said they can communicate their personal boundaries to others.

This disconnect between knowledge and action – although relatively small – could potentially be addressed by the integration into the HRY curriculum of more activities that provide students with a chance to practice the skills required to create and maintain healthy relationships.

3.2 Increase understanding of racial and cultural diversity specifically related to the Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian and Acadian communities

This objective encourages youth to consider diversity in developing both empathy and a deeper social analysis. Throughout program delivery diversity is highlighted in several sessions. Students have the opportunity to analyze stereotypes and discuss the connection with discrimination as a form of violence. They learn about the importance of oral traditions (folklore and talking circle) and are invited to share their own stories. They learn about the continuum of gender identities, and discuss terms and issues related to diverse sexual orientations. They have the opportunity to examine personal diversity through self-identity.

**"Instead of just focusing on violence in relationships, you should also explain what to do if someone is being pressured into something they aren't ready for, just because it's expected of them."
– Grade 9 Student**

**"I liked learning about healthy aspects in a relationship. It helped me learn that my relationship was nowhere near healthy."
– Grade 9 Student**

The success indicators for this objective are:

- Recognize diversity and what makes me unique
- Can identify diversity in my community
- Respect cultures other than my own in my community

3.2.1 Student Response to Indicators

Students provided an overwhelmingly positive response to the indicators for this objective (see Table 4). Ninety-one per cent (91%) reported that they respect cultures other than their own in their community “always” or “most of the time”; 88% said they understand how their gender affects their experience and life; 85% said they recognize diversity and what makes them unique; and 83% said they can identify diversity in their own community.

Relatively few (9%) reported that they “sometimes” or “never” respect cultures other than their own in their community. The statement with the most ambivalent/negative responses (16.5%) was “I can identify diversity in my community.” Three per cent (3%) of students responded “never” to this question.

Table 4: Grade 9 Students Response to Diversity and Gender

Statement	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I recognize diversity and what makes me unique	54.04% 174	30.75% 99	12.42% 40	2.80% 9	322
I can identify diversity in my community	48.13% 154	35.31% 113	13.44% 43	3.13% 10	320
I respect cultures other than my own in my community	70.19% 226	20.50% 66	7.76% 25	1.55% 5	322

3.2.2. Discussion of Student Responses

Responses to the abovementioned statements are inherently difficult to analyze, because the majority of respondents want to be perceived as inclusive, tolerant, non-judgmental etc. Although the vast majority claimed to recognize diversity and respect cultures other than their own, we do not know to what extent their statements or self-perception align with their everyday actions.

Some students do not see themselves as knowledgeable about, or embracing of, diversity. For instance, ten (10) or 3% of students said that they “never” can identify diversity in their community. A similar percentage said they “never” recognize diversity and what makes them unique.

“I learned the most from the first lesson, where you see how diverse everyone is from one another.”
– Grade 9 Student

Five students, or 1.5% of respondents, responded “never” to the statement “I respect cultures other than my own in my community.”

These responses suggest that although the majority of students possess a pro-social attitude upon completing the HRY program, there is room in the HRY curriculum for deeper conversations about diversity that connect students with their own cultural histories and those of their peers.

3.3 Increase students’ awareness of issues related to violence prevention and social inequities from a gender-based perspective

This objective involves expanding the students’ understanding of gender and stereotypes as well as building an understanding of the underlying social inequities such as homophobia, racism and sexism and that they can lead to various forms of violence. Violence affects everyone differently depending on social and cultural factors such as gender, socio-economic status, and religion.

Students have an opportunity to talk together about these inequities, how they can lead to different kinds of violence, and how violence can be prevented or stopped. The HRY program uses a gender based perspective to explore issues and social inequities that are both a cause and a form of violence.

The success indicators for this objective are:

- Understand how stereotypes reinforce discrimination and negatively affect self-esteem
- Can identify gender stereotypes associated with being male and female
- Know the correct language to use when talking about gender identify and sexual orientation (i.e. Gay, Lesbian, Trans, Pan-Sexual)
- Can see and understand how homophobia is connected to other forms of violence such as racism and sexism
- Understand how my gender affects my experiences and life

“I would like you to start looking at sexuality and romantic orientation, and teach more about gender identity, because it’s very important.”
– Grade 9 Student

3.3.1 Student Response to Indicators

Students reported a high level of knowledge with regard to gender and sexual orientation (see Table 5). The vast majority of respondents, 93%, stated that they understand how stereotypes reinforce discrimination and negatively affect self-esteem “always” or “most of the time.” Ninety-one per cent (91%) said they could identify gender stereotypes associated with being male and female “always” or “most of the time”. Slightly fewer, but still a significant majority, responded “always” or “most of the time” to the following: “I can see and understand how homophobia is connected to other forms of violence such as racism and sexism” (88%); “I understand how my gender

“I liked the session when we talked about different genders because I watched as other minds were open about discussing LGBTQ and it opened my mind as well.”
– Grade 9 Student

affects my experiences and life” (88%); “I now know the correct language to use when talking about gender identity and sexual orientation (i.e. Gay, Lesbian, Trans, Pan-Sexual)” (85%).

Although the above statement (“I now know the correct language...”) received the smallest proportion of positive responses, the statement to which the most students responded “never” was “I can see and understand how homophobia is connected to other forms of violence and sexism.

Table 5: Grade 9 Students Response to Stereotypes and Sexual Orientation

Statement	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I understand how stereotypes reinforce discrimination and negatively affect self-esteem	64.67% 205	28.08% 89	5.05% 16	2.21% 7	317
I can identify gender stereotypes associated with being male and female	63.21% 201	28.30% 90	6.29% 20	2.20% 7	318
I now know the correct language to use when talking about gender identity and sexual orientation (ie. Gay, Lesbian, Trans, Pan-Sexual)	53.48% 169	31.65% 100	12.03% 38	2.85% 9	316
I can see and understand how homophobia is connected to other forms of violence such as racism and sexism	58.54% 185	29.75% 94	7.59% 24	4.11% 13	316
I understand how my gender affects my experience and life	63.86% 205	23.99% 77	9.97% 32	2.18% 7	321

3.3.2. Discussion of Student Responses

As with the group of questions about diversity, it cannot be assumed that students’ self-assessment of their level of awareness is a true reflection of their actual behavior. What their responses do demonstrate, however, is their level of *confidence* in what they know and think.

Among students’ positive responses to the above statements, the proportion of responses to “always” was consistently higher than the proportion of “most of the time” - more so than in other sets of questions. This demonstrates a high level of confidence among students in their knowledge and awareness about stereotypes related to gender and sexuality.

“The ads, the way people make stupid ads and sexualize it and have 'hot' girls.”
– Grade 9 Student

There was some ambivalence in students' responses to these statements. A significant number (12%) of students said they "sometimes" used the correct language to talk about gender and sexuality. Likewise, 10% of respondents "sometimes" understand how their gender affects their experience and life.

These responses indicate that the majority of students feel comfortable and knowledgeable with regard to sexual orientation, stereotypes and gender identity, yet their critical analysis – particularly with regard to the intersection of gender and violence – could be deepened.

**"I enjoyed learning about stereotypes because it made me have a better understanding of how everyone is mistreated and how it's so often used in the media."
– Grade 9 Student**

3.4 Foster youth development through peer support, critical thinking, open dialogue and experiential learning

The HRY program strives to foster positive youth development through peer support, youth empowerment, meaningful contribution and experiential learning. The focus is on creating a supportive peer environment at two levels: (1) youth facilitators as peer educators and (2) methodologies that build trust among peers for respectful participation.

This section focuses on students' perceptions of their learning from other students (Youth Facilitators) and their peers as well as their engagement with classroom methodologies.

The success indicators for this objective are:

- Able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class
- The facilitators clearly explained the topics
- Understand how the topics relate and shape my personal experience (i.e. how violence affects my personal relationships)
- Found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school helpful
- Found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me
- Grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school

3.4.1 Student Response to Indicators

Students' responses to questions based on the above indicators were more varied than in other groups of questions (see Table 6). A good majority (84%) of students responded "always" or "most of the time" to the statement "The facilitators clearly explained the topics." Fewer students, but still a majority (77% in both cases) stated that they understand how the topics relate and shape their personal experiences, and that grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school, "always" or "most of the time." Significantly fewer gave positive responses to the statements "I found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school

helpful" (68%), "I was able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class" (66%), and "I found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me" (59%).

Of the students who did respond in a positive manner to these statements, there was a roughly even split between those who responded "always" or "most of the time." The only exceptions were the statement "Grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school," (53% responded "always" and 23.5% responded "most of the time") and "I found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me" (26% responded "always" and 34% responded "most of the time").

Forty-one per cent (41%) of students responded "sometimes" or "never" to the latter statement. About one-third of students (34%) said they were able to express their opinions and share their experience in the class "sometimes" or "never." A similar proportion (32%) had an ambivalent or negative response to the statement "I found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school helpful." Roughly one-fifth of students responded "sometimes" or "never" to the remaining statements.

Among those who gave ambivalent or negative responses, relatively few selected "never." For instance, about 9% of students said that they never found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in their school helpful, while 24% found it sometimes helpful. Likewise, 8% of students indicated that grade 9 students should never receive healthy relationship education in school, but 15% said that they sometimes should.

Table 6: Grade 9 Students Response to Group experience

Statement	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I was able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class	30.98% 101	35.28% 115	26.69% 87	7.06% 23	326
The facilitators clearly explained the topics	40.12% 130	43.52% 141	15.12% 49	1.23% 4	324
I understand how the topics relate and shape my personal experiences (i.e. how violence effects my personal relationships)	38.39% 124	38.70% 125	17.34% 56	5.57% 18	323
I found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school helpful	34.47% 111	33.23% 107	23.60% 76	8.70% 28	322
I found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me	25.55% 82	33.64% 108	23.05% 74	17.76% 57	321

Grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school	53.09% 172	23.46% 76	15.43% 50	8.02% 26	324
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3.4.2. Discussion of Student Responses

The variety of responses to the abovementioned questions suggests that there is a range of student experiences with the HRY program and its method of delivery. While it is very well received and perceived as valuable by many, there is a subset of youth with whom it resonates less strongly. For instance, roughly two-thirds of students felt able to express their opinions and share their experiences in the class, while one-third they could not (or could only sometimes) do so. Likewise, while about two-thirds of students found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in their school helpful, about one-third did not, or only sometimes did. Most significantly, less than two-thirds of students felt it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as them.

There was relatively more agreement among students with regard to the usefulness of healthy relationships education for grade 9 students, and the relevance of the topics to their own experiences. The area with most agreement was the clarity with which the facilitators explained the topics – although interestingly, students were more or less evenly divided between completely or somewhat agreeing.

“The students did a good job telling us about the violence in society.”
– Grade 9 Student

A few insights can be drawn from these response trends:

- There is a need to strengthen facilitator training and/or adjust curriculum activities to ensure that all students feel safe and comfortable to participate in HRY sessions/discussions.
- Enhanced facilitator training would also help address the lack of agreement among students regarding the helpfulness of peer education.
- Increasing student “buy-in” to the program should be a priority. This may include more emphasis of the importance of violence prevention (the “why” of HRY in the initial session), efforts to engage students more meaningfully in experiential learning, and ensuring that the discussion topics are as relevant as possible to their lives and experiences.
- Attention needs to be paid to the age-appropriateness of activities and educational content, to ensure that students do not become “bored” or feel patronized.
- It could be the case that some students have not reached a level of maturity where they can fully engage in the conversations facilitated within the HRY program.
- Separate gender activities should be reviewed to ensure they are working well for the majority of students.

“I enjoyed having classes taught by students. It was a smaller age gap and made things more relatable. Kids know how to get through to other kids.”
– Grade 9 Student

3.5 Gender Analysis of Student Responses

Gender analysis is a key component of the HRY program evaluation process. Through examining the similarities variations in how the program is experienced by youth of different genders, we can better tailor the program to the needs of girls, boys and trans/non-binary youth.

Of the 336 grade 9 students who completed the post-survey, 46% identified as male, 50% identified as female and 4.5% identified as Trans, Other, or Not Sure.

Below is a summary and discussion of areas in which there were high, moderate and low levels of gender consensus between responses of female-identified and male-identified students. This is followed by an analysis of responses by students who identified as “trans,” “other” or “not sure” compared to those of cisgender¹ students, using the same high-moderate-low scale. In instances of moderate and low gender consensus, the difference is explained (i.e. girls agreed more than guys). Finally, there is a summary of overall gender themes and a discussion of the gender analysis.

For the purpose of this analysis, “gender consensus” refers to the extent to which students of different genders agree with a series of indicators, measured by the percentage difference in their responses. A difference of less than 5% in responses constitutes a high level of gender consensus, a difference of 5%-10% is moderate, and a difference of more than 10% is low. To simplify the analysis, we are comparing percentages of students from respective gender categories who have responded either “all of the time” or “most of the time” to the series of statements from the previous section (See Appendix A for complete gender analysis data).

3.5.1 Female and Male Student Responses

Among female-identified and male-identified students, there was relative gender consensus on 9 indicators out of 23 (about 39%). Students reported similar levels of understanding and competence in areas such as knowledge about violence, communication and boundaries, and stereotypes. There was relative agreement with regard to group experience, with some exceptions (see below).

“I learned the whole LGBTQ acronym, and what each thing was, and I learned about gender/sexuality equality.”
– Grade 9 Student, Female

There was moderate gender consensus on 11 (48%) of student indicators. Female-identified students identified more strongly than male-identified students with four indicators directly related to healthy/unhealthy relationships. They also agreed more than males with statements about communication, diversity, gender and homophobia. Male-identified students, however, agreed more than female-identified students that “I was able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class.”

¹ A cisgender person is someone whose gender identity corresponds with their assigned sex at birth; a non-cisgender person is someone whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex at birth. Non-cisgender persons may identify as trans, non-binary, non-cis, genderqueer, gender questioning, gender fluid, gender defiant, two-spirited, a gender category not listed here, or no gender category.

The areas of low gender consensus included about 13% of all indicators and were again very gender-imbalanced: significantly more females than males said they practice respecting others' personal boundaries, know the correct language to for gender identity and sexual orientation, and believe that grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school.

Areas of high gender consensus

- Can identify and explain the different forms of violence
- Understand the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication
- Can communicate my personal boundaries to others
- Recognize diversity and what makes me unique
- Understand how stereotypes reinforce discrimination and negatively affect self-esteem
- The facilitators clearly explained the topics
- Understand how the topics relate and shape my personal experiences (i.e. how violence affects my personal relationships)
- Found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school helpful
- Found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me

Areas of moderate gender consensus

Female-identified students responded "always" or "most of the time" more often than male students:

- Understand and can explain the cycle of relationship violence
- Can identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship
- Can express my needs and expectations of healthy relationships
- Know where to get help or send others for help if they experience violence
- Able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts
- Can identify diversity in my community
- Respect cultures other than my own in my community
- Understand how my gender affects my experiences and life
- Can identify gender stereotypes associated with being male and female
- Can see and understand how homophobia is connected to other forms of violence such as racism and sexism

**"It taught us how to treat other people, and how you should be treated."
– Grade 9 Student, Male**

Male-identified students responded "always" or "most of the time" more often than female-identified students:

- Able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class

Areas of low gender consensus

Female-identified students responded “always” or “most of the time” more often than male students:

- Practice respecting others’ personal boundaries
- Now know the correct language to use when talking about gender identity and sexual orientation (i.e. Gay, Lesbian, Trans, Pan-Sexual)
- Grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school

3.5.2 Non-cisgender and cisgender student responses

Among non-cisgender-identified and cisgender-identified students, there was consensus on 5 or 23% of statements. There was relative agreement in understanding of communication and practicing boundaries, recognizing and identifying diversity, and thinking critically about gender.

Areas of moderate gender consensus constituted 18% of all statements. Discrepancies were seen in student responses to statements about explaining the types of violence, using assertive communication, and understanding/identifying stereotypes (including gender ones). In all cases, cisgender-identified students agreed more strongly with the statements than their non-cisgender counterparts.

In a total of 13 areas (51%), there was a significant difference in the responses of cisgender-identified and non-cisgender-identified students. As with the “moderate” category, cisgender students consistently agreed with the statements more than non-cisgender students. The areas in which the discrepancy was observed encompassed both program content (violence/healthy relationships, boundaries, diversity, gender/sexuality) and group process (ability to participate, facilitation, relevance, helpfulness of program).

Areas of high gender consensus

- Understand the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication
- Practice respecting others’ personal boundaries
- Recognize diversity and what makes me unique
- Can identify diversity in my community
- Understand how my gender affects my experiences and life

Areas of moderate gender consensus

Cisgender-identified students responded “always” or “most of the time” more often than non-cisgender-identified students:

- Can identify and explain the different forms of violence
- Able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts
- Understand how stereotypes reinforce discrimination and negatively affect self-esteem
- Can identify gender stereotypes associated with being male and female

“No matter what gender you are everyone should be treated the same.”
– Grade 9 Student, Female

Areas of low gender consensus

Cisgender-identified students responded "always" or "most of the time" more often than non-cisgender-identified students:

- Understand and can explain the cycle of relationship violence
- Can identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship
- Can express my needs and expectations for healthy relationships
- Know where to get help or send others for help if they experience violence
- Can communicate my personal boundaries to others
- Respect cultures other than my own in my community
- Now know the correct language to use when talking about gender identity and sexual orientation (i.e. Gay, Lesbian, Trans, Pan-Sexual)
- Can see and understand how homophobia is connected to other forms of violence such as racism and sexism
- Able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class
- The facilitators clearly explained the topics
- Understand how the topics relate and shape my personal experiences (i.e. how violence affects my personal relationships)
- Found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school helpful
- Found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me
- Grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school

3.5.3 Overall Gender Themes

There were some similarities and differences across the two categories of analysis (female/male and cisgender/non-cisgender). In a two areas there was high gender consensus across the board:

- Understand the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication
- Recognize diversity and what makes me unique

Moderate consensus on the following subjects was observed among students of all genders:

- Able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts
- Can identify gender stereotypes associated with being male and female

There was low gender consensus among female and male students, and among cisgender and non-cisgender students, on just one statement:

- Was able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class

**"I learned a lot of bad signs pointing to an unhealthy relationship."
– Grade 9 Student, Male**

Although there were a few interesting commonalities, it is clear that the areas in which female and male students agree and disagree – for the most part – are different from the areas in which cisgender and non-cisgender students disagree.

3.5.4 Discussion of Gender Analysis

It is evident that gendered differences in response are present in a majority of areas. This is true for both the female/male analysis and the cisgender/non-cisgender analysis.

Overall, it seems that female students report a higher level of understanding and competence in HRY topic areas than males. As we do not have a pre-survey with which to compare these results, the difference can be attributed to at least three possible factors: a) male-identified students are starting out the program with less knowledge/competence than female-identified students; or b) female-identified students are learning more than their male-identified counterparts; or c) a combination of the above. Regardless, this pattern indicates a need to focus on better engaging male-identified students in learning and skill building through the HRY program.

**“Being racist, sexist or homophobic or being mean in general is wrong and shouldn’t happen.”
– Grade 9 Student, Female**

The most affirming pattern is that there is a high level of gender consensus on statements related to group experience. This suggests that the HRY program is engaging female and male students as equal participants in the classroom. The only exception was the statement “I was able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class.” More males than females responded “always” or “some of the time” to this statement. Interestingly, though, a higher proportion of female-identified students responded “always” to this statement. This nuance is hidden by the combination of the two response options in the analysis, but it is significant here because it corrects the perception that males have an easier time participating, or that females feel uncomfortable participating.

In the analysis of cisgender and non-cisgender student responses, the most outstanding pattern is the relatively high level of discrepancy – while among female and male students only 14% of statements had low gender consensus, cisgender and non-cisgender student responses differed significantly in 51% or over half of all statements.

Not only did non-cisgender students disagree with their “other gender” counterparts more frequently than male and female students; the *extent* of the discrepancy was much greater in the cis/non-cis analysis than in the female/male analysis. For instance, in the group of statements concerning violence and relationships, the difference between cisgender and non-cisgender student responses was roughly double the difference between female and male student responses (see Table 7).

Table 7: Grade 9 Student Differences in Gender Consensus – Female/Male and Cisgender/Non-Cisgender*

Statement	Difference between female and male student responses	Difference between cisgender and non-cisgender student responses	Overall difference
I can identify and explain the different forms of violence	2.57%	6.37%	3.8%
I understand and can explain the cycle of relationship violence	5.39%	13.36%	7.97%
I can identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship	9.43%	17.37%	7.94%
I can express my needs and expectations for healthy relationships	8.17%	16.07%	7.9%
I know where to get help or send others for help if they experience violence	8.32%	14.66%	6.34%

**In all cases here, females agreed more than males and cisgender students agreed more than non-cisgender students.*

The group of statements in which non-cisgender student responses differed the most significantly from cisgender student responses was that concerning group experience. There, the difference in responses ranged from roughly 16% to 36% (see Table 8). This finding is concerning because it suggests that the group process is not adequately meeting the needs of non-cisgender students. In four of the six statements, fewer than half of non-cisgender students agreed or somewhat agreed with the statements. In the statements where most did agree, that majority was less than two-thirds.

The most significant discrepancy between cisgender and non-cisgender student responses was for the statement “I found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender of me” – only 25% (3) of non-cisgender students agreed, and in fact, all of these students responded “some of the time”; none responded “always”. This indicates that separate gender activities are, on the whole, not working well for students who do not conform to the male/female gender binary.

Table 8: Grade 9 Student Response to Group Experience – Cisgender and Non-Cisgender Differences

Statement	“Always” or “Most of the time” – Cisgender (female and male) average	“Always” or “Most of the time” – Non-cisgender	Difference in response
I was able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class	68%	38.46%	29.5%
The facilitators clearly explained the topics	85%	61.53%	23.47%
I understand how the topics relate and shape my personal experiences (i.e. how violence affects my personal relationships)	79%	46.15%	32.85%

I found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school helpful	69%	46.15%	22.85%
I found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me	60.72%	25%	35.72%
Grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school	78%	61.54%	16.46%

One caveat should be made here. Although we take the gender self-identification of all students at face value when they complete evaluation surveys, it is possible that some students may have selected “other” or “not sure” as their gender because they did not take the question – or the survey – seriously. We do not believe this to be the case for the majority of the 13 students who completed the survey and checked off one of the non-cisgender categories, but if some did select these categories as a form of protest, it would skew our findings.

The following comments made by a non-cisgender-identifying student, however, seem to confirm our gender analysis:

“No one [knows the correct language for gender identity and sexual orientation]. The correct language is what the person tells you their label is.

I really didn't like being split up by gender. I didn't like that the girls had pink papers and the boys had blue. There was not purpose for this and it made me uncomfortable, and I bet that other people that do and don't fit in the gender-binary were also made uncomfortable.

In the presentation about gender identity and sexual orientation, I noticed that a lot of things were wrong, as a person who is very involved with the LGBTQA+ community. I would very much recommend that the people who make the sheets and definitions meet with the schools GSA or people who know a lot about the community.”

These comments illustrate a broad set of issues affecting non-cisgender students in the HRY classroom. They indicate a need to update the HRY curriculum and facilitator training approach *in dialogue with students* who do not conform to the gender binary. They call into question the safety of separate gender activities for students who do not see themselves as “girls” or “guys.” Finally, they raise an important point about “correct” language for gender and sexuality – there is no such thing, as the language is always changing; the point is to educate ourselves and others about LGBTQA+² lives, respect, and non-discrimination.

It could very well be that non-cisgender students do not feel very engaged in the HRY program because it does not speak to their realities and in fact reinforces the oppression they experience outside of the classroom. This must change if we hope to make the program useful, relevant and empowering for all students.

² Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/Two-spirited, Queer, Asexual and additional sexual/gender identities.

4. Youth Facilitator Evaluation Results

As outlined earlier, the HRY program has two key objectives relating to the experiences of youth facilitators. They are as follows:

- To provide a youth-centred peer facilitated program that engages Grade 11 and 12 youth in developing facilitation and leadership skills and in deepening their understanding of violence prevention and promoting healthy relationships.
- To integrate a youth-centred approach that fosters youth to take a leadership role within their school.

Youth facilitators completed both a pre-survey and a post-survey. The purpose of this approach was to gain insight into their growth in facilitation skills and knowledge over the course of the HRY program. There were 133 respondents for the pre-survey and 91 respondents for the post-survey.³

4.1 Provide a youth-centered peer facilitated program that engages Grade 11 and 12 youth in developing facilitation and leadership skills and in deepening their understanding of violence prevention and promoting healthy relationships

This objective encompasses two major elements of youth facilitator experience: their development as peer leaders, and their knowledge of the subject matter included in the HRY curriculum. Of course, the two are intrinsically linked: effective facilitation relies on both background knowledge and concrete skills for guiding conversations.

The pre- and post-surveys for youth facilitators followed two sets of indicators for this objective:

Facilitation and leadership skills

- See how HRY benefits grade 9s
- Comfortable speaking in front of younger students
- Able to share my opinion and experience with others
- Able to actively listen to others' experiences
- Confident in my facilitation skills
- Confident in my leadership skills
- Ask for help when I need it
- See myself as a role model for younger students
- Use conflict resolution skills to solve problems
- Know what to do if someone tells me they are in an abusive relationship
- Can explain what diversity in Nova Scotia looks like
- Challenge racism, homophobia, and sexism when I see, hear, or feel it

“I enjoyed my sessions and hope [the grade 9 students] learned from us. It is nice to think we could have made some positive impact.”
– Youth Facilitator

³ The HRY program retained most, but not all, youth facilitators who were trained at the beginning of the program.

Knowledge of issues

- Healthy relationships
- Unhealthy relationships
- Diversity
- Mi'kmaw culture
- African Nova Scotian culture
- Assertive communication
- Personal boundaries
- Hypersexualization
- Hypermasculinity
- Gender stereotypes
- Relationship violence
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity

“I loved seeing the students learning about important topics that they had never known before, like the cycle of violence.”
– Youth Facilitator

The following analysis of youth facilitator responses compares the percentages of respondents who “always” or “usually” agreed with statements prior to participating as HRY youth facilitators, to percentages of those who “always” or “usually” agreed after facilitating the program. (See Appendix B for complete youth facilitator response data.)

4.1.1 Youth Facilitator Response to Indicators

Facilitation and Leadership Skills

Pre-program response

In examining youth facilitators’ responses pre-program delivery, an initial impression is that these youth reported a high level of competence prior to facilitating the HRY program (see Table 9). All positive (“always” or “usually”) responses, pre and post, fell within the 70%-100% range, with the exception of one statement (“I can explain what diversity in Nova Scotia looks like”) that received a combined positive response of only 66%.

Of the 12 statements to which youth facilitators were asked to respond, the top six (in terms of positive response) were: “I am able to actively listen to others’ experiences” (98.5%); “I am able to share my opinion and experience with others” (93%); “I am comfortable speaking in front of younger students” (92.5%); “I challenge racism, homophobia, and sexism when I see, hear, or feel it” (92%); “I ask for help when I need it” (92%); and “I see how HRY benefits grade 9s” (89.5%).

“[The grade 9 students] could relate to us more than their teachers, they seemed comfortable most of the time.”
– Youth Facilitator

The six statements that received the lowest percentage of positive responses were: “I can explain what diversity in Nova Scotia looks like” (66%); “I know what to do if someone tells me they are in an abusive relationship” (73%); “I am confident in my facilitation skills” (80%); “I see myself as a role model for younger students” (81%); “I use conflict resolution skills to solve my problems” (86%); and “I am confident in my leadership skills” (87%).

Pre- and post-program comparison

Youth facilitators reported growth in all but two categories: being able to share one’s opinion and experience with others (slight negative change), and asking for help when one needs it (virtually no change).

In several areas, growth was modest: there was a less than 5% change in students responding positively to the following statements: “I use conflict resolution to solve problems” (4%); “I am comfortable speaking in front of younger students” (3% change); “I see how HRY benefits grade 9s” (2.5% change); “I challenge racism, homophobia, and sexism when I see, hear or feel it” (1% change); “I see myself as a role model for younger students” (0.4% change); and “I am able to actively listen to others’ experiences” (0.4% change). In the areas in which change was negative, absent or marginal, students had initially reported high levels of competence – at least 81%.

The areas of most significant growth include: explaining what diversity in Nova Scotia looks like (20%); knowing what to do if someone says they are in an abusive relationship (19%); confidence in facilitation skills (6%); and confidence in leadership skills (5%).

Table 9: Youth Facilitator Response Pre and Post Program Delivery – Facilitation and Leadership Skills

Statement	Pre-Survey “Always + Usually” Percentage	Post-Survey “Always + Usually” Percentage	Difference Percentage
I see how HRY benefits grade 9s	89.47	91.96	2.49
I am comfortable speaking in front of younger students	92.48	95.40	2.92
I am able to share my opinion and experience with others	93.24	93.02	-0.22
I am able to actively listen to others’ experiences	98.48	98.85	.37
I am confident in my facilitation skills	80.30	86.21	5.91
I am confident in my leadership skills	87.02	91.96	4.94
I ask for help when I need it	91.66	91.67	0.01
I see myself as a role model for younger students	81.20	81.61	0.41
I use conflict resolution skills to solve problems	85.60	89.65	4.05
I know what to do if someone tells me they are in an abusive relationship	72.93	91.87	18.94
I can explain what diversity in Nova Scotia looks like	66.17	86.05	19.88
I challenge racism, homophobia, and sexism when I see, hear, or feel it	91.67	93.03	1.36

Knowledge of Issues

Pre-program response

Compared to youth facilitators' responses to questions about facilitation and leadership skills, their self-assessment of knowledge on HRY topics was more varied (see Table 10).

The areas that received the most positive responses were healthy relationships (95%); gender stereotypes (95%); unhealthy relationships (92%); sexual orientation (84%); gender identity (83%); and assertive communication (79%).

The areas that received the least positive responses were: Mi'kmaq culture (44%); hypermasculinity (49%); hypersexualization (50%); African Nova Scotian culture (51%); personal boundaries (64%); and diversity (79%).

Pre- and post-program comparison

After facilitating HRY, youth facilitators reported increased knowledge in all but one area (gender stereotypes). There was modest (less than 5%) growth in knowledge of just one topic, healthy relationships (0.75%). More significant growth (5%-9%) occurred in the following topic areas: diversity (85%); African Nova Scotian culture (5%); and unhealthy relationships (5%). Considerable growth (10%-20%) is seen in youth facilitators' reported knowledge of hypermasculinity (37%); hypersexualization (37%); Mi'kmaq culture (11%); and assertive communication (10%).

Table 10: Youth Facilitator Response Pre and Post Program Delivery (HRY Topics)

Topic	Pre-Survey "A Lot + Some" Percentage	Post-Survey "A Lot + Some" Percentage	Difference Percentage
Healthy relationships	94.66	95.41	0.75
Unhealthy relationships	91.60	96.55	4.95
Diversity	78.62	86.21	7.59
Mi'kmaq culture	44.28	55.30	11.02
African Nova Scotian culture	51.14	56.47	5.27
Assertive communication	79.39	89.65	10.26
Personal boundaries	63.84	94.25	30.41
Hypersexualization	50.38	87.20	36.82
Hypermasculinity	48.85	86.05	37.20
Gender stereotypes	94.62	93.02	-1.60
Relationship violence	90.08	96.39	6.31
Sexual orientation	83.96	91.66	7.70
Gender identity	83.20	89.41	6.21

4.1.2. Discussion of Youth Facilitator Responses

When asked about their facilitation/leadership skills and knowledge of HRY topics prior to participating in the program, most youth facilitators showed a good deal of confidence. Keeping in mind that the analysis combined students who completely or somewhat agreed with the statements provided, we can surmise that a) there was some self-identified room for growth, but b) there were relatively few outstanding areas of concern. The areas in which youth facilitators did seem less than confident were awareness of diversity in Nova Scotia; and knowledge of Mi'kmaq culture, African Nova Scotian culture, hypersexualization, hypermasculinity, and personal boundaries. Most of these fall into two broad categories: diversity and hypersexualization.

After completing the HRY program, youth facilitators demonstrated moderate to considerable growth in these "weaker" areas – particularly diversity in Nova Scotia, African Nova Scotian culture, Mi'kmaq culture, hypermasculinity, and hypersexualization.

**"I improved on my leadership and public speaking skills. I learned a lot about how to communicate to a large group of people."
– Youth Facilitator**

There was noticeable positive change not just in these areas, but in areas in which youth facilitators had initially reported high levels of competence and knowledge. One of these was confidence in facilitation and leadership skills – an important result for a program that strives to foster peer mentorship and youth leadership. Knowing how to help someone in an abusive relationship was another key area of growth, as was knowledge of unhealthy relationships and assertive communication.

In observing these patterns, a few insights can be made. First, youth facilitators already possess (or see themselves as possessing) considerable leadership/facilitation skills and knowledge. The youth facilitator training approach and ongoing support model should focus on identifying gaps in skills/knowledge and drawing on existing youth capacities as a source of group learning. Second, the areas of diversity and hypersexualization are key areas of growth, and deserve special attention to ensure that the learning experience for youth facilitators is as rich and meaningful as possible. Third, there is room for more significant growth in youth facilitators' level of confidence in facilitation and leadership skills. Finding more innovative and effective ways to foster these skills among youth should be a priority area for the HRY program.

**"I liked being able to reach out to more shy kids and getting them to open up."
– Youth Facilitator**

4.2 Integrate a youth-centred approach that fosters youth to take a leadership role within their school

This objective concerns the extent to which the HRY program engages youth meaningfully as leaders and active learners. According to youth engagement theory, "Youth engagement is the meaningful of participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity that has a focus outside the individual." Youth engagement is motivated by the following: "Opportunities to follow their passions;

connections with both peers and adults; a sense that their work contributed to making a difference; the ability to take concrete actions; having fun."⁴ Guided by this understanding of youth engagement, the HRY program strives to take a youth-centered approach in the design of its curriculum, its training of youth, and its ongoing support of youth as peer facilitators.

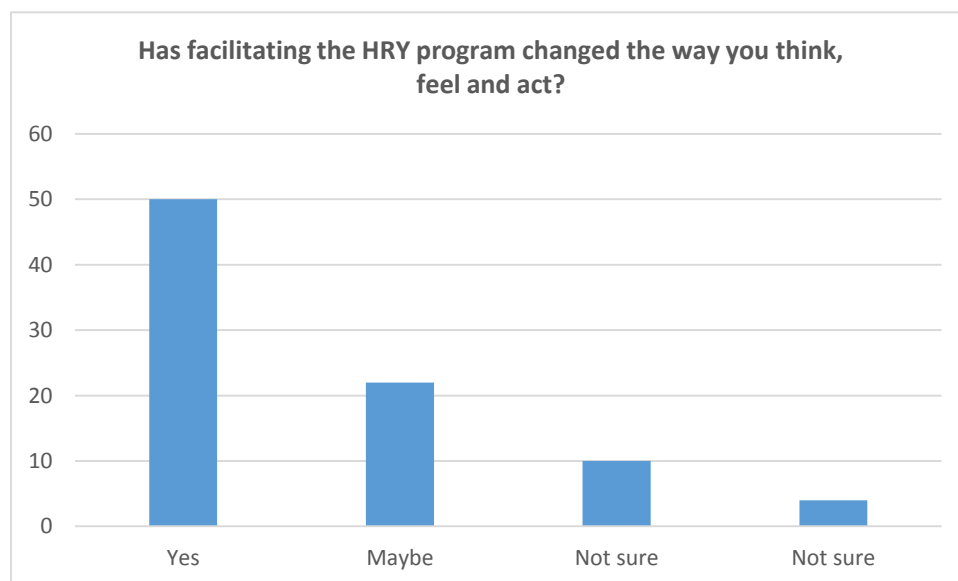
The HRY program did not integrate a specific set of indicators and corresponding questions related to this objective into this year’s evaluation process. However, we did ask youth facilitators a series of questions in the post-survey about their experiences as facilitators. Additionally, the program conducted year-end focus groups with youth facilitators. Their responses provide insight into the success of the HRY program in integrating a youth centered approach. They are organized into the following areas:

- Change in perceptions of self, attitudes, feelings and personal behaviour
- Training, support and challenges
- Overall facilitation experience

4.2.1 Change in perceptions of self, attitudes, feelings and personal behaviour

Upon completing the HRY program, youth facilitators were asked “Has facilitating the HRY program changed the way you think, feel and act?” (See Table 11.) Nearly sixty per cent responded “yes,” about a quarter responded “maybe,” 12 per cent were “not sure,” and 5 per cent said “no.”

Table 11: Youth facilitator change in self-perception



When asked “In what way?” youth facilitators gave a variety of responses. They are summarized below, categorized in terms of knowledge, leadership, attitude, and behaviour.

⁴ HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development, "A Framework for Community Youth Development." <http://youthcore.ca/res/download.php?id=73>

Knowledge

Youth facilitators identified learning in a number of areas – gender, hypersexualization, healthy/unhealthy relationships, sexual orientation, and diversity. The following quotes illustrate their experiences:

"I understand how to identify healthy and unhealthy relationships."

"I learned more about sexual orientation so I better understand if someone's is different than mine."

"[I] think about issues more, think more about what I say, learned more about important topics like hypersexualization."

"It has made me more open to diversity and has given me better understanding of what is healthy and unhealthy in a relationship."

"It has made me more aware of diversity all around me."

"I learned more about separate genders and the challenges of being your gender. What people expect you to do and what they like to let the opposite gender know. And also about being diverse."

**"It has made me more open to diversity and has given me better understanding of what is healthy and unhealthy in a relationship."
– Youth Facilitator**

Leadership

Youth facilitators described increased self-confidence, improved communication and assertiveness skills. Many of them now see themselves as role models to grade 9 students, and are more comfortable speaking in front of a classroom. In their words:

"It changed the way I view teachers, and also the more comfortable the gr. 9's feel with facilitators who are students as well."

"I feel like I learned more about the subject while teaching it, more than when I was learning it in grade 9."

"It has helped me to be more responsible as a person and mature."

"I feel like I am more likely to speak to people about these issues."

"I feel more confident about talking to people in groups and in my abilities to teach a class."

**"I feel more confident about talking to people in groups and in my abilities to teach a class."
– Youth Facilitator**

Attitude

Through their involvement in the HRY program, youth facilitators developed more pro-social attitudes. They identified increased empathy, compassion, consciousness of others, and open-mindedness. According to respondents:

"[I have] more empathy and compassion, think in others shoes."

"I'm a lot more open to stuff now."

"It makes me want to help others with their problems as well as listen to them."

"It made me think about how other people feel and think."

"It changes my thoughts, when I hear other peoples stories."

**"It makes me want to help others with their problems as well as listen to them."
– Youth Facilitator**

Behaviour

Apart from changes in leadership and attitude, the youth facilitators who responded to this question did not report significant changes in their behavior. However, they did describe some ways in which the program reinforced already existing pro-social behavior:

"HRY didn't change the way I think, however it reinforced it."

"I am able to work with younger students better but I'm still the person I was."

"I feel like I have always been this way, which is why I got into facilitating. I have improved, but yeah."

From a youth engagement perspective, the above comments are affirming: they demonstrate that facilitating the HRY program is a meaningful experience for youth, and that it is contributing to their personal growth. They also show that the program is fostering positive connections among youth facilitators, grade 9 students, and teachers.

4.2.2 Training, support and challenges

The HRY program fosters leadership development in youth in three main ways: youth facilitator training, ongoing support of youth facilitators through regular check-ins with the HRY program coordinator, and in-school/classroom support by the grade 9

Healthy Living teacher. In their year-end focus group, youth facilitators were asked to identify what was most useful/challenging with regard to training/support, and what they would add or change to improve these aspects of the HRY program. They wrote their comments on sticky notes, and some of them appear below.

**"I became more social."
– Youth Facilitator**

Most useful

Youth facilitator training in the HRY program comprises three parts: an introductory half-day session, one or two full days of intensive training (including skill-building and deepening of knowledge), and a half-day follow-up session.

Most comments provided by youth facilitators on their training experiences were positive. In particular, they appreciated the opportunity to gain practical skills and knowledge through youth facilitator training. The most useful thing for one youth facilitator was:

"Learning how to be good at being a public speaker; good leadership skills and being a good role model."

For others, the opportunity to travel to a different school and meet other students through HRY training sessions was a highlight. They learned from the other youth facilitators, appreciated hearing others' opinions, and enjoyed the social aspect of the sessions. According to these youth facilitators, the best part was:

"Attending another school and being with people you didn't know."

"I became more social."

Some of the youth facilitators pointed out that they came away from the training sessions with new information or knowledge, particularly about hypersexualization and hypermasculinity. For one youth facilitator"

"Information about new issues like the new cyberbullying laws was the most useful."

**"The check in visits were extremely helpful because they were relaxing and easy to ask questions to the coordinator."
– Youth Facilitator**

After being trained, youth facilitators had ongoing contact with the HRY program coordinator through regular in-school meetings. During these meetings the coordinator and youth facilitators would debrief from previous sessions with grade 9s, prepare for upcoming sessions, and discuss any emerging issues.

Youth facilitators very much appreciated these meetings, as they offered a chance to ask questions, feel supported, and engage in discussion. The meetings always involved food, which one youth facilitator described as "motivation." According to other youth facilitators:

"The check in visits were extremely helpful because they were relaxing and easy to ask questions to the coordinator."

"[We received] encouragement that we were doing well and that what we were doing was important."

In the classroom and between sessions, the grade 9 Healthy Living teacher was an important source of support to youth facilitators. The teacher helped with the scheduling of HRY sessions with their students and remained in the room for the sessions in order to provide facilitation support if need be. Some youth facilitators said that they were especially helpful when it came to unruly classrooms:

"Teachers helped when kids got too rowdy."

"Having the teacher there as a guide, and someone to keep the class from getting out of control."

**"[I appreciated] having the teacher there as a guide, and someone to keep the class from getting out of control."
– Youth Facilitator**

These comments point to the fostering of youth-adult partnerships, an important aspect of youth engagement.

Challenges

Youth facilitators identified a number of challenges in both training and ongoing support. With training, some found aspects of the content or activities less than useful. For instance, there were mixed responses to a new diversity awareness being introduced into the curriculum, which involves students standing in a line or circle and stepping forward or back in response to questions about privilege. When tried out during youth facilitator training, it did not resonate with all:

"When we came back from the diversity line, I feel like a lot of people felt uncomfortable with that. Almost like they felt separated."

Others found some of the content/activities to be irrelevant or redundant. According to these youth facilitators, the least useful aspects of training were:

"The non-relevant activities that somehow are repeated every year."

"Being told things we already know."

Some simply did not enjoy the games that were included in the training model.

With regard to ongoing support, youth facilitators had some critical comments about the role of teachers. Some issues included teachers not informing students of coordinator visits beforehand, teachers not having materials accessible, the need for better scheduling and preparation, and teachers needing more knowledge/info. Another challenge was trying to deliver sessions with a substitute teacher who was not familiar with the HRY program.

Suggested changes

Youth facilitators provided a good deal of constructive feedback for improving the HRY program and their experience within it. They identified a number of training needs related to the development of their facilitation skills. Noted areas include improvising, addressing behavior effectively, problem-solving, being more engaging with youth, how to feel more comfortable speaking in front of others, and being able to help students who approach them with issues. The following comments illustrate some of these needs:

“I think we should expand on talking to students if they need someone.”
– Youth Facilitator

“[I would like to see] more public speaking experience and tips on where and when to express personal experience and opinion to students to emphasize the reality in some areas”

“I think we should expand on talking to students if they need someone, and being able to bring up those issues to adults if needed.”

“Make sure the facilitators really know what they’re talking about and understand it well.”

In addition to identifying training needs, youth facilitators shared suggestions on how to improve the format of training. They primarily included more games, and practicing more activities from the curriculum. Several individuals noted this gap:

“There should be more coverage of the in-course book and individual lessons.”

“More training with activities.”

“More hands-on practice with individual sessions.”

“[There should be] more hands-on practice with individual sessions.”
– Youth Facilitator

Although youth facilitators had few critical comments about the support they received from the HRY coordinator, they did share some suggestions on how to improve support between sessions. They included ideas like having more meetings, having group chats on social meetings, or creating a blog /Facebook group.

In terms of in-class support, youth facilitators identified a need for better organization (including reminders of the session schedule), more preparation time, and better support from facilitation partners.

Youth facilitator commitment came up more than once in the focus group comments. Some felt that their peers were not dedicated enough to their role:

"I would make participants apply for their role on the team so that the job would be taken more seriously."

"I would teach future facilitators more about what an HRY facilitator does and the importance of teaching."

These comments are one example of the degree to which youth facilitators feel engaged in the HRY program; they care about their role and they expect other youth facilitators to care too.

4.2.3 Overall facilitation experience

The majority of youth facilitators had positive things to say about their experience with the HRY program. They described it as fun, and a valuable opportunity to learn and practice leadership. The following comments highlight those experiences:

**"I honestly loved being a part of this program!"
– Youth Facilitator**

"I honestly loved being a part of this program! I started at the beginning of grade 10, so I just finished my second year. It has given me an opportunity to teach and learn about healthy relationships. The skills I have learned so far are going to be with me in any future facilitating things I do! :)"

"Enjoyed being an HRY facilitator and really hope the great information provided and my personal experience/input as a facilitator/individual peer helped the grade 9's develop better conflict resolution skills, understanding of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships and feel better about themselves."

Some youth facilitators provided critical feedback. It was focused primarily on the curriculum and length of sessions:

"Some of the lesson weren't long enough and we had to improvise a lot with games. It was kind of annoying. The jeopardy wasn't long enough, for example. We had 25 minutes left at the end of class. Thanks, though."

"I found the sessions were often too short. More games for their age group would be more influential."

"The curriculum needs a lot of work. We modified a lot of lessons to work with grade 9's. The games were not always great and the topics didn't always get presented in the manual the way they should have been."

A group of comments focused on the challenge of engaging grade 9 students, and how the HRY program might be able to do it better:

"More involving activities are always better."

"Grade 9's might need a little more direct involvement to stay engaged."

**"More involving activities are always better."
– Youth Facilitator**

“Some of the curriculum needs to be updated so that is more interesting to the grade nines. I found our group worked better in discussion sessions than many of the games.”

Overall, youth facilitators reported positive experiences with their role in the HRY program. Some offered valuable feedback on the structuring of sessions and ways to better engage grade 9 students. Most significantly for this outcome area, they described experiences of personal growth and development as leaders. Their comments, both positive and critical, display an investment in the HRY program and the students for whom they have become mentors.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings presented in the above sections indicate that the Healthy Relationships for Youth program is meeting its objectives with regard to grade 9 student engagement and peer facilitation/leadership development. The analysis of student and youth facilitator response has identified some key strengths of the program, as well as some areas for growth. Both are summarized below.

5.1 Grade 9 Student Engagement

Student responses to the evaluation survey showed a high level of engagement in the HRY program. Upon completing the program most grade 9 students expressed confidence in their knowledge about violence and healthy relationships, and in their awareness of healthy relationships skills such as boundaries and communication. A gap is observed between their self-identified knowledge of these skills and their actual use of them. There is also apparent room for deepening of students’ analysis of diversity and gender.

There are varying degrees of student engagement in the HRY program; some see considerable value in it, while others express boredom and disinterest. On the whole, however, there is a healthy level of student “buy-in” to the program, and a generally positive response to peer facilitation. Students’ responses have shed light on a need to find new ways to foster engaged participation (see recommendations below).

The gender analysis of student responses demonstrated a knowledge gap between female and male participants, with male-identified students typically reporting less confidence in HRY topics and skills than female ones. More outstandingly, there were considerable differences between the responses of cisgender and

“I enjoyed [HRY] very much, it was one of my favorite classes. The facilitators taught the lesson well and it was easier to relate with them better because they are more our age. I think that HRY should continue to be part of the curriculum as well.”

– Grade 9 Student

“The HRY program is a very amazing program. It makes a difference & provides us with a better understanding of all the topics you talk about.”

– Grade 9 Student

non-cisgender students, pointing to a need to foster more inclusive spaces within the HRY program for students who identify along the gender spectrum.

5.2 Peer Facilitation and Leadership Development

Overall, being involved with HRY was a positive experience for youth facilitators. The majority of youth facilitators who responded to the pre- and post-surveys reported positive experiences with the HRY program. While already expressing a high level of confidence, they noted growth in their facilitation skills and knowledge of topics related to violence prevention – especially hypersexualization and diversity. Their responses indicate room for growth in building personal capacity for facilitation and leadership, as well as increased knowledge and deeper analysis of the issues.

**“HRY has given me the chance to step out of my comfort zone when talking about things that were uncomfortable for me.”
– Youth Facilitator**

In the areas of training and support, it is evident that the HRY program is creating space for the cultivation of positive relationships among youth facilitators, teachers, and students. Youth facilitators generally feel well supported in their classroom role, while identifying the need for enhanced support in scheduling and preparing for sessions. They provided valuable critical feedback on the HRY training model, such as the need for more hands-on practice with sessions and tips on how to handle “unruly” classrooms.

The responses and comments of youth facilitators confirm both that the HRY program’s commitment to youth engagement is achieving its intended impact, and that there is room for deepening of this approach. In particular, the volume of constructive feedback suggests a desire for greater engagement in the process of developing the HRY program and curriculum. A new challenge for the HRY program may well be to move beyond incorporating youth facilitator feedback into the program, to a paradigm of *co-creation* in which youth facilitators (and students) are more actively engaged as partners in shaping the HRY program’s form and content.

**“I honestly loved being a part of this program! ... It has given me an opportunity to teach and learn about healthy relationships. The skills I have learned so far are going to be with me in any future facilitating things I do! 😊”
– Youth Facilitator**

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the above analysis of student and youth facilitator feedback and the resulting insights/conclusions, the following recommendations for the HRY program are offered.

For grade 9 students:

- Integrate more activities into the HRY curriculum that enable students to *practice* the skills needed to create and maintain healthy relationships (e.g. communication, boundaries).

- Foster deeper conversations about diversity that connect students with their own cultural histories, those of their peers, and an analysis of privilege/oppression.
- Support the development of more critical analysis of gender and violence; for instance, through updating the curriculum activity on the cycle of violence.
- In curriculum design and youth facilitator training, focus on ensuring inclusion and participation for all students. In particular, language and activities should be sensitive to the fact that not all students identify as “female” or “male;” at the same time, find ways to continue offering separate gender conversations on more sensitive topics.
- Review the format of separate gender activities ensure they are working well for the majority of students, including gender non-conforming ones.
- Incorporate best practices for engaging boys in learning and skill building.
- Consult with gender and sexuality alliances (GSAs) to ensure that curriculum language on gender identity and sexual orientation is up-to-date, and that conversations reflect the realities of LGBTQA+ youth.
- Update curriculum activities to ensure age-appropriateness and relevancy to grade 9 students’ lives.

For youth facilitators:

- Incorporate more hands-on practice of curriculum activities into the youth facilitator training model.
- Ensure that hypersexualization and diversity are included as key topics in youth facilitator training.
- Incorporate best practices for fostering leadership and facilitation skills.
- Work with schools to increase youth facilitator support for scheduling and session preparation.
- Explore ways to engage youth facilitators more actively as co-creators of the HRY program and curriculum.

We are pleased to have completed another successful year of delivering the Healthy Relationships for Youth program within the Strait Regional School Board district. The program continues to evolve along with changes in the world of youth – changes in technology, in identity and self-expression, and in the issues that matter most to young people. We remain grounded in a commitment to social justice and to supporting youth in developing an analysis of the intersecting forms of power, privilege and oppression that form the structure of our society. Our own analysis is evolving through conversations with youth; in particular, through learning about how they negotiate the complexities of living in a hypersexualized culture, and how online interactions shape their identities and relationships.

Guided by the rich feedback shared by youth through this year’s evaluation process, we look forward to developing an even stronger HRY program that is relevant to youth’s lives, engages youth

meaningfully as leaders and learners, and promotes non-violence in our schools, communities and world.

References

HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development, "A Framework for Community Youth Development."
<http://youthcore.ca/res/download.php?id=73>

Appendix A: Gender Analysis Tables

Table 12: Grade 9 Students Response to Violence and Relationships

Statement	Gender	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I can identify and explain the different forms of violence	Female	77 47.53%	60 37.04%	21 12.96%	4 2.47%	162
	Male	65 43.33%	58 38.67%	22 14.67%	5 3.33%	150
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	4 30.77%	6 46.15%	2 15.38%	1 7.69%	13
I understand and can explain the cycle of relationship violence	Female	77 47.53%	57 35.19%	25 15.43%	3 1.85%	162
	Male	62 41.33%	54 36.00%	27 18.00%	7 4.67%	150
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	3 23.08%	5 38.46%	3 23.08%	1 7.69%	12
I can identify and explain the traits of a healthy relationship	Female	103 63.98%	44 27.33%	14 8.70%	0 0.00%	161
	Male	65 43.62%	57 38.26%	25 16.78%	2 1.34%	149
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	4 30.77%	5 38.46%	3 23.08%	1 7.69%	13
I can express my needs and expectations for healthy relationships	Female	90 56.25%	53 33.13%	17 10.63%	0 0.00%	160
	Male	70 46.98%	51 34.23%	24 16.11%	4 2.68%	149
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	5 38.46%	4 30.77%	3 23.08%	1 7.69%	13
I know where to get help or send others for help if they experience violence	Female	93 58.49%	47 29.56%	17 10.69%	2 1.26%	159
	Male	68 45.95%	50 33.78%	25 16.89%	5 3.38%	148
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	4 30.77%	5 38.46%	1 7.69%	3 23.08%	13

Table 13: Grade 9 Students Response to Communication and Personal Boundaries

Statement	Gender	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I understand the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication	Female	95 59.01%	43 26.71%	20 12.42%	3 1.86%	161
	Male	76 51.35%	50 33.78%	20 13.51%	2 1.35%	148
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	7 53.85%	4 30.77%	0 0.00%	2 15.38%	13
I am able to use assertive communication to resolve conflicts	Female	70 43.48%	61 37.89%	28 17.39%	2 1.24%	161
	Male	55 37.41%	57 38.78%	32 21.77%	3 2.04%	147
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	2 15.38%	7 53.85%	2 15.38%	2 15.38%	13
I practice respecting others' personal boundaries	Female	113 70.19%	36 22.36%	10 6.21%	2 1.24%	161
	Male	62 42.47%	49 33.56%	24 16.44%	11 7.53%	146
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	6 46.15	5 38.46%	0 0.00%	2 15.38%	13
I can communicate my personal boundaries to others	Female	74 46.25%	56 35.00%	29 18.13%	1 0.63%	161
	Male	51 35.42%	65 45.14%	23 15.97%	5 3.47%	144
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	4 30.77%	4 30.77%	3 23.08%	2 15.38%	13

Table 14: Grade 9 Students Response to Diversity and Gender

Statement	Gender	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I recognize diversity and what makes me unique	Female	93 57.76%	47 29.19%	19 11.80%	2 1.24%	161
	Male	71 48.30%	50 34.01%	21 14.29%	5 3.40%	147
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	9 69.23%	2 15.38%	0 0.00%	2 15.38%	13
I can identify diversity in my community	Female	85 53.13%	54 33.75%	18 11.88%	2 1.25%	160
	Male	61 41.78%	56 38.36%	24 16.44%	5 3.42%	146
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	9 69.23%	2 15.38%	0 0.00%	2 15.38%	13
I respect cultures other than my own in my community	Female	136 85.00%	16 10.00%	7 4.38%	1 0.63%	160
	Male	82 55.41%	47 31.76%	17 11.49%	2 1.35%	148
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	7 53.85%	3 23.08%	1 7.69%	2 15.38%	13
I understand how my gender affects my experiences and life	Female	111 69.38%	37 23.13%	12 7.50%	0 0.00%	160
	Male	85 57.43%	39 26.35%	20 13.51%	4 2.70%	148
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	9 69.23%	2 15.38%	0 0.00%	2 15.38%	13

Table 15: Grade 9 Students Response to Stereotypes and Sexual Orientation

Statement	Gender	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I understand how stereotypes reinforce discrimination and negatively affect self-esteem	Female	118 74.21%	32 20.13%	7 4.40%	2 1.26%	159
	Male	75 52.08%	57 39.58%	9 6.25%	3 2.08%	144
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	11 84.62%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 15.38%	13
I can identify gender stereotypes associated with being male and female	Female	119 74.38%	33 20.63%	8 5.00%	0 0.00%	160
	Male	74 51.39%	53 36.81%	12 8.33%	5 3.47%	144
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	9 69.23%	2 15.38%	0 0.00%	2 15.38%	13
I now know the correct language to use when talking about gender identity and sexual orientation (i.e. Gay, Lesbian, Trans, Pan-Sexual)	Female	102 63.75%	43 26.88%	13 8.13%	2 1.25%	160
	Male	60 41.67%	56 38.89%	23 15.97%	5 3.47%	144
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	6 54.55%	2 18.18%	1 9.09%	2 18.18%	11
I can see and understand how homophobia is connected to other forms of violence such as racism and sexism	Female	113 71.07%	36 22.64%	10 6.29%	0 0.00%	159
	Male	64 44.76%	56 39.16%	14 9.79%	9 6.29%	143
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	7 53.85%	3 23.08%	0 0.00%	3 23.08%	13

Table 16: Grade 9 Students Response to Group experience

Statement	Gender	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
I was able to express my opinions and share my experience in the class	Female	55 34.16%	49 30.43%	45 27.95%	12 7.45%	161
	Male	44 29.14%	61 42.38%	35 23.18%	8 5.30%	151
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	3 23.08%	2 15.38%	5 38.46%	3 23.08%	13
The facilitators clearly explained the topics	Female	64 40%	76 47.5%	19 11.88%	1 0.63%	160
	Male	63 42.00%	61 40.67%	24 16.00%	2 1.33%	150
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	2 15.38%	6 46.15%	4 30.77%	1 7.69%	13
I understand how the topics relate and shape my personal experiences (i.e. how violence effects my personal relationships)	Female	75 47.17%	54 33.96%	23 14.47%	7 4.40%	159
	Male	48 32.00%	67 44.67%	25 16.67%	10 6.67%	150
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	1 7.69%	5 38.46%	6 46.15%	1 7.69%	13
I found learning about healthy relationships and violence prevention from other students in my school helpful	Female	66 41.51%	43 27.04%	38 23.90%	12 7.55%	159
	Male	43 28.86%	60 40.27%	34 22.82%	12 8.05%	149
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	1 7.69%	5 38.46%	4 30.77%	3 23.08%	13
I found it easier to participate in groups that only had people of the same gender as me	Female	45 28.30%	52 32.70%	37 23.27%	25 15.72%	159
	Male	36 24.16%	54 36.24%	35 23.49%	24 16.11%	149
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	0 0%	3 25%	2 16.67%	7 58.33%	12
Grade 9 students should receive healthy relationship education in school	Female	101 62.73%	34 21.12%	18 11.18%	8 4.97%	161
	Male	66 44.30%	40 26.85%	28 18.79%	15 10.07%	149
	Trans, Other, Not Sure	7 53.85%	1 7.69%	3 23.08%	2 15.38%	13

Appendix B: Youth Facilitator Response Tables (Pre and Post)

Table 17: Youth Facilitator Response Pre-Program Delivery (General)

Statement	Always	Usually	Not sure	Rarely	Never	Total
I see how HRY benefits grade 9s	62.96% 51	22.22% 18	14.81% 12	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	81
I am comfortable speaking in front of younger students	44.44% 36	46.91% 38	7.41% 6	1.23% 1	0.00% 0	81
I am able to share my opinion and experience with others	39.51% 32	56.79% 46	2.47% 2	1.23% 1	0.00% 0	81
I am able to actively listen to others' experiences	78.75% 63	18.75% 15	1.25% 1	1.25% 1	0.00% 0	80
I am confident in my facilitation skills	22.22% 18	60.49% 49	16.05% 13	1.23% 1	0.00% 0	81
I am confident in my leadership skills	48.15% 39	38.27% 31	12.35% 10	1.23% 1	0.00% 0	81
I ask for help when I need it	45.68% 37	51.85% 42	0.00% 0	2.47% 2	0.00% 0	81
I see myself as a role model for younger students	35.80% 29	37.04% 30	27.16% 22	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	81
I use conflict resolution skills to solve problems	30.86% 25	53.09% 43	12.35% 10	3.70% 3	0.00% 0	81
I know what to do if someone tells me they are in an abusive relationship	55.56% 45	29.63% 24	13.58% 11	1.23% 1	0.00% 0	81
I can explain what diversity in Nova Scotia looks like	31.25% 25	41.25% 33	20.00% 16	2.50% 2	5.00% 4	80
I challenge racism, homophobia, and sexism when I see, hear, or feel it	56.25% 45	30.00% 24	6.25% 5	7.50% 6	0.00% 0	80

Table 18: Youth Facilitator Response Pre Program Delivery (HRY Topics)

Topic	A lot	Some	None	Want more	Total
Healthy relationships	50.00% 33	46.97% 31	0.00% 0	3.03% 2	66
Unhealthy relationships	51.52% 34	43.94% 29	1.52% 1	3.03% 2	66
Diversity	31.82% 21	48.48% 32	13.64% 9	6.06% 4	66
Mi'kmaw culture	7.58% 5	53.03% 35	27.27% 18	12.12% 8	66
African Nova Scotian Culture	6.06% 4	56.06% 37	24.24% 16	13.64% 9	66
Assertive Communication	27.27% 18	53.03% 35	13.64% 9	6.06% 4	66
Personal boundaries	60.61% 40	34.85% 23	3.03% 2	1.52% 1	66
Hypersexualization	31.82% 21	37.88% 25	24.24% 16	6.06% 4	66
Hypermasculinity	28.79% 19	39.39% 26	24.24% 16	7.58% 5	66
Gender stereotypes	63.64% 42	34.85% 23	1.52% 1	0.00% 0	66
Relationship violence	53.03% 35	46.97% 31	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66
Sexual orientation	43.94% 29	53.03% 35	1.52% 1	1.52% 1	66
Gender identity	42.42% 28	57.58% 38	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66

Table 19: Youth Facilitator Response Post-Program Delivery (General)

Statement	Always	Usually	Not sure	Rarely	Never	Total
I see how HRY benefits grade 9s	47.13% 41	44.83% 39	8.05% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	87
I am comfortable speaking in front of younger students	63.22% 55	32.18% 28	2.30% 2	1.15% 1	1.15% 1	87
I am able to share my opinion and experience with others	54.65% 47	38.37% 33	5.81% 5	1.16% 1	0.00% 0	86
I am able to actively listen to others' experiences	74.71% 65	24.14% 21	1.15% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	87
I am confident in my facilitation skills	40.23% 35	45.98% 40	12.64% 11	1.15% 1	0.00% 0	87
I am confident in my leadership skills	63.22% 55	28.74% 25	8.05% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	87
I ask for help when I need it	46.43% 39	45.24% 38	3.57% 3	4.76% 4	0.00% 0	84
I see myself as a role model for younger students	37.93% 33	43.68% 38	17.24% 15	1.15% 1	0.00% 0	87
I use conflict resolution skills to solve problems	32.18% 28	57.47% 50	9.20% 8	1.15% 1	0.00% 0	87
I know what to do if someone tells me there are in an abusive relationship	60.47% 52	31.40% 27	5.81% 5	2.33% 2	0.00% 0	86
I can explain what diversity in Nova Scotia looks like	52.33% 45	33.72% 29	10.47% 9	3.49% 3	0.00% 0	86
I challenge racism, homophobia, and sexism when I see, hear, or feel it	48.84% 42	44.19% 38	6.98% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	86

Table 20: Youth Facilitator Response Post-Program Delivery (HRY Topics)

Topic	A lot	Some	None	Want more	Total
Healthy relationships	47.13% 41	48.28% 42	3.45% 3	1.15% 1	87
Unhealthy relationships	54.02% 47	42.53% 37	2.30% 2	1.15% 1	87
Diversity	44.83% 39	41.38% 36	8.05% 7	5.75% 5	87
Mi'kmaw culture	8.24% 7	47.06% 40	27.06% 23	17.65% 15	85
African Nova Scotian culture	15.29% 13	41.18% 35	28.24% 24	15.29% 13	85
Assertive communication	39.08% 34	50.57% 44	9.20% 8	1.15% 1	87
Personal boundaries	55.17% 48	39.08% 34	4.60% 4	1.15% 1	87
Hypersexualization	47.67% 41	39.53% 34	5.81% 5	6.98% 6	86
Hypermasculinity	41.86% 36	44.19% 38	6.98% 6	6.98% 6	86
Gender stereotypes	66.28% 57	26.74% 23	4.65% 4	2.33% 2	86
Relationship violence	65.06% 54	31.33% 26	1.20% 1	2.41% 2	83
Sexual orientation	54.76% 46	36.90% 31	4.76% 4	3.57% 3	84
Gender identity	55.29% 47	34.12% 29	4.71% 4	5.88% 5	85