

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PREVENTING TEEN DATING VIOLENCE



An Evaluation of the Teen Violence Prevention Program



About the Canadian Women's Foundation

The Canadian Women's Foundation is Canada's national public foundation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls.

We research, share, and fund the most promising approaches to ending violence against women, moving low-income women out of poverty, and empowering girls with confidence, courage, and critical thinking skills.

Ranked as one of the ten largest women's foundations in the world, we have raised over \$32 million and supported more than 900 programs across Canada since 1991.

We help to end violence against women by helping women and their children to rebuild their lives after abuse, and counselling children who have witnessed violence to help them heal and prevent them from becoming victims or abusers themselves. We also teach teens how to prevent relationship violence, through Teen Violence Prevention programs, the subject of this report.

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Chapter One: Dating Violence and Prevention Programs

'Dating' or 'going out' are common activities for many Canadian adolescents as early as age 11, 12 and 13 (Price, Byers, Sears, Whelan & Saint Pierre, 2000). As pleasurable as most dating experiences can be, abuse is not uncommon. Teen dating violence parallels adult intimate partner violence by existing on a continuum from verbal and emotional abuse to sexual assault and serious physical violence. It also falls on a continuum of abuse experienced across the life span including child abuse, spousal or intimate partner violence, and senior abuse (Wolfe, Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, Grasley, & Reitzel-Jaffe, 2003).

Healthy relationship or dating violence programs are one strategy to protect and prevent young adults from being abused by partners. Commonly offered in middle and high schools, such programs vary from one-time presentations to in-depth curricula. Evaluations to-date suggest that these programs impact attitudes and knowledge of dating violence, however a key unanswered question is whether the programs make a difference in the long run.

The Canadian Women's Foundation has funded this follow-up evaluation of four best practices in dating violence/healthy relationships curricula to assess whether these programs have an impact on youth in the long run, whether program participants found the information useful and have they used the skills in either their own relationships or to assist friends/family two or more years after having participated in the program. The programs are: Saltspring Islands' Respectful Relationship Program, The Fourth R (based in London Ontario), Making Waves/Vague par vague (based in New Brunswick) and Healthy Relationships for Youth (based in Antigonish, Nova Scotia). All programs are provided in collaboration with local school districts to students starting in Grade 7, at the youngest.

This chapter reviews the literature on dating violence and its effects on youth, examines prevention programs in general and describes the results of well-designed research on prevention programs, many of them Canadian.

Review of the Research on Dating Violence

The 2004 General Social Survey on Victimization (Statistics Canada, 2005) estimated that 7% of Canadian women are victimized by an intimate partner. Of those who experienced violence, 27% were beaten 25% choked. 44% were injured and 13% sought medical help. Perhaps most informative is that 34% of abused women fear for their lives in reaction to the violence (Statistics Canada, 2005). Teens and young adults are at the highest risk for abuse by a partner:

"According to the 2004 GSS, those who are between the ages of 15 and 24 who live in a common-law relationship, who have been in a relationship for three years or less, and whose partner is a frequent heavy drinker, defined as consuming five or more drinks on one occasion, five or more times per month, are at increased risk of experiencing violence at the hands of their intimate partner." (p. 8)

A wide range of abusive acts can occur in dating relationships beyond physical or sexual violence. In a Canadian study conducted by Lavoie, Robitaille and Hebert (2000) these included death threats, psychological abuse, denigration and insults, jealousy, excessive control, indifference, threats of separation and reprisals, damaging reputations, and harassment after separation. Although both young men and women may act abusively, the abuse of young women by men is more pervasive and usually more severe.

Physical abuse includes shoving, slapping, choking, punching, kicking, biting, burning, hair pulling, using a weapon, threatening someone with a weapon, or forcibly confining someone (Kelly, 2008). These attacks cause both emotional and physical harm. Typically, young men use physical force to assert control while young women use it to protect themselves, to retaliate or because they fear that their partner is about to assault them. Some women live in terror of such attacks. In contrast, young men rarely fear assaults from young women, considering women's use of force to be innocuous generally.

Sexual harassment, or unwanted sexual attention, is a common experience for Canadian students at the start of high school: reported by 44.1% of girls and 42.4% of boys in a recent Ontario study with 1734 Grade 9 students (Chiodo, Wolfe, Crooks, Hughes, & Jaffe, 2009). Further, these same researchers reported that, several years later, harassed students were significantly more likely than non-harassed students to report other forms of victimization (dating and peer violence) several years later and to report emotional distress, substance abuse and violent delinquency perpetration. McMaster, Connolly, Pepler and Craig (2002) reported similar proportions in students from middle schools (Grades 6 to 8): boys were victimized 42% and perpetrated 36%; girls were victims 38% and were perpetrators 21% of the time.

Sexual assault includes unwanted sexual touching, forcing or pressuring a partner to consent to sexual activity, rape and attempted rape and attempting or having intercourse with a person who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs (Health Canada, 1995). Such abuse is more often directed at young women. While each of these acts is emotionally damaging, they vary in the extent to which they result in physical injury.

Emotional abuse, like sexual and physical abuse, varies in its intensity and its consequences. It includes behaviour such as insulting or swearing at a partner, belittling them, threatening or terrorizing them, destroying their property or possessions, isolating them from friends and relatives and treating them with irrational possessiveness or extreme jealousy (Health Canada, 1995). Emotional abuse originates in the aggressor's desire to control the other person's behaviour. Undermining their partner's self-confidence limits their ability to act independently. Both young men and young women may use emotional abuse. Society too often downplays the effects of emotional abuse because there is no visible harm. As a result, communities offer little support to deal with emotional abuse by either men or women.

More young women are aware of teen dating violence among their peers and have experienced such abuse than young men. In a study of students in Grades 9 to 13, Jaffe Sudermann, Reitzel, and Killip (1992) reported that 54% of students were aware of dating violence among their peers, with significantly more girls (61%) reporting this than boys (48%). Price and colleagues (2000) studied dating violence in approximately 1700 English- and French-speaking New Brunswick youth (11 to 20 years old). They reported significant differences between the percentages of adolescent girls and boys experiencing psychological and/or physical abuse, 22% and 12% respectively, and sexual abuse, 19% and 4% respectively. Overall, 29% of adolescent girls and 13% of boys in the sample reported some abuse in their dating relationships.

A more recent study of Canadian students (Josephson, & Proulx, 2008) concluded that of the 138 respondents in dating relationships, 34% reported at least one physical violence incident, whereas 43% reported at least one in relationships with friends.

A study of post-secondary students, DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993, cited in DeKeseredy, 1997) reported findings from 3,142 Canadian university/college students. This national study noted that between 16% and 35% of young women reported having experienced at least one physical assault by a male dating partner, 28% had experienced at least one incident of sexual abuse in the previous 12 months, and 45% had been victimized in a dating relationship since leaving high school.

O'Keefe's 1997 U.S. research identified some reasons why adolescent girls and boys behave violently to their dates. Both young men and young women reported that males more frequently initiate dating violence. The primary reason reported by both men and women was 'a way of showing anger', although females were significantly more likely to declare this than males. 'Self-defence' was the second most frequently given reason for young women, whereas for young men it was 'gaining control of their partner'. Other factors included an increased likelihood of violence when one or both had been drinking alcohol. Having witnessed violence within the family was a significant predictor of inflicting dating violence for males, but not females. Conflict in the relationship and the seriousness of the relationship were significant factors that young women associated with the initiation of dating violence.

Lavoie, et al. (2000) explored perceived causes of dating violence with 24 Canadian teens. The youth identified factors such as jealousy, and the need for power and/or use of alcohol or drugs by the young men. Characteristics of victimization were provocation by the young women and previous experience with violence. The youth often cited communication problems, with the victim seen as playing a role in provoking the violence. The teens identified a number of social factors including the influence of peers, especially friends who behaved violently and the impact of pornography on violent interactions in sex.

Sears, Byers, Whelan, Saint-Pierre and The Dating Violence Research Team (2006) conducted separate gender focus groups with high school students in New Brunswick to understand their views of physical and psychological abuse in dating relationships. The genders tended to view the behaviours differently and reported less physical but more emotional abuse. In summary, dating violence happens all too frequently to Canadian youth with severe consequences to those directly affected.

Dating Violence and Child Abuse Histories

The interconnections between dating violence, a trauma history often linked to child maltreatment, and the related adolescent issues of using substances, sexuality and delinquency have been highlighted in recent studies that suggest the need for more comprehensive programs to prevent the issue.

Wekerle, Wolfe, Hawkins, Pittman, Glickman, and Lovald (2001) studied a high school sample of 1,329 youth (aged 13-20 yrs) and 224 youth (aged 13-18 yrs) from active child protective services with respect to trauma:

For females only, results support a mediational model in the prediction of dating violence in both samples. For males, child maltreatment and trauma symptomatology added unique contributions to predicting dating violence, with no consistent pattern emerging across samples. When considering the issue of self-labeling as abused, CPS females who self-labeled had higher posttraumatic stress symptomatology and dating violence victimization scores than did their non-labeling, maltreated counterparts for emotional maltreatment. (p. 847)

Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle, and Pittman (2001) confirmed that female students with a maltreatment history had much higher emotional distress than girls without such a history; boys were much more likely to report both depression and trauma symptoms and to be at greater risk to use threats or physical violence against their dating partners. Similarly, Wolfe, Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, and Grasley (2004) reported that trauma-related symptoms were significantly predictive of dating violence for both boys and girls. However, while attitudes and empathy and self-efficacy were correlated with such behaviour at both time points, these variables did not predict dating violence over time. Such research suggests the need for comprehensive programs that address problems related to dating violence in addition to information and discussion to change attitudes and beliefs about the problem.

Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo and Jaffe (2009) concluded that child maltreatment is often connected to behaviours in adolescents who may perpetrate violence through bullying and harassment both with romantic partners and peers. The authors utilize these findings to propose universal prevention programs with respect to healthy relationships, not only in middle and high schools but in elementary schools as well.

Crooks, Scott, Wolfe, Chiodo and Killip similarly made connections between child maltreatment and violent delinquents (2007). Importantly, though, school climate was a major contributor to violence: students in schools considered safe by their colleagues were less likely to exhibit violent behaviours. Aggression in both peer and dating relationships are related for girls and contribute to increased delinquency (Ellis, Crooks & Wolfe, 2008). Further, beyond the effects of childhood maltreatment, the control of peer groups predicted risky alcohol usage and delinquent behaviour, especially in boys (Ellis & Wolfe, 2009).

Healthy Relationships or Violence Prevention Programs

Violence prevention programs have been available for the past three decades. The type of violence addressed in these programs may be the abuse of children (either physical, sexual or neglect), violence against intimate dating partners and married couples or violence between child and youth peers (bullying).

What is a program? For the purposes of this report, a program is a set of materials, a curriculum that addresses a particular issue. While brief in-person school presentations from individuals that have, for example, experienced and overcome bullying are compelling and can be instructive, for the most part they complement rather than constituting programs. Standardizing materials and providing a manual or curriculum are the hallmarks of a program.

Before presenting the section on health relationship/dating violence programs several caveats are considered. First, a program is not a solution (Tutty, 2008). It would be tempting to promote a program as the answer to significant problems such as dating violence, but a program is often simply the first step in raising awareness and providing information about the issue. Much detailed and difficult work remains to repeat the message that relationship abuse is not acceptable and find ways to involve all students and school staff in the effort.

Children and youth in schools are by far the most common audience for violence prevention programs. Prevention programs can be directed at a total population (universal or primary prevention), at a group considered 'at-risk' (secondary prevention) or at a group already experiencing violence either as victimizers or victims (tertiary prevention) (Kessler & Albee, 1975). They may have an informational and skill-training focus as in sexual abuse prevention programs offered to all children in a school (typically considered primary prevention), or they may consist of early intervention for children exhibiting some difficulties with anger and aggression (typically considered secondary prevention). Other forms of prevention include initiatives to change the broader systems in which violence may arise such as schools and communities. This may mean reviewing policies about dealing with bullies in schools or involving students in initiatives to raise awareness about dating violence.

Stopping violence before it occurs is the major goal of universal prevention programs. School-based violence prevention efforts for youth are based on the principle that education can change awareness and knowledge, and teach skills that may change behaviour. The hope is that such knowledge will empower youth to interact in positive and prosocial ways.

Another rationale for offering healthy relationship programs is to encourage youth to disclose and seek assistance if they have been abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Few researchers have examined adolescents' willingness to seek help related to dating violence. Rather, the literature on dating violence and help-seeking more often focuses on adolescents' unwillingness to seek help or, if they do seek help, to whom do they turn? Ashley and Foshee (2005) reported that 60% of the adolescents did not seek help with dating violence victimization. Similarly, in a New Zealand study of high school seniors, Jackson, Cram, and Seymour's (2000) concluded that 46% of both genders talked to no one about the sexual coercion that they were experiencing in dating relationships; 55% of the girls and 46% of the boys did not disclose physical abuse. The adolescents more often talked about dating violence with friends as this provided them an opportunity to feel supported and/or "sort things out."

Most violence prevention programs provide information in the hope of informing or changing attitudes with respect to problem behaviours, preventing bullying being an obvious example. Others teach about positive (prosocial) skills such as good communication or problem solving skills so that relationship problems such as dating violence do not develop in the first place. Still other programs focus on personal factors such as self-esteem that are considered to protect against problems developing.

Given the different possible foci, a significant question is whether programs should focus on healthy or on problem relationships. Is it better to focus on healthy sexuality or describe sexual abuse/assault? Should programs focus on healthy peer relationships rather than bullying? Although there are no best practices with

research evidence in the literature, from my perspective, one needs both, especially in primary prevention. Students need the skills for “normal” living: Communication skills; problem solving skills; interpersonal negotiation skills. All programs should promote relationships forged on the basis of equal power and goodwill. Students also need to know, however, about the abuse of power, when they might need to ask for assistance or how they could help a friend who disclosed that they were being abused (Tutty, 2008).

Who Delivers Prevention Programs?

Violence prevention programs are often offered in schools by an external agency with expertise in addressing a particular form of violence (Tutty, 1991; 1996; Tutty & Bradshaw, 2004). For example, sexual assault centers were the first to develop child sexual abuse prevention programs; dating violence prevention was first offered by staff from shelters for abused women. One advantage of externally offered programs is that those who present the program are most often professionals who know the material well and are comfortable with the topic. Staff from external programs can comfortably discuss the violence prevention concepts with children, thus relieving teachers of some of the responsibility to handle disclosures and potentially embarrassing material. Teachers are often reluctant to take a major role in violence prevention programs, perceiving such duties as beyond the scope of their jobs.

A disadvantage of external programs is that use of the program is voluntary and most such agencies are relatively small; only a portion of the children in an area will likely have access to the program. Teachers or principals who invite the program may already be sensitized to the abuse issue and may have previously provided some information to their students. Those most likely to need the information, individuals who know little about the problem, are least likely to be aware of the programs. Another disadvantage of external programs is that the program staff are in the schools for a limited time.

Internal programs are integrated directly into the schools’ curricula, for example, into health or family life education classes. Teachers both present the material and assume responsibility for leading role-plays and answering questions from children. Schools are a natural environment for prevention programs, addressing entire populations of children with an approach that fits with the purpose of the institution – providing education. Children may more likely disclose to teachers; however, training is especially important, as teachers, like most of the population, often feel uncomfortable discussing sensitive topics with children. In addition, teachers may, themselves, have been abused, and presenting information on interpersonal violence and bullying may be distressing.

Another advantage of internal programs is that teachers can integrate violence prevention concepts with other relevant topics, such as self-esteem and resolving conflict, or as issues emerge in the classroom between students. A disadvantage of school-based curricula, as mentioned previously, is that some teachers perceive these topics as beyond what they should be expected to teach. Despite having a prepared curriculum, teachers may feel uncomfortable presenting the material, a reaction that is likely communicated to students.

An option is integrating aspects of both external and internal programs. Staff from external agencies may present the prevention materials within the school and are responsible for leading student discussions. They provide supplementary materials for the teachers to utilize in follow-up discussions in their classrooms. Teacher training is a key component in integrating the two types of programs. One disadvantage of such an integrated approach is that collaboration is time-consuming and requires considerable co-operation. However, the result is a prevention program that targets its message to larger segments of the community.

Evaluating Prevention Programs

Evaluating prevention programs is no simple task. In 1981, Martin Bloom, an early advocate of prevention programs, referred to it as “the impossible science.” It is difficult to evaluate the success of prevention programs because the goal is to stop a particular problem or behaviour from developing in the first place. If the prevention strategy is successful, the problem will not occur; but neither can one say with any certainty that the problem would have developed. Although, it is challenging to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention programs, it is, nonetheless, essential.

Most prevention research evaluates whether the program has met its goals in changing knowledge and attitudes. Ideally, we would prefer to have research evidence about both. In addition, ideally, we would like to know whether children's behaviour actually changes in response to a prevention program because improvements in knowledge and attitudes are not necessarily accompanied by actual behaviour change (O'Leary, Woodin & Fritz, 2006). For example, knowing that bullying is inappropriate might change the behaviour of some, but not all children.

However, it is easier to collect information about knowledge and attitudes than to identify actual changes in youths' behaviour in reaction to a program, so behavioural change is the least likely to be evaluated of the three variables. Including observations of children's behaviour either in simulated situations or *in vivo* (i.e., on the playground), strengthens the research but is expensive and rare, exceptions being the evaluation of Second Step (Grossman, et al., 1997) and Steps to Respect (Frey, Hirschstein, Snell, Edstrom, MacKenzie, & Broderick, 2005), both programs of the Seattle Committee for Children.

Finally, even if youth improve their knowledge, attitude and behaviours after participating in a prevention program, do they remember the material over time or revert to their original pre-program levels? Evaluations that include follow-up testing to assess maintaining these prevention targets are important.

Some research is methodologically stronger than others are. The best is often published in academic journals. The process of publishing involves peer reviews by knowledgeable academics; often articles are revised or otherwise strengthened through the review process. Strong empirical research designs include the use of pre-tests and post-tests, so that one can assess whether the students' attitudes, knowledge or behaviours change after the program in comparison to what they knew in the first place (Tutty, 1993).

A further important design feature is including control or comparison groups (with students that did not participate in the program) so that one can assess that it was the program that made the difference not other factors such as the passage of time or a national TV show on violence. In the school-based manual (Tutty et al., 2005), we also included evaluations with less-clearly interpretable findings such as pre-test-post-test evaluations with no control groups. While we included programs that utilized consumer satisfaction surveys that can provide important program information, these are so often highly complimentary that they are not sufficient evidence that programs work.

It is important to realize that the stronger the research design, the more likely one is to identify problems with programs. For example, using a suggestive research design with pre-test and post-test measures of knowledge of bullying, one might identify significant improvements after the program. If one added a control (non-program) group, however, we might discover that the students who did not participate in a program also improved their attitudes, suggesting that something other than the program was responsible for the change. Further, non-significant results could be due to factors other than the program, such as a measure of attitudes that is not reliable, or a poorly trained program facilitator. Interpreting research results is complex.

Process Evaluations

Process evaluations to assess different strategies for presenting program information or the effects on different audiences are valuable. As one example, Hilton, Harris, Krans, Smith, and Lavigne (1998) found that Grade 11 students that attended only an hour-long audience-wide presentation on rape and dating violence did not improve their knowledge, on average, but students in subsequent small-group discussions did. This supports the importance of providing opportunities to interact with peers in discussing anti-violence issues.

Similarly, Lavoie, Vezina, Piche, and Boivin (1995) investigated attitudes and knowledge about dating violence with Grade 10 students (222 boys and 295 girls) in two Quebec city schools. The program was offered in two formats: short (consisting of two classroom presentations of 120-150 minutes) or long (two supplementary activities including a film on dating violence and writing letters to a fictional victim and to an aggressor in two more classroom periods). The research design was pre-test/post-test with no control condition. There were positive improvements following the program. The length of program did not make a

difference: both schools improved to a similar degree on attitudes; the school receiving the short program reported greater improvements on the knowledge items.

Gender differences are also important in both the prevalence and incidence of dating violence and the outcomes of prevention programming. Dating violence prevention research has taken a leadership role in examining the impact of programming on the sexes. When compared to young men, young women tend to have higher knowledge and attitude scores at pre-test and sharper, faster improvements in appropriate attitude scores, use more emotional abuse at pre-test but showing a greater reduction at post-test. Young women are also more resistant to peer pressure and pressure to conform than young men at post-test and follow-up.

Outcome Evaluations

A number of different outcomes are typically assessed in evaluations of dating violence prevention efforts. Most programs increase knowledge of the dynamics of dating violence and, hypothetically, what might be done to avoid such violence. The results of the research on the effectiveness of dating violence prevention programs to change inappropriate attitudes that support violence and to actually reduce physical, sexual and emotional abuse in teen dating relationships have been mixed. Although the skills for healthy relationships are a focus in many programs, the extent to which these are learned is rarely assessed.

What evidence do we have of the efficacy school-based violence prevention programs? Several colleagues and I reviewed research on school-based violence prevention programs in North America (Thurston, Meadows, Tutty, & Bradshaw, 1999). We found approximately 60 programs with some form of evaluation. Of these, only 14 (23%) utilized control groups. Most focused on the prevention of general violence rather than gender specific or family violence. These programs tended to be either “gender-based”, that is, acknowledging forms of abuse between girls and boys, or “general violence”, programs that look at violence between peers of either sex. Few gender-based programs were offered to children in elementary schools—all of the dating violence programs that we reviewed were for junior high school and above. Since it is not unusual for children younger than 12 or 13 to begin dating, one might question this gap. Further, issues of general violence continue in junior and senior high school. They may change somewhat in form, for example including sexual harassment, but the problems remain.

One dilemma for evaluators is how to measure the success of prevention programs. If we prevent an event such as abuse from occurring, how can we measure it? Another difficulty is that most evaluations of prevention programs focus on changes in attitudes and knowledge, when we know that such improvements do not necessarily translate into changes in behavior. Nevertheless, Hilton, et al. (1998) reviewed several studies in which attitudes towards issue such as date rape actually became worse after participation in an antiviolence program. They suggested that, as a result, such programs should not be assumed to be benign, at worst. This provides a strong rationale for including attitude/knowledge measures in evaluations.

Further, it can be very difficult to measure behavioural change. Some researchers have set up scenarios in schools where, for example, an unfamiliar adult approaches a child on the playground and asks them to accompany them to complete a task, such as carrying in their son’s birthday brownies from the car. If a child has learned not to go with strangers, s/he will, hopefully, refuse.

However, most forms of violence cannot be tested using such scenarios. Imagine even considering setting up a “bullying situation” or one in which a partner is asked to behave abusively towards his girlfriend. Given the constraints on gathering behavioural evidence, the first step in testing success may need to be demonstrating that knowledge and attitudes about abuse and violence can be changed. In addition, though, more qualitative research methods may be utilized to gain a more in-depth sense of students’ reactions to having participated in a school based prevention program.

Evaluated Healthy Relationship/Dating Violence Prevention Programs

Although dating or relationship violence programs are commonly offered to students in high school and junior high, relatively few evaluations have assessed their efficacy. Most dating violence programs are offered by external agencies that visit the school and conduct presentations either to the entire student body or in individual classrooms (Tutty et al., 2005). This section highlights some program evaluations with an emphasis on Canadian ones.

The London Family Court Clinic evaluated the A.S.A.P. program (Jaffe, et al., 1992) in a large group presentation/class discussion format. This pre-posttest evaluation was administered to 679 students using a 48-item Clinic Questionnaire on Violence in Relationships with extensive reliability and validity. Awareness of intimate violence, alcohol use and family violence and what behavior constitutes abuse significantly increased after the program.

The Respect in Schools Everywhere program (RISE) was originally developed by the Violence Intervention Project in collaboration with the Toronto District School Board. (Connolly, & Friedlander, 2009). Josephson, Connolly, Simkins-Strong, and Weiser (2009) studied students in two middle schools that received the workshops. The students completed questionnaires at the beginning of the school year (before RISE) and at the school-year end. Program students became more knowledgeable about healthy relationships and dating aggression, less accepting of dating aggression, and less likely to be targets of dating aggression.

Krajewski, Rybarik, Dosch, and Gilmore (1996) used a pretest/posttest quasi-experimental control-group design to evaluate Levy's Skills for Violence Free Relationship with 13-18 year-old students (Grade 7). A teacher and shelter worker co-taught the program in ten consecutive health classes. The students significantly increased their knowledge and attitudes, although after five months the significant knowledge and attitude differences between the program and control group was lost.

The Canadian Red Cross RespectED program, 'What's Love Got To Do With It' is a relationship violence prevention program presented to Grade 9 to 12 students in two 1-hour or four 30-minute sessions. With 126 Grade 9 participants, (Legge, Josephson, Hicks & Kepron, 2004) compared students who participated in the program to those who had not. At post-test, program participants had significantly higher knowledge scores than at pre-test and as compared to control group students at post-test. All students (both program and controls) scored about 80% correct at pre-test. At 2-month follow-up, however, the program participants no longer scored significantly better than students did in the control condition or in comparison to their pre-test scores, raising questions about the long-term impact of the program.

The Fourth R is one of four curricula included in the current evaluation. Crooks Wolfe, Hughes, Jaffe and Chiodo (2008) conducted research on the program with over 1500 students in 10 intervention and 10 control schools using a cluster randomized controlled (RCT) design. Pretesting were conducted in the fall of the students' Grade 9 year and post-testing was four months later. Relative to controls, the Fourth R students learned the materials and had significant gains in knowledge and attitudes pertaining to violence, substance use and sexual health. The Fourth R students were better able to identify subtle forms of abuse in dating relationships than students in the control schools as well as demonstrating superior skills acquisition.

Wolfe and colleagues (2009) recently published an additional article on the same cluster randomized trial with 2.5-year follow-up to the Fourth R, presenting data from 1722, 14 to 15 year-old students from 20 public schools (52.8% girls). The research concluded that the program was more effective for boys and, "reduced PDV [physical dating violence] and increased condom use 2.5 years later at a low per-student cost" (p. 692).

In general, these evaluations reported positive changes in knowledge and attitudes. However, the results suggest some problems in differentially affecting some students and attrition in knowledge gains over time. For example, Wisdom, Belamaric, Rohrbeck and Dutton (August, 1999) reported on the lack of effectiveness of the High School Domestic Violence Workshop Curriculum. In this well-designed study with over 300 students, that used reliable and valid outcome measures, students in the program condition did not differ

significantly from control group students on scores of knowledge, attitudes, or behavioural intentions to intervene in dating violence situations.

A number of the evaluations found gender differences such that girls knew more about intimate partner violence before participating in the prevention program and afterwards (Jaffe et al., 1992). In Jaffe et al., the males made some changes in the undesirable direction. As such, any evaluation of dating violence prevention programs should analyze gender as a variable.

The efficacy or program changes to knowledge, attitudes and behaviour over time is a critical aspect that relatively few researchers have documented. Several programs have documented long-term effectiveness: Wolfe et al. at 2.5 years (2009). At five-year follow-up, Foshee and colleagues (2005) reported significant Safe Date program effects on the four follow-up time periods with respect to moderate physical, psychological and sexual dating violence perpetrating behaviours. The program was deemed equally effective for females and males, non-whites and whites.

Nevertheless, as previously noted, in two other studies, (Krajewski, et al., 1996; Legge et al., 2004) knowledge and attitude gains were lost at five- and two-month follow-up respectively. This confirms the importance of conducting long-term follow-up studies on such programs.

No meta-analyses have yet been published on the effectiveness of healthy relationship programs. Whitaker et al. (2006) reviewed 11 evaluations of primary prevention programs that address partner violence. Only three of the evaluations were judged to utilize high quality designs and methods: Foshee (2005) for Safe Dates; Wolfe et al. (2003) for the Youth Relationship project for high-risk youth, developed by the authors of the Fourth R, one of the programs in the current evaluation and Pacifici et al. (2001), which was primarily focused on sexual coercion, each of which reported that the program had positively impacted the students' knowledge. Nine of the 11 studies found at least one positive effect related to the program, however most of these were with respect to knowledge and attitudes, begging the questions of whether these lead to behavioural changes. Both Safe Dates and the Youth Relationship project reported improvements in behaviour over extended follow-up periods.

While the foundation for the effectiveness of healthy relationship/dating violence programs has been laid, more research is clearly necessary. Relatively few qualitative evaluations have solicited the opinions of students and school personnel about their impressions of the impact of the program both short- and long-term. This is a significant gap, especially in light of the two quantitative studies that found that students' knowledge and attitudes reverted to their original pre-program levels over time.

Several recommendations that arose from focus groups and interviews with adolescents are to address some prevention topics, at least initially, in separate gender groups (Normandeau et al., 2002). This would allow for universal prevention programming, but be attentive to the presentation, safety, and knowledge differences that exist between the sexes. The groups could then re-convene and share learning afterwards.

If prevention programs are effective in helping children and youth identify abusive situations and either avoid them or ask for assistance, the long-term health and behavioural consequences of abuse may be drastically reduced. If the programs are not effective, this has important implications for project personnel who may wish to revise the curricula and for educators who have multiple pressures to utilize school time for psychosocial interventions. Marshalling the spectrum of evaluation methodology is important to answer the core question of many: do the programs make a difference in the lives of students in the long-run.

Chapter Two: Evaluation Methodology

This report highlights the implementation process, challenges and strategies of four of Canada's most well-respected dating violence/healthy relationship programs for youth. The four programs were chosen by the Canadian Women's Foundation in 2006 from applications from approximately 20 programs invited to apply for three-year funding.

These programs stand out in a number of ways (see Appendix 1). They are relatively long-lived and well-established in their communities. Each has been well-evaluated previously (see Appendix 2) with considerable evidence that students learn the material after having participated in the programs. Notably, with the exception of the Fourth R program, the evaluations of these programs remain internal documents and un-published.

The current evaluation, thus, focuses on the question of whether the programs have an impact on the program participants in the long-run. Two research methods were used to address this question; a survey and in-depth interviews or focus groups. This chapter presents brief descriptions of the programs in addition to the current research methodology.

This comparison of programs is intended as a resource to other organizations and agencies that may already be or are contemplating developing dating violence/healthy relationship programs. The information provides a range of options that addresses key prevention program components; it is not intended to convey that any one program structure or premise is superior. Each of the programs highlighted in this analysis developed in response to the unique needs and context of its community. Each developed in response to funding restraints and opportunities. Their journeys, successes and struggles are presented to highlight the considerations of what such programs face and must address in providing the best possible information in the hope that our youth may be protected from entering into or remaining in dysfunctional or abusive intimate and peer relationships currently or in future.

Program Snapshots

Making Waves/Vague par vague: Started in 1995 in New Brunswick, Making Waves/Vague par vague consists of weekend retreats attended by Grade 10 and 11 students (about four from each school) and teachers (one or two) from several schools. The workshops entail 12 to 14 hours of exercises and discussions at an off-school site over a two-day period, although Making Waves has shifted from Friday to Sunday weekends to Friday to Saturday weekends due to funding issues. The experiential exercises and discussions are led by adult and student facilitators (the Student Advisory Committee of past student attendees). The participating students meet together and in separate gender groups where they make and take back action plans to their schools to disseminate healthy relationship information to others. Examples of action plans include plays, poster displays and essay contests. Making Waves has offered their French version, "Vague par vague," from early on. Making Waves includes special needs students (PAL program) at regular weekends and has special versions of the materials for hearing- and visually-impaired students.

Making Waves/Vague par vague recently acquired additional funding from Status of Women to do follow-up with the schools to check how the student action plans were being conducted. The program also created Making Waves/Vague par vague manuals for middle schools with funding from the Counselling Foundation. Most recently, Making Waves began collaborating with Partners for Youth, a local New Brunswick organization that focuses on programs empowering youth. They merged in 2009, after the completion of the current evaluation. The website is: <http://www.partnersforyouth.ca/projects.html>

Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA) Respectful Relationship program (R+R) is an external program with 12 weeks of one-hour curriculum for four grades - 7, 8, 9, 10 (or 11), a total of 48 classes. Developed on Saltspring Island in British Columbia in the early 1990's, the program has been utilized in a number of other BC school districts. Program facilitators work alongside trained student facilitators, who increasingly take responsibility for leading discussions and exercises. The United Nation's Habitat identified the program as a "Good Practice in youth violence prevention" in 2007. The website can be found at: <http://respectfulrelationships.swova.org/>

Healthy Relationships for Youth/Rural Youth Education Project: A program of the Antigonish Women's Resources Centre in Nova Scotia, the Rural Youth Education Project began when, in applying for funding for a similar program, the National Crime Prevention Centre requested that the Antigonish Centre replicate SWOVA's Respectful Relationships model in rural Nova Scotia. The 12-session per year curriculum (ultimately adapted from Respectful Relationships as well as other programs) was offered in four grades (7, 8, 9 and 11) by program facilitators aided by students. Since the NCPCC funding finished, the curriculum has been significantly revised and renamed the Healthy Relationships for Youth Program, now offered in all ten schools in the Strait Regional School Board.

The program is now a 12-session curriculum offered to Grade 9 students, originally led by a teacher, a community facilitator, and incorporating student facilitators. The most recent iteration of the program primarily uses student facilitators to present the program, with teacher support. A program coordinator trains students and supervises the program implementation. According to the 2009 school-year statistics, 85 students and 13 teachers were trained to deliver the program. The program has incorporated materials on diversity, by, for example, addressing the centuries-old Black population in Nova Scotia and soliciting Mi'kmaq students as youth facilitators. Website: <http://www.antigonishwomenscentre.com/ryep/youth.html>

The Fourth R: This 21-session curriculum developed for Grade 9 students (this varies by province) is an internal program taught by teachers in physical education classes. Originating in London, Ontario, the program was initiated by child abuse researchers, Drs. David Wolfe and Peter Jaffe. Ray Hughes, a former teacher, Dr. Claire Crooks and Debbie Chiodo were central in developing and revising the program materials. The curriculum addresses three areas (7 sessions each): healthy relationships, sexuality and alcohol and substance use. Fourth R staff currently train teachers to provide the program but, in future, experienced teachers may take over this aspect, educating new teachers to the model and potentially creating further cost-savings.

The Fourth R developed an additional component for Grades 9, 10 and 11 students that can be inserted into the English curriculum. The Fourth R has a French version starting in Ottawa. The Fourth R has extensively revised their program for Aboriginal students in southern Ontario and this curriculum is being used in Saskatchewan. A Grade 8 curriculum for Ontario has also been developed. The website can be found at: http://youthrelationships.org/about_fourth_r.html

Similarities across Programs

A number of factors distinguish these programs from many other healthy relationship/dating violence programs.

- Each program offers an in-depth curriculum of at least seven sessions or more focused on healthy relationships.
- Each grew from organizations/individuals with well-articulated principles and knowledge with respect to relationship violence.
- Each has been operating for seven years or more.
- Each has successfully gained access to students in several school districts and is well-liked by teachers.
- Each demonstrates respect for youth in their philosophies and approach by engaging students in either program delivery or in activities to supplement the program.
- Each has expanded the materials to address populations of special needs or distinctive issues such as substance abuse, homophobia or racism.

- Each has conducted or cooperated with substantial internal and external program evaluations that have validated that students learn the materials and have changed their attitudes, at least immediately after the program.

Differences across Programs

While there are considerable similarities across these four healthy relationship programs, a number of differences distinguish one from another.

- Three (R+R, HRY and Making Waves/Vague par vague) are external programs (delivered by program or community facilitators); the Fourth R is internal (teacher-delivered).
- The three external programs developed with input from individuals who worked in community feminist front-line agencies, such as shelters with a violence-against-women philosophy: The Fourth R emerged from a research centre concerned with preventing child abuse and associated violence.
- The three external programs involve youth as presenters/co-presenters, providing them training and leadership skills. The Fourth R, as a more traditional teacher-offered curriculum, does not, although it encourages schools to assist students to develop student-based committees and to conduct student activities that complement and extend the curriculum.
- There is some diversity in the targeted grade levels. Healthy Relationships for Youth and the Fourth R target Grade 9 students although, for the Fourth R, this varies by province and a new Grade 8 curriculum was developed for Ontario. Making Waves/Vague par vague invites students from Grade 10 or 11 to the weekend retreats, so that, if they are chosen for the Student Advisory Team, they have one or two years to return and contribute. Finally, SWOVA's four-year curriculum spans Grades 7 to 10 (or 11 in some schools).

Evaluation Methods

The major objective for the current evaluation was to determine any long-term effects from implementing the four healthy relationships programs that were determined to represent “best practices” in Canada by the Canadian Women’s Foundation. The evaluations conducted to date on these four programs indicated improvements in students’ knowledge and attitudes and, in the case of the Fourth R, behaviour. That the programs had such strong evaluation support is impressive and supports their designation by the Foundation as best practices.

Despite this strong research support, a recurring question from funders that has not been answered to date was, “Do the programs make a long-term difference?” One way to address this question would have been to conduct a follow-up study using a standardized questionnaire, however, this would have been challenging since the program foci are substantially different. The approach agreed upon by the project research advisory team was a more qualitative, open-ended approach that would gather opinions about the programs from participants and others, two to three years’ post-program.

The research involved both a survey and a focus group/interview component. The evaluation focused on the core program components, not some of the intriguing new directions, such as the Fourth R Aboriginal curriculum program or Making Wave’s work with alternative education students.

The survey participants were students (Grades 10 and above), program staff, teachers and community representatives who have been involved with one of the four programs. Each program assisted in developing a strategy to contact former students in their district. For students aged 16 and older, the survey included an invitation to be interviewed about their experiences. Interviews were conducted by telephone or email and standard qualitative methods were used to analyse the information.

The research respondents were invited to participate by two methods:

- 1) A flier describing the research that included the address of the website on which the survey would be posted. This was either hand delivered or sent in an email attachment.
- 2) An invitation from the program personnel to the appropriate school staff or program alumni to request access to students using in-class time.

The majority of the research respondents were students aged 16 and older. No names were collected on the surveys. For any in-person administrations, a consent form was provided to the students. It was made clear that students had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If utilizing the on-line survey, it was straightforward to withdraw from the study: the respondent could simply stop answering the questions and not submit their responses. In one study site (Nova Scotia for the Healthy Relationships for Youth Project), students aged 14 to 15 were among those invited to participate and so parental consent was acquired.

The research procedures and informed consent forms were reviewed and approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Ethics Review Board. In addition, permission to invite students to participate in the evaluation was required by a number of the school boards.

Only the principal investigator had access to the completed surveys and interviews. Identifying information was deleted or disguised in the event that information from the interviews is included in the final report or subsequent publications. Data are reported in aggregate.

Since relatively few students responded to the survey invitation to share stories, additional focus groups and individual interviews were conducted during extra program site-visits. The focus groups were introduced with two general questions: “What do you recall about the healthy relationship program in which you participated several years ago?” and “Did the program have a long-term impact on your life and relationships and if, yes, how so?” The interviews were transcribed verbatim, entered into the AtlasTI computer program and analyzed using mainstream qualitative social work research methodology including identifying prominent themes and sub-themes (Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell, 1996).

Presentation of Results

The results from the survey and focus groups are presented separately, although some content certainly overlaps. Essentially, this evaluation comprises two separate studies, one qualitative and one quantitative. The quantitative survey asked numerous specific questions, prompting the respondent to think about issues that they might not have previously, such as whether the program had an impact not only on their relationships, but also on their schools and communities.

In contrast, the qualitative focus groups and interviews were much more open-ended, asking the respondents to identify their ideas of what they saw as important. They typically did so in more detail than the written survey question responses. That some content overlaps across the two research methods confirms the importance of these themes. For this reason, the reader is asked to bear with the repetition of ideas across chapters.

The statistical comparisons of the survey data are primarily Pearson chi-square analyses. Because of the relatively large samples, which more easily results in statistically significant chi-square tests, a further statistic, Cramer’s V, was added. After the [chi-square](#) has determined significance, the Cramer’s V statistic is used as a post-test to determine the strength of the association. This statistic interprets the proportion of the effect that can be attributed to the comparisons across the programs (Craft, 1990).

When easily identifiable from the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups, the gender of the student is noted. As mentioned in Chapter 1, gender has been a contentious issue in implementing healthy relationship programs, such that some male students negatively react to so the content of some programs and, in fact, perform worse on outcome measures post-program. As such, it was considered important to identify the gender of the quotation source, when possible, to highlight whether such diverse perspectives were apparent.

Evaluation Participants

This section describes the numbers of participants who responded to the survey and to the interviews or focus groups. The survey was administered differently across the programs based on the recommendations of the program personnel and logistics. The Respectful Relationships and Healthy Relationships for Youth programs both used face-to-face administration, while Making Waves/Vague par vague and the Fourth R in Ontario passed on information with respect to the on-line survey. Ultimately, the face-to-face administration of surveys resulted in more responses than the on-line survey, as can be seen in Table 1.

As well, because the original survey response in Ontario with respect to the Fourth R was rather low, the author contacted and collected additional surveys from a school in Strathmore, Alberta, where the Fourth R has been offered for a number of years. Notably, though, these surveys were administered by an individual who was not the teacher for the Fourth R classes and who could not refresh their memories about the curriculum. The Fourth R Ontario and Alberta students seldom took the opportunity to comment to the open-ended survey questions, so this important source of contextual information about their responses to the various aspects of the Fourth R program is largely missing.

Across all programs, 404 surveys were completed. Of those, eight individuals answered in such a way that it was clear they were not taking the survey seriously, so their responses were not included in any analyses. Another 21 individuals had not participated in the programs of interest (or they did not recall such participation), so their responses were excluded. Thus, 382 surveys were considered valid and were included in the statistical analysis.

Table 1: Survey Responses re. Healthy Relationship Programs

Program	On-line	Classroom	Total
Respectful Relationships (SWOVA)	7	157	164 (42.9%)
Healthy Relationships for Youth	0	122	122 (31.9%)
Making Waves/Vague par vague	49	0	49 (12.9%)
The Fourth R	19 (Ontario)	28 (Strathmore)	47 (12.3%)
Total	75	307	382

Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted during site visits (at least two per program) or by telephone. A total of 107 individuals were interviewed, with the breakdown by program and role displayed in Table 2. Two site visits for the Fourth R were made to Saskatchewan, where the program has been implemented for several years.

Table 2: Individual/Focus Group Interviewees

Program	Youth	School/Community	Program Personnel	Total
R+R (SWOVA)	18	4	8	30 (28%)
HRY	20	2	2	24 (22.4%)
Fourth R	11	4	5	20 (18.7%)
Making Waves	17	9	7	33 (30.1%)
Totals	66 (62%)	19(18%)	22 (20.5%)	107

Across the survey and individual interviews, information from 489 informants contributed to the quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

Chapter Three: Implementing Healthy Relationship Programs

The interviews with program personnel asked core questions with respect to developing and implementing their programs, the focus of this chapter (for interview guide see Appendix 3). The rationale for these conversations was to both identify key characteristics of each of these programs that have been labelled as “best practices” and challenges and successes in their implementation and maintenance that might be valuable for new programs to consider.

This chapter provides information with respect to the philosophy behind the curriculum development, the perceived relevance of the materials, including grade level(s) chosen and administration (such as the choice of being an external versus an internal program), accessing schools, and engaging youth. The program personnel also identified particular challenges such as sustainable funding, and the successes of their programs. Comments that fit the implementation themes, from the interviews and focus groups conducted later with students, and school and community personnel, are also included in this chapter.

Program Philosophy

The philosophies of the four healthy relationship programs were assessed through the implementation interviews and focus groups. Each one of the programs embeds their philosophy of respect for youth and diversity in how they offer the program.

The crux of Making Waves is the philosophy and that’s what makes it successful. How we do it. It’s not even the violence stuff necessarily. The stuff’s important, but it’s the empowerment model and the process; it’s very process driven. The weekend is magical and it’s hard to articulate that. One of the key elements is the difference between experiential education and transformational education. Traditional education with information, didactic, where you receive a lot of facts and it doesn’t really sink in. The weekend is experiential; you have an experience. The information goes in in a different way and the model itself is to me a part of the message, the way it’s delivered. (Making Waves Board)

The core foundational piece is violence against women and children, and a strong commitment to anti-oppression, looking at racism, at homophobia, looking at class. Building sexism as the foundational piece, but also being able to weave in intersection. (R+R staff)

The program is a skills-based philosophy. They’re going to learn skills connected with issues that they like and hopefully we can support them in transferring those skills into their life. You can’t just talk about them. You have to do lots of practice. Grade 9 students have to have a very strong teacher, to be able to do that well. The whole process is structured. On top of that, you need a teacher who can watch them and debrief immediately on the way they’re handling those conflicts. For me that was pivotal. The teachers loved the lessons across the board; the kids loved the activities and information. I’ve never had a negative. (Fourth R staff)

For people who have never even thought about the connection between unhealthy relationships and poor sexual decision-making or substance abuse, there’s a whole philosophy that we’re trying to sell. The extent to which that makes sense to you probably has a pretty decent impact on how you implement it. (Fourth R staff)

We approach violence looking at diversity issues and oppression as a form of violence and then, how that affects relationships. We start the ball rolling there with the kids and it takes about three years for their personal growth and skill development to come to an understanding and a comfort level with these topics. (HRY staff)

In addition to the previous quote from the HRY representative, two staff from the Respectful Relationship program also spoke of the importance of addressing diversity.

One of the things that made SWOVA so successful was the dedication to equality. This comes from having worked in other organizations afterwards that perhaps said that they were working for equality but didn't really demonstrate it in their own organization. SWOVA was so fantastic about that: the adults and the youth were very much on the same page about everybody's role. (R+R staff)

As a gay man going into these situations, I can gently dissemble and bring back down to root causes around sexism, and seeing how that, at least in the realm of homophobia, there's an extension, which is still relatively new in the gay community, too, to see that that's part of the root. With this last group (Youth Team) we brought in the anti-racism piece. (R+R Staff)

Relevance of the Program Material

While the common content of the four programs that comprise the focus of this evaluation is healthy relationships and dating violence, each incorporates somewhat different additional materials. In implementing the curricula, one issue is to what extent do program students, staff and others consider the program material relevant? Many students spoke about the importance and relevance of the curriculum focus and materials.

First, what did student participants think of the sessions? Their comments largely convey the perception that the program topics and examples were essential and real, reflecting the types of issues that they face in their day-to-day lives.

What we learn here applies so much to real life; things you don't learn in normal school. It's really crucial for bettering your understanding of the world at large, but also on a personal level because you go through so many different types of relationships. (R+R student female)

Everything that we've learned in the classroom I actually use. In everyday life, I think back to SWOVA and if I am stuck, I know what to do. It's real life facts that everybody needs to know; learning about life. I have friends from all over the world. I learn about how different the world is everywhere else. I was like, "Wow these people don't know these things" and it's kinda heartbreaking to know that they don't know it. Helping them is really nice too. If you can help people, almost like a counsellor, but it's learning how to be a friend. I think that's the point of this whole program. To learn how to be a good friend. (R+R student female)

I enjoy this new program because it involves real problems that kids my age have. It helps kids find ways to deal with their problems in a positive way. (Fourth R student)

This is what we should be learning in school. You're learning how to be responsible towards yourself and society, to make the world a better place. That's what we need to be learning. This will stick with you. (R+R student female)

A lot of the Grade 9s aren't knowledgeable, especially [about] the equality thing. It's important that they talk about it and get educated. (HRY student male)

At the time, it seemed kind of stupid but now I've actually seen people in abusive relationships. When you're 14 or 15 you don't really think about it. "Oh that doesn't happen," but it does. You kind of know it does happen but it's not your life so you don't really care about it. (Fourth R student)

You could actually use the stuff; this is real! There are things you learned in school that you are never going to use again, like math, algebra. This you're going to use. When we teach them something they could use it the next day. It's not one of these things that will only be good to them years later. (HRY student male)

It's kind of common sense brought into action. I didn't really think of those things ever. I kind of knew them, growing up. But you don't really think about the way you handle a problem and the best way to approach

different issues. You know you should handle it this way but it doesn't mean, when you're actually in a situation, you will. (Fourth R student male)

Sometimes you find yourself in social positions where, "I have no idea what I should be doing." We do scenario work in classrooms a lot, and try to make them empathetic to their character's position. It's totally a set up scenario for real life. I've been faced with some crazy, crazy things and this is just high school! We're all 14 to 18 and people don't necessarily think what happened actually does happen. It's such a reality. There's violence on so many levels and I'm thankful personally that our community has gone through what we have. I think that it's really valuable. In the classrooms some of those things come up. (R+R student female)

A number of the adults also commented about the extent to which the program materials addressed issues of importance to their students but that also issues may be difficult to discuss or uncomfortable.

To have their experiences validated as young people dating. Maybe they feel like the adults in their lives are like, "Oh, teenagers in love. Whatever." But even to find out that they're not the only ones who have problems with relationships and their problems are real and they happen to adults and there are ways to solve them... Some kids, all they need is to be validated. It's like the relationships aren't worth talking about because they're just teenage relationships so if you don't think that your relationship is valid, then if you're experiencing abuse, you don't think the abuse is valid or the feelings. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

They're asked to contemplate and reveal things that are probably quite new to them. They're talking about relationships and sexuality quite often and homophobia, with this group of kids who are probably at the most chaotic times of their lives. Sometimes the boys will be joking around. But a lot of the time, they're being challenged with things that they don't want to talk about, they're not ready to talk about. Some attitudes might be counter to what they're learning at home. There is a degree of discomfort but we know that dissonance creates learning. From just watching, it's hard to evaluate. I know that they carry the discussions on outside of the sessions. (R+R school personnel)

It's developmentally sensitive. I don't think they really understand enough about what adolescents are going through. So we isolate this issue, dating violence, but we don't realize the contexts that occur with alcohol drugs, sex, pressure. [I: You have to understand the complexity of their lives?] Absolutely. I hear kids saying, "If I hear about bullying, one more time..." because they heard about it in elementary. What they really need is to understand how these things occur, how they deal with the pressures, not with just that one issue. (Fourth R staff)

They don't talk about relationships and how complicated they get or the many different aspects of them in any course in high school or middle school. The closest is the Health and Development curriculum, which is nuts and bolts oftentimes depending on who is teaching them. Lots of filling out diagrams; it doesn't really get into complicated things; it's like the plumbing and safe sex and they don't get any more direct, even in high school. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

This program is organized in a way that makes students feel comfortable talking about real issues. The way the topics are taught allows students to foster critical thinking skills about real-life scenarios. As a teacher, I finally feel confident teaching a health class addressing topics of real importance in society. The Fourth R will make a huge impact on our students' lives. (Fourth R teacher)

You'll see kids who don't use the skills but will, later in life, because it will become important to them. These are the skills that kids need. We've done a lot of damage for a long time saying, "Just say no" and messages like that. We do damage when we lead people to believe that if we do the one-day thing [prevention program] that's going to impact kids' behaviours. I'm apprehensive to support them at all for fear that people think that's going to be enough. As you can tell, I'm still quite passionate. I believe in it a lot. I think it's important that we do it in schools and that all kids have access to it and that's why I like the model of rolling it out in schools. Where else do all kids go? (Fourth R staff)

Not only are they teaching about communication, but the contexts within which they teach it are difficult. Things that people try really hard not to talk about because it's uncomfortable. The kids are using the skills to deal with difficult material. Then when it comes time to be in the real world, it's never that difficult. (R+R school personnel)

It was about relationships. That's where students demonstrate most of their problems in Grade 9. They tend to move to students who do the things they do. If one student skips classes they'll move to a group of students who skip classes. Some things that came up we hadn't expected, like students who were doing well in school but stressed by school and the pressures on them. They would start to talk about it, whereas they wouldn't necessarily without a class on stress and issues. It gave them an opportunity to talk about things that were bothering them in class. (Fourth R staff)

The kids are very outspoken about it, so if you ask anybody about SWOVA, first of all, they will have something to say. It will very likely be positive and sometimes they'll say we should add this or, it would be great if we could talk about this too. But I haven't found anyone who has been negative except for someone who hasn't been in it yet. "I don't want to do that stupid thing, I don't want to talk about this" and then, a month later, it's not stupid anymore. (R+R school personnel)

Others noted that the process facilitates the students feeling respected, which often leads to them, in turn, modelling respect.

They're being taught to be respectful. But they're also being respected because they're being taught a high-level skill; they're given the benefit of the doubt that they're going to be able to learn it. So it's highly complimentary to them saying, "We think you can do this, and we're also going to talk about interesting things that you would like to talk about. What is talked about varies greatly depending on the group and the facilitators have to be pretty on their toes. But they are. They can take pretty much anything that's said and figure out a way to pay it some respect and talk about it. (R+R school personnel)

Every couple of years, we'll be evaluating a workshop, and somebody will say, "What's that term mean?" All of a sudden, nobody says that anymore. So, something as simple as that, and keeping our programs based on the experiences they have in their schools. Those are their words. That's what they say. We're empowering them, and giving them the information to make their own decisions. Nobody is preaching at them, nobody is judging them. When you have that respect between facilitator and student, it fosters that same respect between the students. You have students considering other students' perspectives, and thinking, "What would that be like in a same-sex relationship?", or, "What if I didn't have a mom and a dad?", or, "What if...?" (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

As the one multi-year program, the Respectful Relationship process of connecting with students over the years is important to note. Several adults described this process that students undergo as the program progresses:

The 12 sessions gives the students the chance to build a relationship with us, as the facilitators. If they don't have that level of trust you're going to get nothing. That takes time. So it's usually halfway through that we really sort of get into the good stuff. The kids talk more. (R+R staff)

It does plant seeds for kids in Grade 7 and 8 when they see Grade 10, 11 and 12 students sharing facilitation with the adults. In Grade 7 and 8, they may not quite understand it. By Grade 9, they're thinking maybe we want to join the Youth Team. It's modeling to younger kids different positive messaging around leadership, facilitation, social justice, all the things we talk about. So not only are we sharing those skills with them, but how we do it. (R+R staff)

Follow-up Activities

Activities in which the students engage or lead once the healthy relationship program has finished are one strategy to incorporate more long-term effects into students' lives. While not every program formally incorporates additional activities post-program; these are particularly important for the Making Waves program to circulate the information beyond the students who attended the Waves weekend. Nevertheless, the study respondents described follow-up activities for the three other programs as well.

I just participated in the Many Faces of Abuse play. It went really well. The response from a lot of people even a few days later was like, "Wow that was kind of intense". It was all quiet when we were doing it. (Making Waves student female)

As the Youth Coordinator, I sat on schoolboard meetings. They got to the point where they accepted me and listened to my input. It's so rare that a youth would be able to sit in that sort of meeting and it was through SWOVA I ended up representing everything. They asked about counselling and leadership and youth. I think that it made a big difference in our community. (R+R student female)

This year we made three videos and put them on the video announcements in every classroom. It really got people. We presented them with the facts, like women from ages 18 to 22... and then we'd do a little skit. People would catch it, and, "What was that about?" and I'd tell them. They're like, "Oh that sounds really interesting, I didn't know that." Some of the facts just scared them. My sister's in Grade 10 and she said all her friends were like, "The More you Know video is coming on". We had fun with it. The funny thing is nobody knew what they were about, and that was our angle. (Making Waves student male)

While I was with SWOVA, we did quite a few different things. We had some community-based things through the high school: Freedom from Fear days and for December 6, we did a ribbon campaign, and relationship workshops through the middle school where we paired with an adult facilitator and we did workshops for kids slightly younger than us. (R+R student female)

I'm a community mentor, a liaison for the peer mentoring programs in the high school. I (me and three other college or university students) sit in and observe and make sure the mentoring sessions run smoothly. I would recommend it (laughs). I think is a really good program. (Fourth R student female)

A number of the adults also described follow-up or outreach activities:

There's student governments but they are a little artificial. What they end up doing are sometimes not terrifically socially meaningful. These kids have found a place where they can do something real. They can really help. One of the spin-off programs they've started, "Pass it On," has made a profound difference just by giving people a place to talk and to become mentors. It was a 17 year old who said, "I have a good idea". It's really good! We're starting to get almost complacent about it. We're so used to our kids going to things all the time. They're invited to this and invited to that... (R+R school personnel)

The kids who did the play today, a great group of kids, had a teacher who was very gung-ho, who communicated well with the principal and the principal was gung-ho. Things worked really well in that school. When we're doing action plans we don't ask them for the moon. We want something realistic. Even putting the play on, that's not easy! It's a lot of work for kids, a lot of time, practice, committed time from the teacher. You can't just do it! It wouldn't go over well. It takes work and it takes time. (Making Waves staff)

In District 6, they did a whole day and kids wore T-shirts of different colors. The Morimucto kids put on a media and gender workshop four different times as part of their action plan. The last ED and I were there to provide support, but the kids were doing the workshop. (Making Waves staff)

We work with one or two youth facilitators in each class and support them in school initiatives. One year, we were involved with starting what seems to be an annual pow wow. One of the youth came up with the idea. We thought that would give us an excuse to get them to pay more attention to the Mi'kmaq culture, do a

little more research. At that school, there's a strong Mi'kmaq presence but everybody assumes that they already know everything because they've been together for so long. One of the girls who was Mi'kmaq said she was forced to do a little bit more digging than normal. So we ended up supporting the Mi'kmaq support worker. The Mi'kmaq support worker needed to know there were youth ready to do some work. That was one of the most powerful moments. (HRY staff)

Students have done such a variety of things. A lot of them do workshops. Some schools have a Making Waves Day, tying it in with bullying, things like that. We've had schools do murals depicting the power and control wheel and the parts of a relationship, healthy and unhealthy. The play that we start the weekend with, a lot of the schools take that: Theatre arts classes, poster campaigns, just expressing themselves and the message in whatever way. Then they realize, "Look what we just did! We made a difference in our school." (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

In Antigonish, a teacher is really passionate about a Gay-Straight alliance. The youth facilitators at [school] are very open to supporting the work of the gays. So they're taking on an Anti-homophobia day. It's like we had a built in support group; they're willing to say this is a no-brainer. Without having that support built in, the youth facilitators, as a group of kids that are already OK with LGBT issues, it could be difficult. (HRY staff)

Just the awareness and the acceptance of people and differences. I don't think SWOVA is the number one contributor to this, but we've branched into so many different groups. We have a Gay/Straight Alliance at the high school and it's very well regarded. Global Awareness and Environmental Action Group. That is part and parcel to SWOVA being in the school and people accepting it and gaining knowledge from it. (R+R school personnel)

They've commonly had poster contests. Kids are really creative. There are poetry contests, stuff around their schools advertising. Twice a year we have a youth regional meeting and they see what other kids are doing and get energized. If the kid can say, "I'm on the Youth School Committee, I go to this conference. I could win a prize." There are two prizes for each school for the kid who does the most. Kids have to feel that they're recognized for their work. (Fourth R staff)

You have, first of all, kids that are really charismatic. You have a teacher who really cares about the kids; a school administrator that really cares about the teacher and the kids, so allows this to happen. When it does happen, there's magic. It's like those kids who came to do the whole Making Waves presentation with no adults at all. These kids did an amazing job! (Making Waves Board)

If I do community presentations; I had a Youth Health Fair presentation at one of the schools last week and the Healthy Relationships for Youth Team helped me conduct that. I had pairs of Youth Facilitators leading activities. They do a lot of extra things. [I: Did they enjoy it?] Definitely. They're fabulous, fabulous and they grow so much. It's very, very valuable work. (HRY staff)

The school put on an event 5 or 6 years ago. They organized the whole thing: put on a two-hour program for junior kids, did the play, had the media there. They had support of the teachers, of course, and the principal, but the kids got the school board to get buses to bus kids in from surrounding areas. They filled the auditorium with these kids and put this whole thing on. They did all the interviews, the media came. It was quite remarkable. (Making Waves Board)

Going into the Jewish communities in Vancouver last year. Just the impact of these kids when you did the training... All of these educators from around the province were weeping to hear the kids speak of their experiences. It was staggering to see the response. It's wonderful to see other people, how refreshed they are by the experiences of these kids. (R+R staff)

These kids make incredible mentors. They are so amazing! I've seen the difference of high school kids going to talk at middle schools: it's like gods and goddesses walking in the room with those kids, it's unbelievable.

There's just no comparison to having me going in there. But when those kids go in, as long as there's some framework for them to work, that's where the impact is. (Making Waves Board)

The Youth Team also participate in community events. An external speaker comes and they're invited to facilitate a workshop in the community. It speaks to the program. The Youth Team are going to blow these parents away. I thought it amazing when I first experienced it and to see the youth leading the adults should be fascinating. The Unitarian Church is asking us to facilitate a workshop in April. They're presenting in two weeks at a film festival. So there's a huge amount of community engagement from our youth team and I'd like to think it's because of this organization but it's also because it's who they are. We've provided a venue for that. (R+R staff)

We've looked at the action plans from the weekends and how they get implemented back at their schools as a mark of success. But, we don't look at the informal work that happens in small group discussions and over the internet and email. There's piles of that. We hear it all the time. We can't identify this as Making Waves, but that conversation took place in my classroom last week about dating violence is directly related to the experiences those kids had at the weekend. It's not poster making or presenting something to their peers formally but the informal work has such a significant impact. (Making Waves Board)

The other valuable thing is our ability, because of the credibility, to get kids into power positions. We took a kid to talk to the Senate, a kid that had never even been out of New Brunswick. What impact did that have? We took kids to the Board of Education who presented about how guidance counsellors are never there when you want them. They're too busy and we can't talk to them. These people at the top of the department are saying, "We didn't know this" and the kids are saying, "Maybe you should ask us to talk to you more often... But it's only because Making Waves has credibility that we could get a meeting... Then all of a sudden, positive things are happening because you've given them the power instead of being afraid of what they're going to do with it. (Making Waves Board)

Probably the next best are the Youth Action Committees, depending on the school with the local champion who has the funding or a personal interest. They're all manualized, which is a good step. The parent newsletters, I don't know the extent to which those go out and if they would go out once we stop paying for it. It was one of the shifts we've been trying to sort out. (Fourth R staff)

Nevertheless, other students and adults identified the extent to which the students follow through with additional activities, post- or external to the program as challenging at times:

When we do the action plans the next year, they say, "I know we've done this," or "That bulletin board was started but never finished" (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

One component I don't think has replicated well is the Youth Action Committees. I want to be careful because it's something we're so proud of and it's a great idea. It really depends on the community. In Saskatchewan, maybe not every school, but most schools have really good committees. There's been quite a bit of networking across them. Probably three years ago now, one of the committees started an anti-violence publication, a board-wide one. It comes out once a year and people from the different schools can submit essays and artwork. (Fourth R staff)

The kids have good intentions but it's hard for them to get support and make things happen. Doing a workshop in a school is a huge undertaking for kids. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

External versus Internal Programs

As noted in the literature review, one of the core questions in developing healthy relationship programs is whether to do so from an external or internal perspective. External programs are offered from agencies that operate outside schools. Typically the program materials are offered by external staff that come into the school system to present the curriculum. In contrast, internal programs are offered by teachers within the school system. Three of the four programs included in the current evaluation are external, while one, the Fourth R is internal—teacher-offered.

Of course, any program that functions within the school system entails a partnership, whether internal or external, so this distinction may be somewhat academic. Also this distinction is rarely a choice: program developers tend to be either external to schools or internal, so program direction is determined from the start.

This section includes comments from the key informants with respect to advantages and disadvantages of both external and internal programs. Some advantages of internal programs include the sustainability of the program once adopted as a curriculum within the school system and that the material becomes part of regular school curriculum and access to schools facilitated. A disadvantage of internal curricula is that after the teachers are trained, the program developers hand over control of the curriculum. Possible diversions from the intended programs are that teachers may skip role-plays, select materials and skip others or present the units out of order.

The representatives from the Fourth R, the one internal program, presented a rationale for this choice as well as mentioning some advantages and drawbacks:

[I: Is a strength of the Fourth R that it's teacher friendly, teacher-driven?] Absolutely! We had to start in their system, not ours. I've been very pleased. In psychology, a program like the Youth Relationships is hard to take off because everyone has their own way of doing it. Whereas, the schools are very happy to get something that they can deliver without having to mess with it. I hear good things; I'm surprised at how receptive teachers have been. (Fourth R staff)

You want the programs to be in schools in an ongoing way, curriculum that everybody has to teach. You need to look at where the program might fit in. One of the things we're struggling with is [that] something going on for years loses its "oomphh" in some ways. Some of the teacher excitement is in the pilot schools. But it's a balance. There's a whole cohort of students who've gone through that program without awareness that it's anything different. That's a strength: it's a victory of sorts for us and it's a challenge. (Fourth R staff)

For the Fourth R, maintaining the integrity of the program could become an issue. For example, teachers can purchase the curriculum without taking the training.

In Ontario, any teacher can purchase it and use it. We encourage them to get the training, to make sure that they understand what we're trying to accomplish and don't teach it the wrong way. If they were to skip role-plays, and just lecture...that would destroy the whole thing. But we can't control that because it's impossible for us to train everybody. (Fourth R staff)

When teachers see it as an internal curriculum, they change it and we don't even always know in what ways. It's built sequentially, so Unit 1 on healthy relationships and violence prevention lays the groundwork for Unit 2, which is alcohol, substance abuse and 3, sexuality. A lot of teachers seem to want to start with Unit 2. I don't know if it's comfort because they've been teaching substance abuse longer, but it's not how the curriculum is built. The role-plays are more complex and advanced in that unit, and then you have people say, "Oh I tried the role play and it didn't work". Well, Unit 1 starts building those step by step. It's making us think about sustainability. When I did that survey of national partners, the one thing that the administrators and the teachers agreed on was that ongoing teacher training and training new teachers was critical. (Fourth R staff)

I have to admit that probably what's getting disseminated is the curriculum. We love to think of the Fourth R as a multi-component, comprehensive program with something for parents, something for youth [but] I think what gets disseminated well is the curriculum. (Fourth R staff)

We didn't have any bumps other than that teachers sometimes veer off the plan. When counsellors got involved in the implementation, we even went further awry. So many teachers and counsellors just want to talk about it. Well you have to practice negotiation skills, refusal and delay skills...You can't just talk about them. (Fourth R staff)

At one of the schools in which student focus groups were conducted, several women teachers who had previously been trained by the Fourth R staff had become pregnant and left, leaving the program to teachers who, by default, had not received the training. Students commented on the effect of this on the curriculum presentation, which was contrasted by the experiences of one student in the other section who worked with a teacher who had been trained. First, from one of the teacher's perspective.

I've done it two years without the course. Now that I've had the course, I'm kind of excited. I didn't have all the supplies either. We had to clean the office of one of the girls on maternity leave. I came across a whole package of things I could have used for two years. I said, "That could have helped. I remember these from the training." But I wouldn't have known what they were. (Fourth R teacher)

Next, two students, who were taught by different teachers, commented:

It was really disorganized. We wouldn't know what we were doing. He'd be, "Just read this and answer these questions". He talked a lot, mostly about his past, a lot of personal stories. Much more of a guilt trip in the sense of, "You shouldn't do drugs. If you have, that's wrong completely, if you've tried alcohol that's wrong. I don't do any of this. I think people who do are wasting their lives." (Fourth R student)

In my class, our teacher bridged the gap. She was always putting herself in our shoes, understanding the pressures that we go through. I felt her relating to us and she handled it in a really good way. It made the class that much easier to handle. Because, it is evident that it's around us. We're exposed to it all the time. She wasn't saying, "Avoid it completely." (Fourth R student)

The other three programs began as entirely external to the school system. Individuals from these programs and from the schools made the following points in support of external programs:

[I: You have done workshops in class and it's not the same?] No, it doesn't have the same impact. The information is the same, but there's no impact. What we are doing here is opening the kids up, and then giving them the information. So you have an impact, and they are realizing it and then incorporating it into their lives; whereas in the classroom, they are not opened up. So, the information bounces off them. The key is that the kids are here [out of school], and those boundaries and barriers are gone, and the information affects them differently. It's difficult to explain in funding proposals. I did a workshop: you give these kids a scenario, and the big burly guy has to read that card that says, "My boyfriend slapped me". If you did that in class, you'd have all of that class laughing at them. There would be giggling, there would be comments, because of the insecurities and the stereotypes. You do that here, and there's none of that, because they don't feel that pressure, that insecurity about themselves or anyone else. You have people who might not have discussed how a man might be abused by their girlfriend, or a male abused by a male. Here, the barriers are gone. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

Teachers are certainly capable of teaching the message, but a lot of the impact would be lost because we teach a different style - they're in a circle, it's visibly different, it's more interactive and communicative. Some teachers have had trouble adapting their teaching style. Having the youth in the room with them facilitates that transition because the youth facilitators have no problem with it. They're highly adaptable. It is an extremely hard shift. Some of our best teachers are the most enthusiastic and very open-minded when it comes to switching to a different style. (HRY staff)

Because we're not teachers, the kids listen at such a high level. We can dress the way we want, we can start modeling some communication skills, and then invite them in, probably halfway through the session, to start revealing our experiences. It's like a wave that the kids' perceptual, their attitude shift is enormous when they start seeing people - teachers - beyond their role and they can start behaving beyond their pre-conditioned role, too. (R+R staff)

Holding them out of school works well because a lot of them tune things out in school. So you'd be a lot less likely to take things into consideration or start sharing things because you've got to be in that same place the next day where somebody could bring up what you talked about. Activities work well in school but getting them pumped up about doing something works a lot better on a weekend because they all just go overboard on enthusiasm. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

With an internal program with more than one teacher, you're looking at consistency issues. We see that with our home rooms: some home are really dynamic, progressive places; others may not be. The real strength of this facilitation team is that they're trained, and their sole focus is delivering the program. And you've got a male, female pair facilitating, which is great. We couldn't afford to do that. (R+R school personnel)

With an internal [program], be concerned about adding to the curriculum and to the teacher's load, what they have to prep and plan for. Something that maybe they're not trained for. It would be a scheduling nightmare. It is definitely a bonus to have the facilitators here. I don't think the program would work, honestly. It wouldn't be as successful. (R+R school personnel)

Accessing Schools

One of the significant and essential tasks for external programs in accessing schools and getting permission to provide the program. The program developers mentioned several important considerations or suggestions:

As an outside organization, there is a general initial atmosphere of suspicion. What is it you want? As a parent, I don't think that's necessarily bad. They're a public institution, they have to be accountable to parents and the public taxpayers, so you're facing all of that as an outside community person. It was a process of building trust with them. One of the key things was that it just seemed natural in working with young people that they should co-facilitate the workshops. So the trust was building, the mistrust was diminishing and again once they started seeing success with students, that, hey this was going to help the school. (R+R staff)

A further consideration for all external programs is to ensure that the materials fit with provincial curriculum guidelines.

We had the new curriculum for the Grade 9 students, we had it independently assessed by an individual who works with the Board of Education but it was assessed by her to be in line with the Grade 9 PDR curriculum, the Personal Development Relationships. (HRY staff)

Individuals from the programs commented that relationships with individual teachers are important.

Mostly we're welcomed by teachers. They are just so happy to have the support and the additional help in and we've had teachers say, I'm sure you've heard it already, this has changed how I see my students, this has changed our classroom dynamic, how we relate to each other on a very positive way. (R+R staff)

Other suggested the need to find a local champion within the school system, whether on the school board, a trustee or a superintendent.

We had a very strong ally as a school trustee. Figuring out who your allies are is absolutely critical. We were seen in those days as radical women with an axe to grind, an agenda, and we were often treated with suspicion. (R+R staff)

The Fourth R involved teachers in writing the original curriculum. This was especially important since the program is ultimately taught by teachers.

What Grade Levels to Target?

An important question for any healthy relationship program is at what age to target the materials. Prevention programs have tended to be targeted to particular age-groups depending on the focus. Elementary schools are more likely to offer programs on bullying and child sexual abuse, while programs on sexual assault most often are provided to high school or universities (Tutty et al., 2005). Some skeptics question the need to offer dating violence prevention to middle or high school students at all, noting that their most important, long-term relationships come later. What age do the developers of these four best practices healthy relationship programs target and why?

One important factor that was mentioned by the adults is the relevance to the students' lives given their developmental stage.

We initially were doing K to 12 one-off work, then realized we were all over the place. Judi's research was showing us that we should focus on Grades 7, 8 and 9. It was a really vulnerable age, developing attitudes and skills around relationships. Then coming back with a reinforcement year would be really helpful. (R+R staff)

In Grade 9, everything changes so rapidly. We're coming in a little late, because some kids in Grade 9 are dating. At age 14, 15, they want to know about sex and drugs. They're interested and engaged. They are starting to date or want to, so you've got a ready audience. You can't teach that to 12-year-olds and by Grade 10, we're too late to start with basic skills. (Fourth R staff)

In Grade 9, their worlds are really opening up. They are exploring relationships in a new way. There's a general isolation, because this happens from Grade 7 through Grade 9, but Grade 9 seems a pivotal year. They're beginning to reach a different level of maturity and understanding of their world. In part, it's where the cool straight jacket starts to break down a little bit so they can look at issues like homophobia without somehow putting their own sexuality on the line. If you could only choose one, it's a good grade. (HRY community)

If you do it earlier, they could have more of a solid foundation when they get into high school; they're already in relationships in junior high. Everything we know about violence tells us that it's cyclical and the problem is breaking it once you're into it. So does that not suggest that all we have to do is get to it before the cycle starts? (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

Girls develop some of these skills earlier; boys aren't ready for pieces of it. They're developing Grade 8 resources as well; I think they're working on Grade 7. That will bridge into the Grade 9 program better. I hated to leave them until Grade 9 to develop some of these skills. We've got kids who are sexually active in Grade 6 and 7. That isn't the average but of the kids who are sexually active, the average age was 13½. Waiting until Grade 9 to introduce those skills is too late. (Fourth R staff)

Several students commented on the age at which the programs should start.

I think high school students and middle school students are the most important time of their lives. That's when they learn to talk to people, when they learn about themselves really, so doing it any earlier would kinda be too much for them to take in, but and doing it any later would be maybe too late. (Making Waves student male)

[I: What if somebody said, "Why are they wasting time on kids so young?"] I would say that it would help prepare us for the future. That is major. It's not true that kids don't get in abusive relationships in high school, because I've seen it. That's probably the most abusive place because you're just learning how to be in a relationship. People are so insecure in high school that it puts them in a situation where they could so

easily be taken advantage of, especially if it is your first relationship and you're excited and you just put up with it. I mean education is the best way of prevention. If you're educated earlier, you're going to have time to consider it before you really get in a situation like that. (Making Waves student female)

Unfortunately, a lot of people are introduced to cycles of violence earlier through family or peers who have had abuse. As much as I would like it to be too young, I don't think it is. Whether adults think that it's appropriate, relationships in middle school are quite serious. It may not be lasting, but they're definitely moving faster than a lot of adults perceive them to be. If youth are going to put themselves in that situation, it makes sense that we give them the skills to act and understand that it's OK to expect to be treated in a respectful way. To have guidance during that time that can be so rough socially is really important. (R+R student female)

Youth Engagement

Each program involves youth in different ways. In the three external programs, students actually present or assist in presenting curriculum materials, thus becoming role models to fellow students. In the Fourth R, the internal program, in some schools students on the Youth Committees supplement the program. Several adults spoke of the program intentions in choosing the youth that were invited or chosen to take leadership roles.

It's a bit of a mental leap to get over the idea that the best students have to be involved. It's more important that we get a range of students. In one school, the guidance counsellor picked kids who she thought would commit to it but who weren't necessarily the ones being picked for everything. She said that they were really excited. They were like, "You want me to go?" I'd like to see more Native students and Black students but of the 62 facilitators, only two are Black. There were some Acadian kids or francophone kids in the group. So my challenge is to have the local diversity more reflected within the Youth Team. (HRY staff)

Leadership potential: not necessarily "A" students. We'll often have one or two who identify as that, but we're really looking for people with power positions in different cliques. This year we made a tremendous effort to get more international students, and met the complication that that bridge had not been created within the school. We're looking for kids who have a willingness to explore their connection to sexism, and racism, homophobia. We're very clear that the agency and the work that we do is the foundation to sexism. We're basically doing social justice work, so they all try that on. In terms of gender, we are looking ideally for half guys and half girls, and it doesn't have to mean the strongest guys or girls in terms of addressing sexism, but they have a willingness to be challenged, lovingly and gently challenged. (R+R Staff)

They apply; they go through an interview process. [I: They don't always pick the best students?] No, they actually go head hunting for boys because boys don't tend to apply to begin with, and for different kinds of kids who fit in different groups. (R+R school personnel)

The youth facilitators were popular; they can relate to them and they bridge the experience and the generation barriers between the teachers and students. It seems to make them feel a lot more comfortable. Lots of comments like, "I could talk about topics that I couldn't talk about with my teacher in the room" "Having another girls beside me, my age leading the discussion"... "I learned that students can be teachers too" or "I learned that if you're 16 or 17 you can be a role model." These kids are showing that in a year or two you can be using these skills in your daily life and actually be teaching them to others. So that's in their face every day working with youth facilitators. (HRY staff)

Making Waves/Vague par vague is somewhat different because the students are chosen to attend the weekend and to go back to their schools to conduct follow-up activities. From these, the students choose a select few for the new Student Advisory Committee (SAC) that organizes and co-present the program the following year.

We selected the first kids and they select their successors. We had some say in it. It's pretty much them. We have this secret meeting in our rooms, lay out Polaroids and it's a pretty intense conversation about who and

why they should be involved in the team. It's conversation about strengths and weaknesses and how much they spoke. They take it really seriously. It's quite a process. (Making Waves staff)

Every year from the weekends, we pick two or three students to come back in an advisory role. Our program has always prided itself on being driven by students. The workshops are full of student input and it's good to have people who have been through the program come and reflect on it and say, "This worked for me and my peers, and this didn't work, and this is how you can make it better". We usually bring Grade 10 students, so then normally they get to come back twice as Student Advisory members. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

An important part is the way that they select the students. It's up to the schools. It's not about bringing the kids with the highest grades or the highest involvement. That's a big part, seeing the change in the kids over the weekend because sometimes it's kids that wouldn't necessarily have the opportunity to go to a weekend conference. You learn so much from them because they're not the kids you would expect. Their perspectives are so different than if you just invited everyone with a 95% average. The ideas aren't uniform and their perspective is coming from whatever background they have that doesn't privilege them as much. They see things that we don't see, I suppose (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

An issue that is essential to the Making Waves/Vague par vague program is continued support for students in their schools after the weekend. Passing on the program information to the home schools is a central characteristic of the program and entails teachers being willing to support the students later on.

We don't want teachers who don't want to be here because it's really draining. When kids went back to the schools they'd get absolutely no support and that's not fair. The actions plans were great but it's the follow-up that's essential and that's where we let kids down by not having money enough to do the follow-up that needs to be done. There needs to be somebody (staff) that's going to get in a car and drive and meet with the kids and meet with the teacher periodically to make sure that stuff gets done and we have not had that component. (Making Waves staff)

Program Debates, Challenges and Strengths

This section documents some of the factors that remain challenging, others that have been ongoing debates and strengths. The topics include keeping program staff, the gender debate, and funding sustainability.

One of the factors mentioned by the key informants as contributing to the program's success is great staff/program coordinators. However, keeping these dedicated staff members over time can also be challenging.

I have difficulty seeing how we can keep this program going without a coordinator; she's great! She's got so much energy and she's really committed. It really needs someone that's bringing the schools together saying, "It's time to do this." Because it's so busy, it would just get lost. (HRY community)

There has to be someone who never takes no for an answer. Someone who won't give up on the vision. If you don't have that, you're at the whim of whatever political regime we're in, whatever money situation, whatever community pressures. We need to recognize crime prevention practitioners as a professional entity. We fund teachers in a sustainable way, so maybe we fund crime prevention practitioners in as sustainable way, developing guidelines, standards and training. Saying we're a professional body. We're doing crime prevention. (R+R staff)

We're not employees. If we were paid employees, a lot of those cracks could be filled in more. But it's contract work. We're limited by both our own lifestyle and our time and efforts as well. We put a lot of free consultation time in because we are all passionate about it. (R+R staff)

I was one of the only facilitators to stay attached to the program for its duration. We worked in pairs of male and female facilitators. We went through a few male facilitators because of the nature of the job. It wasn't

full time and it wasn't super high paying so we'd get a guy for a year maybe and then he'd be moving on to something else. (HRY staff)

One issue that was previously described in the literature review is the extent to which healthy relationship programs acknowledge gender differences in experiencing violence: that women and girls are the most common victims of serious intimate partner violence. Respectful Relationships and Healthy Relationships for Youth both incorporate a gendered perspective. Three feminist representatives from women-led organizations developed Making Waves/Vague par vague, yet the program, with its largely experiential process, does not always explicitly present information on violence against women. The gender perspective is clearly embedded in the material and exercises, but the students are not lectured or provided facts and figures about the issue.

Claire Crooks uses the term, "gender strategic" to describe the process by which gender is not highlighted as centrally in the Fourth R but is none-the-less exemplified in some of the materials and information. Without being gender strategic, the argument is that schools are wary to accept the program.

This section presents the perspectives on how each program deals with gendered violence, in the words of the program developers.

A huge part of my job is staying the course. People many times [say], "Why do you talk about violence against women and girls. Just talk about violence and you wouldn't tick so many people off?" It happens all the time, every youth team, every year, because we always have both male and females on the youth team. "Why should I work for an organization that sees me as an enemy?" There is a lot of pressure to cave on that. We're very proud that we have evidence of engaging boys in a significant way. Early on, we really did get resistance from male students. We worked with youth through evaluation, our own experience; just kept honing... (R+R staff)

Gender is key in this program. In the gender-specific exercises, the girls really do talk about their issues as girls and how they feel about that. The boys get to talk about that too. Having the boys talk about their differences is also a feminist process. The other part is looking at power imbalances, how do they affect us, how do they silence us or, how do they support acting out in a way that we don't necessarily even fundamentally agree with. A gender analysis underlies everything that we do. It's really core. It's about engaging the boys in a way that they can recognize that they are humanity and move away from their complicity in the oppression. (HRY community)

Younger kids are much more receptive to talking about relationships and bullying and fairness. Ten year-olds understand racism, sexism, better than a 15-year old. Fourteen, 15-year olds are in divided camps, especially the guys; they're afraid to be open-minded about certain things, that they'll be called "gay". They're much more rigid in their gender beliefs. So we had to back off a more feminist strategy in teaching this, which you would do with adults, because the girls and the boys just won't respond to that. When you're talking about gender-based violence, you have to use different words. (Fourth R staff)

Another issue that emerges with respect to the gender debate is the need to engage boys and young men. Despite adopting a feminist perspective of intimate violence, if the program is perceived as blaming all males for such violence, male students and teachers will become defensive.

In the media workshop, Paul's good at saying it's really men-to-women, but looks at the guy's stuff too. He keeps it balanced. [I: You don't give stats on violence against women?] I don't think they hear them. They get a lot of that in school. Learning, for kids, has to be experiential. You can't beat people over the head with a stat. I don't think we're entirely gender-neutral. We talk about the fact that guys get abused too, but how it tends to be more girls. We just do it in a more subtle way, so we don't ostracize anyone. How will they get the guys to think about boundaries and communication? They wouldn't see themselves in the perpetrator category. So they would think it doesn't apply to them. (Making Waves staff)

Today we had a class going over statistics about violence against women so they asked, "Where is the violence against men?" I get a sense sometimes from students that we're being sexist when we talk about violence against women. I acknowledge, "Violence does occur against men and I'm not here to condone that. But it's not the program that's sexist. The statistics are people's stories and they're representative of a sexist society. The aim of the program is not to shame young men and victimize young women. It's to acknowledge what's going on and to find strategies to deal with this. Side-stepping is not a solution. We need to have that discourse, provide an arena where young men and young women can question it. Then they can draw their own conclusions. (R+R staff)

There's an excellent part in Grade 9 on abusive relationships. It is a part that I know male students were not getting [before]. This has been so good for our male population. (Fourth R teacher)

We talk about it; we give statistics in the curriculum package, extra notes for the facilitators...the statistical information, because there are places where they need the numbers. (HRY staff)

The most substantial challenge facing all four programs, despite their differences and successes, was sustainable funding. None of the programs evaluated in the current document, external or internal, has core sustainable funding.

What's holding us back is core funding. When the executive directors of nonprofits spend 75% of their time trying to raise money to keep going; that time is not going into the work. It's huge. I basically manage two full-time jobs, because the only way we can fund my position is if I also do project management. It's not sustainable as a human resource agency. (R+R staff)

I was told, "You're doing too many different things; you're going to get burned out. I said, "We have to do too many different things to have money to do anything." You're stretching yourself in a million different directions. We have a good program but everybody's trying to do the best they can with limited resources and limited time. (R+R staff)

Ideally, we'd love to deliver this program to all three grade levels. It's been a budgeting concern; that's why we're down to one grade. This is certainly very valuable but it was heart wrenching to see the curriculum cut to one grade. But, after the last year's evaluation looking at the student responses, we're confident that what we're doing is valuable and making a big impact. (HRY staff)

Each program spends considerable time seeking funding, much of which is annual and non-renewable. Each also applied for funding from multiple sources. Governmental funding agencies included federal government agencies such as Status of Women Canada and National Crime Prevention from Public Safety Canada; and provincial government groups mentioned were Ministries of Education, Women's Equality, and Community Mobilization funds.

Foundation funding has been critical to all of the programs including funds from the Canadian Women's Foundation, the McCain Foundation; the Royal LePage Foundation; the Nova Scotia Law Foundation, and the Counselling Foundation.

Nonetheless, several program coordinators mentioned the contributions and importance of government project managers or foundation staff in supporting the programs, not merely financially.

We've had so many project officers or contacts in ministries who have been so supportive and have worked behind the scenes for us on our behalf, and I'm enormously grateful for that. They know the potential here and they've seen, they got it and they just thought we've got to keep moving this forward somehow. (R+R staff)

We've had the most amazing Status of Women project officers. They got very involved with the program. They come to the meetings, they see these kids learning, they trusted us with a lot of money and they've

driven some of the program indirectly. You have to read the applications, and do things. How are kids going to have a voice in all this? They forced us to think about it. {Making Waves staff}

Who should fund healthy relationship programs? No one funder was identified by the key informants as the most appropriate source of financial resources for prevention programs:

Nobody does ongoing funding for these programs. Should the Department of Education fund it? Part of me says yes. Should it be private foundations funding? Royal Bank who has some interest in programs for youth? I don't know. I would say we don't need private enterprise funding school-based programs. But, foundations are fantastic. Is there a foundation, aside from the Canadian Women's Foundation, that could provide core funding? (HRY community)

You have to have money. You don't get consistent investments from anywhere whether it's foundations, government... They want something new, innovative, pilot... Canadian Women's Foundation and Status of Women, though, have been pretty reliable. The great thing about Waves has always been a funder saying, "We've funded that program for 5 years. We can't fund it any longer. If you can rename it or do something different, we'd be happy to reinvest." That speaks volumes about the success. It's not a difficult sell. With foundations, it's the relationships you build. If the relationships are positive and reciprocal, then it's exacting change in their own foundation at the same time the work is happening with the kids. They're keen to get involved. It's just; we want to make it sustainable. (Making Waves Board)

I wish it were sustainably funded. They've attracted funding from all of these different places but never sustainably. I find it incredible, the amount of funding we have to fix things after they're broken. We keep hearing people say, "Prevention, prevention, prevention." But, I'm not sure what we're doing to prevent right now. I see a lot of things on the other end. It costs so much money to incarcerate somebody. (R+R school personnel)

The costs are not much, that's the good news. The teacher training should be self-generating after this. We'll train the new ones; materials don't have to be bought every year, so it's not very expensive to keep it going. Right now, the cost is to keep our staff so that they're available to help other places get the training. If we have longitudinal data on how many schools are using that, how many kids are effective, you can extrapolate the cost-benefit ratio. (Fourth R staff)

The Department of Education provided additional funding, a few thousand dollars for training the youth. I trained the adults for one day, because we generally have so many teachers we have to schedule in-service to train them so, can't do two consecutive days. The Department of Education funds that, including my materials and luncheons. I'm looking at funding to do some additional events with the peer counselling and to fund speakers for the mini workshops, the Royal Bank, different groups that have funds for working with youth or for working with youth on health-related issues. I'm putting together a mishmash of 5 to 10 thousand dollars or smaller to meet their demands. It has to be on very specific things. I have to almost partition the program into sections if I'm putting together a collage of funders. That can be difficult. The biggest challenge has been funding sources comfortable contributing to the overall cost of the program. (HRY staff)

Opportunities to expand the programs to new districts are also affected by funding issues and constraints:

Status of Women wanted this program to go to Newfoundland so I travelled all over Newfoundland selling Waves. What an easy job to do to sell a program that you love! They started doing it in Newfoundland. But then people changed, and the money is not there. And it's the money... (Making Waves staff)

In 2003, we went to the Quesnel & Gold Trail school districts, both far away. The mandate is we find a women-serving organization to partner with the school district, a local coordinator through the women's organization. The money goes through them, they find facilitators, we train the facilitators; provide all the materials and ongoing mentoring. It isn't working that well. We have been always the one to find the money. The Ministry of Community Services funded eight projects for \$150,000 to do prevent violence against

women and girls. The one we just got will enable us to work in five school districts giving workshops to parents and professional development days to teachers that will complement the program (R+R staff)

The search for funding can create competition between programs:

There's competition. Because of the scarcity of funds, we are forced to be pitted against each other. That's really sad because there's a place for all of us. There is so much that needs to be done, the breadth is huge if you're talking to each and every young person in Canada, it's huge. (Making Waves staff)

Program integrity can be a concern as programs expand or are offered opportunities to become internal. SWOVA had this experience:

We had a meeting with the Ministry of Education. "What would it cost to buy your program without training and without input on how it gets delivered?" We just said no. The curriculum is part of it but the way it's delivered, who it's delivered by, the evaluation, the youth team, all of these pieces make the program and they're why it works. To just take a chunk out of it didn't make any sense to us. (R+R staff)

Program developers also described being pressured to find ways to save money by changing the program by using volunteers or other means:

There's a lot of pressure saying, "Why can't you do this with volunteers?" People may call me stubborn, but there are things that I know; I've been doing it for a long time. I'm sorry but getting a bunch of grad students who are maybe here for one year and gone the next. It's just not sustainable, and it's not going to provide the quality that is required if you really want to do this work. (R+R staff)

They [students] don't know all this stuff. They don't have the depth to actually engage with issues of how you manage conflict, how you set boundaries... They can do exercises, but to get the kids in the classroom into work that really touches them deeply and that they begin to integrate into their lives, to a certain degree the youth team can help find channels in. They can help translate up and down between the kids in the classroom and the facilitators. But to take over and be the people delivering, I'm honestly not comfortable with that. (R+R staff)

A program-specific challenge is the dual language focus of Making Waves/Vague par vague. Since New Brunswick is the only official bilingual province in Canada, offering the program in both official languages is considered essential.

Then there's the English/French, which is a struggle to keep going because there are two school systems: the Anglophone and the Francophone. There's different systems involved, there's psychologists working in French schools, there's cultural differences. There's different French in the north of the province from the south of the province. I'm not bilingual so we've contracted out. (Making Waves staff)

Recently Making Waves/Vague par vague was offered in a joint bilingual weekend:

The last weekend was the first time we did a bilingual weekend. Organizationally we were a little like, "What's going on here?" Still, the outcomes were totally the same. The facilitators were guided but it was amazing. I keep using that word but it's so apropos. For me that is the transformation. You know it's going to happen, because of what's in place. You can see it pop! (Making Waves Board)

It was very cool. There was a girl that couldn't talk English and there's all the other French kids. It's really cool because you never really talked to the French kids. Everyone started talking and then we'd joke around. I'd try to talk French and they're like, "Ah, you suck at it." Then they tried... Like that's really fun and very cool. (Making Waves student male)

Advice to New Programs

A final question in the implementation survey was what advice the program staff would give to individuals considering developing new programs.

Broad community support. Get your players, many different levels, initially. Like we teach to the kids, learn to ask for help. We are learning our own lessons. Recognizing that we need to see beyond ourselves as organizations and ask for help more and more. To have a community that's somehow educated and understands the necessity for violence prevention is key. We do meet resistance. It certainly needs to come in within the school system. That's vital. Identify other agencies doing similar work, so we'll not have that competitive piece. (R+R staff)

You need a really well thought-out program to begin with; the curriculum itself is really important. You need to have good people on the ground, who absolutely believe in what they're doing, but what they're doing is a really, really important piece as well. It's not just a job; it is profoundly working to change the world. (HRY community)

Summary

To summarize the information regarding implementing these four healthy relationships programs, each took a somewhat different tack, each of which presented unique challenges and rewards.

Despite their differences, the fact that funding is a shared and perhaps the greatest challenge is not surprising. These programs have been sustained over the years with a patchwork of funding from a myriad of sources. Foundations such as the Canadian Women's Foundation have been an invaluable support. Although the issue of healthy relationships seems like a core topic for provincial educational ministries, none of the programs receive sustainable funding from this source or any other. Maintaining the funding often results in changing the program to meet the project requirements, not because the program needs revising.

Despite such an ever-present challenge, the numerous comments with respect to the relevance and importance of the relationship focus from the interviewees and focus group members is heartening and validates the effort to continue offering the programs.

Chapter Four: The Survey Results

With input from the program personnel and Canadian Women's Foundation representatives, a standardized survey was developed of questions regarding the students' feedback and the utility of the programs several years after they had been involved. The survey was developed to be offered either on-line or in-person, depending on the accessibility to students.

Across all programs, 404 surveys were completed. Of those, eight individuals answered in such a way that it was clear they were not taking the survey seriously, so their responses were not included in any analyses. Another 21 individuals had not participated in the programs of interest (or they did not recall such participation), so their responses were excluded. Thus, 382 surveys were considered valid and were included in the statistical analysis.

The numbers of surveys collected from each program varied (see Table 3), given the strategies necessary to collect data from former participants from each program and despite the efforts made by all program personnel to engage students to answer the survey. The programs with the highest number of respondents relied more heavily on the classroom-administered surveys.

Table 3: Survey Responses regarding Healthy Relationship Programs

Program	On-line	Classroom	Total
Respectful Relationships (SWOVA)	7	157	164 (42.9%)
Healthy Relationships for Youth (Antigonish)	0	122	122 (31.9%)
Making Waves/Vague par vague	49	0	49 (12.9%)
The Fourth R	19	28 (Strathmore)	47 (12.3%)
Total	75	307	382

Eight individuals noted that, in addition to one of the programs above, they had taken part in another healthy relationship program. When asked to name the other program, only two alternative programs were mentioned by two students: DARE and Inspire, a program of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. This exemplifies the paucity of opportunities to partake in healthy relationship education.

The survey asked respondents about their primary roles with the program (see Table 4). The designations overlap somewhat because of multiple roles and changing roles over time.

Table 4: Primary Role with Program

Primary Role	
Student Participant	330 (86.4%)
Youth Facilitator	36 (9.5%)
Teacher Facilitator/Teacher Participant	12 (3.4%)
Making Waves Alumni Committee	19 (5.0%)
Program facilitator	2 (0.5%)
Community Participant	1 (0.3%)
Total	382

For example, all of the youth facilitators had also been student participants and in Making Waves/Vague par vague, the only program that offered this opportunity, some of the Making Waves Student Advisory group (youth facilitators) moved into the Making Waves Alumni group. Thirty-eight individuals listed secondary roles and ten listed tertiary roles. Most of these listed their student role, but two respondents later became community participants in programs.

Of the 16 adult respondents, eleven were from Making Waves/Vague par vague, one from the Fourth R and four were from Respectful Relationships (SWOVA), with no adult respondents from Healthy Relationships for Youth. The adult's roles with the programs are listed in Table 5:

Table 5: Primary Role of Adult Survey Respondents

Primary Role	Frequency (%)
Teacher Participant	11 (66.8%)
Teacher Facilitator (Fourth R)	2 (12.5%)
Program Facilitator	2 (12.5%)
Community presenter/facilitator	1 (6.3%)
Total	16

The following quotes provide some context to the shifting roles in these programs, most notably, Making Waves/Vague par vague:

I attended a Making Waves/Vague par vague weekend with three other students from my school. Then I applied to be a part of the Provincial Youth Strategy committee and was accepted so I attended another, more strategic weekend.

I also played a role in a Making Waves play that was performed at the weekend as well as for my school, and another school.

Student participant in Grade 10, then member of the Student Advisory Committee, then member of the Alumni Committee, then program facilitator (off and on).

J'étais responsable du côté technique de l'organisation de la fin de semaine Vague par vague. (I was responsible for organizing the last Vague par Vague weekend)

The Survey Respondents

The following demographic characteristics were collected. The demographics are presented separately for the student program participants as compared to adult participants (n = 13). Since some of the adult respondents were students when they went through the program, but are still involved in other capacities such as being on the alumni committee, they are considered "students" for these analyses. The adults had roles that were either as program facilitators or program participants in light of their adult responsibilities.

As is clear from Table 6, a somewhat higher proportion of females completed the surveys as compared to males. Slightly more than half of the respondents are currently between the ages of 16 to 18 with another more than a third between 14 and 15 (see Table 7).

Table 6: Gender of Survey Respondent

	Students	Adults	Total
Female	222 (61.0%)	14 (87.5%)	236 (62.1%)
Male	142 (39.0%)	2 (12.5%)	144 (37.9%)
Total	365	16	380
No information			2

Table 7: Current Age

Age ranges	Students	Adults	Total
12 to 13	3 (0.8%)	0	3 (0.8%)
14 to 15	136 (37.2%)	0	136 (35.6%)
16 to 18	203 (55.5%)	0	203 (53.1%)

19 to 21	14 (3.8%)	0	14 (3.7%)
22 to 25	10 (2.7%)	3 (18.8%)	13 (3.4%)
26 to 35	0	3 (18.8%)	3 (0.8%)
36 and older	0	10 (62.6%)	10 (2.6%)
Total	366	16	382

Table 8: Student Current Age by Program

Program	12 to 15	16-18	19 & older	Totals
R+R (SWOVA)	92 (57.6%)	60 (37.5%)	7 (4.4%)	160
HRY	41 (33.6%)	80 (65.6%)	1 (0.8%)	122
Making Waves	4 (10.5%)	21 (55.3%)	13 (34.2%)	38
Fourth R	2 (4.3%)	42 (91.3%)	2 (4.3%)	46
Total	140 (38.3%)	203 (55.5%)	23 (6.3%)	366
Pearson chi-square = 115.04,, p <.000, Cramer's V is .40, a very strong effect				

The analysis of the data in Table 8 showed statistically significant differences between the current ages of students across the four programs. The student respondents from the Making Waves/Vague par vague program were older than those from the other three programs. Students from R+R (SWOVA) were the youngest, with a much higher proportion in the 12 to 15 age group.

The country in which the participants were born is presented in Table 9. If they were not born in Canada, we did not ask them to specify where. Table 10 provides information on the racial background of the survey respondents: The majority of both adults and students were of Caucasian background.

Table 9: Country of Birth

	Students	Adults	Total
Born in Canada	315 (93.8%)	15 (93.8%)	330 (93.8%)
Born elsewhere	21 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	22 (6.2%)
Total	336	16	352

The primary language of the survey respondents is presented in Table 11. Of those whose first language was not English, the following first languages were reported: French (14), Mandarin (3), German (3), Spanish (2), Cantonese (1), Chinese (1), and Mikmaq (1). Three individuals did not specify their first language.

Table 10: Racial Background

	Students	Adults	Total
White/Caucasian	269 (83.8%)	9 (81.8%)	278 (83.7%)
Asian	10 (3.1%)	2 (18.2%)	12 (3.6%)
Black	15 (4.7%)	0 (0%)	15 (4.5%)
Filipino	2 (0.6%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.6%)
Indo-Canadian	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.3%)
Central/South American	3 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.9%)
Aboriginal	6 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	6 (1.8%)
Métis	11 (3.4%)	0 (0%)	11 (3.4%)
Other	4 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	4 (1.2%)
Total	321	11	332

Table 11: First Language Spoken

	Students	Adults	Total
English	299 (92%)	13 (81.3%)	312 (93.4%)
Another language	26 (8%)	3 (18.8%)	29 (8.5%)
Totals	325	16	341

Table 12 presents data on the size of the community in which the students and adults lived. Notably, only a small proportion lived in big cities. Most lived in small communities.

Table 12: Size of Community

	Students	Adults	Total
120000+	13 (4.1%)	0 (0%)	13 (3.9%)
15,000 to 119,999	30 (9.5%)	2 (13.3%)	32 (9.7%)
Under 15,000 but more than 500	235 (74.6%)	12 (80%)	247 (74.8%)
About 500 but geographically isolated	37 (11.7%)	1 (6.7%)	38 (11.5%)
Totals	315	15	330

Table 13: Student Living Arrangements

Student Living Arrangement	
Both Parents	226 (68.9%)
My mom only	40 (12.2%)
My dad only	10 (3%)
One of my parents was/is away working for long periods	11 (3.4%)
My Mom and a step-parent	27 (8.2%)
My Dad and a step-parent	4 (1.2%)
Other (other relative, group home etc.)	10 (3%)
Total	328

The data presented in Table 13 shows that, while over two-thirds of the students live with both birth parents, another third live in diverse households including in circumstances where one parent lives away (often out of province) for considerable periods of time.

The Survey Respondents' Views of the Healthy Relationship Programs

As shown in Table 14, almost three-quarters (70.4%) of the respondents had started participating in the prevention program from two to five years previously. This was the primary target group for the follow-up survey: individuals who had participated in the healthy relationship programs more than a year ago, a group seldom captured in follow-up studies.

Table 14: How Long Ago Started Program?

	Students	Adults	Totals
Over 6 years	94 (29.8%)	4 (28.6%)	98 (29.8%)
Two to Five years ago	130 (41.3%)	3 (21.4%)	133 (40.4%)
One to Two years ago	62 (19.7%)	0 (0%)	62 (18.8%)
This Year	29 (9.2%)	7 (50%)	36 (10.9%)
Total	315	14	329
No information	51	2	53

The student survey respondents were also asked about the extent to which they completed the healthy relationship program (see Table 15)

Table 15: Program Completion (Students only)

All or almost all	286 (80.6%)
About two-thirds	28 (7.9%)
About half	20 (5.6%)
Less than half	4 (1.1%)
Only a few classes	17 (4.8%)
Total	355
No information	11

All of the participants in Making Waves/Vague par vague reported completing the entire program or almost all; not surprising since the sessions take place over the course of one weekend. Of the respondents from the two programs offered over multiple years (Respectful Relationships and Healthy Relationships for Youth), 82.5% and 80.9% from each, respectively, completed all or most sessions. Those who did not complete all or almost all, had often moved to or from their homes in Saltspring Island or Nova Scotia, so that they missed one or more years of the program.

With respect to the Fourth R, about 56% of the respondents reported completing all or almost the entire program. Another one-quarter claimed to have taken only a few classes. As the only internally offered program (by teachers during Physical Education or Health classes), some students seemed confused about whether they had participated in a program. This was anticipated by the program representatives and the evaluator, since students can easily perceive the program as part of the regular school curriculum, as intended. An additional five students had taken the Grade 10 English program and three had taken the Grade 11 or 12 English programs.

Knowledge Pre and Post-Program

In an attempt to gauge the impact of participating in healthy relationships programs on knowledge with respect to key program foci, we asked the respondents retrospectively to assess the extent of their knowledge from pretest to posttest. A limitation of this process is that student perceptions of their self-reported knowledge could well be different than their actual knowledge levels were they to answer a more comprehensive questionnaire before, after and following the program. However, since this was not possible and few programs have assessed the long-term knowledge levels, these results are useful estimates.

The questions were worded as follows: “Before/after taking part in the program, I knew about the following (please circle the best answer).” In response to each question, the respondent could answer “a little”, “some” or “lots,” creating a simple scale of from zero to two with higher scores representing higher knowledge levels. A comparison of pretest and posttest scores is presented in Table 16. For these items, only student responses were included in the statistical analyses (n = 370).

The numbers responding to each question vary because the four different programs have different emphases. The inclusion of these foci was determined in consultation with the program personnel. Nevertheless, in each case, the students perceived that they had significantly gained in knowledge after the programs.

Table 16: Student Knowledge Levels Pre-Post Comparison

Item	n	Pretest	Posttest	t-test (p value)
The differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships	312	1.33	1.81	13.5 (.000)
Different forms of relationship abuse	348	1.26	1.85	15.7 (.000)
Healthy ways to communicate	347	1.24	1.77	13.3 (.000)

Conflict resolution and boundaries	341	1.11	1.78	16.6 (.000)
Diversity	273	1.15	1.67	13.1 (.000)
Sexual orientation	110	1.23	1.72	7.6 (.000)
Bullying	157	1.56	1.80	4.8 (.000)
Sexuality	193	1.33	1.75	8.7 (.000)
Substances and abuse	47	1.43	1.81	3.7 (.001)

Feedback on Program Characteristics

The next sets of questions were with respect to various aspects of the programs such as the program materials, facilitators (whether adult or student), the program sessions, handbooks, role-plays/exercises and follow-up. These analyses include all respondents (N = 382).

The survey respondents made a number of comments with respect to each program characteristic, which were content analyzed with examples presented throughout. The student perspectives are presented separately from the adults' views.

Table 17a: Feedback on Program Characteristics

Program Variable	n	Poor	Good	Excellent
Program materials	375	20 (5.3%)	242 (64.5%)	113 (30.1%)
Adult Facilitators/teachers	377	23 (6.1%)	186 (49.3%)	168 (44.6%)
Youth Facilitators	320	24 (7.5%)	192 (60.0%)	104 (32.5%)
Program Sessions	374	8 (2.1%)	181 (48.4%)	185 (49.5%)

Table 17b: Feedback on Program Characteristics

Program Variable	n	A Bit	Some	A lot
Student handbook/ program information made sense	376	67 (17.8%)	145 (38.6%)	164 (43.6%)
Role-plays and exercises	377	83 (22.0%)	169 (44.8%)	125 (33.2%)
Follow-up	91	30 (33%)	29 (31.9%)	32 (35.2%)

Feedback on the Program Materials

With respect to the data in Table 18, students and adults, considered together, saw the program materials as “good” in almost two-thirds of cases, and excellent in almost another third (30%).

Table 18: Students' Views of the Program Materials by Program

Program	Poor	Good	Excellent	n
R+R (SWOVA)	5 (3.2%)	105 (66.5%)	48 (30.4%)	158
HRY	13 (10.8%)	86 (71.7%)	21 (17.5%)	120
Fourth R	2 (4.7%)	37 (86%)	4 (9.3%)	43
Making Waves	0 (0%)	9 (23.7%)	29 (76.3%)	38
Totals	20 (5.6%)	237 (66%)	102 (28.4%)	359

Pearson chi square = 64.8; p = .000; Cramer's V = .30, a strong effect

Across programs, two-thirds of the students considered the program materials “good,” another 28% as “excellent”. In comparing programs, there was a statistically significant difference with respect to this item, such that Making Waves/Vague par vague student respondents saw the program materials more often as “excellent” compared to the others.

Forty-six students commented on the program materials: R+R = 25; HYR = 6; Fourth R = 4; Making Waves = 11. Three comments about the program materials were negative and eight students raised concerns related to certain aspects of the programs.

Didn't really care about the program at all.

Good, but repetitive as we continued to participate.

Some of the information is outdated. Need to review curriculum.

I think some of the information was kind of obvious.

Is just OK.

Notably though, the majority of the student comments with respect to the program materials were positive. Notably, several of the students were involved in creating or providing feedback with respect to the program content (i.e. youth teams, or student advisory committee members):

A lot of thought and planning went into the materials and program. The material was designed for a youth audience and, in some cases, the material and information are peer-driven which, in my opinion, sends a powerful message to youth about the importance of this topic and our ability to make a difference in our actions and how we treat each other.

The information provided was relevant, accurate, and well presented to the youth. The materials, like the Waves booklets were also done up very effectively, and were quite helpful to the students who returned and created Making Waves groups at their schools.

I really enjoyed getting to know our facilitators and growing together as a class, learning all this really amazing.

I think it was very helpful in the ways of giving people that are being abused some ways of resolving it, getting help, etc.

I learnt more than I thought I would and I found out what I've done wrong in the past and have tried to correct my ways by using what I have learned.

This program was really informative and enjoyable. We learned lots of things while having fun.

I found the program useful and was interested in my colleague's points of view.

I thought the program was good. It taught me a lot more about things that I already knew. It was interesting because it was personal stories and the class was not boring.

Making Waves had information that was very valid and it was given to us in very creative and fun ways. Everyone could learn and everyone was included.

I really enjoyed participating in the SWOVA program because it was both fun and informative. I enjoyed the interactive nature of the workshops. I found the material to be extremely helpful later on, especially when dealing with interpersonal conflicts and work-related issues.

I really enjoyed the weekend, and after being in an abusive relationship myself before this program, I felt that I was able to contribute a little to the weekend with helping people see just how real the whole situation can be and how it really can happen to anyone. The information was accurate and a lot of it hit close to home for me.

I learned so much, and have been using most of it since leaving high school.

Seven of the 16 adults commented on the program materials: R+R = 1; Making Waves = 6. All of these comments were positive.

As a student, I used them when I returned to school to help spread the word about the important issues, and now (10 years later) my students are doing the same thing.

I have found the material extremely informative and helpful with my students. They can really relate to the tone and vocabulary.

The students really enjoyed the weekend and were excited to implement some of their ideas in the school when they returned.

Students at my school enjoyed the weekend and have been putting on skits for the school.

Feedback on the Adult Facilitators/Teachers

In considering the feedback with respect to the adult facilitators and/or teachers providing the material to students in the programs, it should be remembered that the programs differed substantially on who presented the materials and in what context. SWOVA's R+R program and Making Waves/Vague par vague utilized adult facilitators in addition to youth facilitators. These adults were external to the schools. HRY changed over the years based on differing models and sometimes by school. The program has shifted more to student-led presentations, but several years ago, had also included adult facilitators. The Fourth R program is teacher-led.

Table 19: Students' Views of the Adult Facilitators/Teachers by Program

Program	Poor	Good	Excellent	n
R+R (SWOVA)	2 (1.3%)	62 (39%)	95 (59.7%)	159
HRV	19 (15.7%)	80 (66.1%)	22 (18.2%)	121
Making Waves	0 (0%)	7 (19.9%)	30 (81.1%)	37
Fourth R	2 (4.5%)	33 (75%)	9 (20.5%)	44
Totals	23 (6.4%)	182 (50.4%)	156 (43.2%)	361
Pearson chi square = 93.4; p = .000; Cramer's V = .36, a strong effect				

Recalling the data analysis in Table 17, both students and adults together saw the adult facilitators/teachers as "good" in almost half of cases (49.3%), and excellent in almost another half (44.6%).

As is also apparent in Table 19, across programs, half of the students considered the adult facilitators/teachers as "good", another 43% as "excellent." Across programs, there was a statistically significant difference with respect to the perceptions of the adult facilitators/teachers, such that Making Waves/Vague par vague and SWOVA's R+R student respondents saw the adult facilitators more often as "excellent" compared to the others. Students from the HRY program identified a higher proportion of the adult facilitators (although still a small number) as "poor."

Fifty-eight students commented on the adult facilitators: R+R = 32; HYR = 11; Fourth R = 4; Making Waves = 11. Because the comments were so different by program and the adults were involved somewhat differently, the programs are identified with the quotation. In the content analyses, several students made comments that fit more than one theme.

The comments with respect to the adult facilitators from six student respondents were negative and all from the HRY program. Notably, the survey was conducted two years ago and the students were reflecting on a time period several years earlier than that.

Not really friendly. Wasn't a comfortable environment.

The girl was a little bit uncomfortable and not really person to person. The guy was cool though.

She was kind of creepy and way too jumpy. It made me uncomfortable.

Another five individuals mentioned concerns about particular aspects of the facilitation from the adults.

They did not do quite as much in the new program as they did in the pilot.

Have sometimes seen student conflicts with facilitators that were not fair or not student's fault.

Depends on the teaching methods. More standards should be in place. Too much freedom with teaching.

They changed every year.

Four students raised concerns about the adult facilitators having strong opinions that the students perceived as biasing their presentations.

Sometimes a little too opinionated.

One facilitator was a true feminist activist and made some things all about feminism.

Some had already set biases that influence the discussion their way.

However, the bulk of the students' comments about the adult facilitators across all programs were extremely positive (48 comments)

Very helpful.

Easy to relate to, share personal stories.

Enthusiastic about what they were doing.

Very understanding. Good at pushing boundaries.

Never felt uneasy or uncomfortable.

Well-rounded people.

Christina and Robert especially are fantastic, sensitive, intelligent and vibrant people. They inspire me.

They always know just how to assess things.

They were amazing; I learned a lot and had fun doing it.

The adult facilitators were always ready and "on the ball" at all times.

Kalya is an absolutely great facilitator and I hope she keeps doing it.

She was very fun, and she seemed like she was having fun and liked teaching.

The facilitators were very fun and in touch with their inner teen. I found them very open and it reminded a lot of kids that adults know more than we think.

I always felt very comfortable talking to the adult facilitators and even feel as though I became friends with many of them over the course of my time with Making Waves. They were very friendly and warm, and always seemed to know the right answer.

They made us feel comfortable and safe, while teaching us so many things.

I really appreciated the effort and time that the adult facilitators put into making the workshops interesting and helpful. I found them to be non-judgmental and open, even when the topic of discussion produced many differing and contradictory responses.

Two adult survey respondents commented on the adult facilitators. A comment from an adult associated with SWOVA's Respectful relationships program was, "Good interaction with all parties". A comment from an adult connected to Making Waves/Vague par vague noted, "One or two were a bit boring."

Feedback on the Student Facilitators

With respect to the previously presented data in Table 17 from both students and adults concerning the program's youth facilitators, 60% considered these "good", and another almost third (32.5%) rated them as "excellent." Notably, the Fourth R program does not use youth to present the program material, so this question was not included in their survey.

Table 20: Students' Views of the Youth Facilitators by Program

Program	Poor	Good	Excellent	n
R+R (SWOVA)	9 (6.2%)	98 (67.1%)	39 (26.7%)	146
HRY	15 (12.4%)	80 (66.1%)	26 (21.5%)	121
Making Waves	0 (0%)	11 (28.9%)	27 (71.1%)	38
Totals	24 (7.9%)	189 (62%)	92 (30.2%)	305
Pearson chi square = 38.9; p = .000; Cramer's V = .25, a moderately strong effect				

Across programs, almost two-thirds of the students considered the youth facilitators to be "good," another almost third as "excellent". In the comparison of programs, there was a statistically significant difference with respect to this item such that Making Waves/Vague par vague respondents rated the youth facilitators as "excellent" more often than they rated the others.

Forty-eight students commented on the youth facilitators: R+R = 25; HYR = 13; Making Waves = 10 (note that several students made comments that fit within several themes). Eight student respondents commented negatively about the youth facilitators:

Not very helpful or useful.

Most were excellent, but one of them was quite obnoxious and made me feel uncomfortable.

They didn't seem as enthusiastic.

Some years were better than others. I personally think they were just there to make equality to look present..

Some seemed a little cranky that particular weekend.

Another ten student respondents commented that the youth facilitators were seldom involved in the program sessions.

They were good for the one and only session they were in.

We only had them a few times.

We didn't have many.

Didn't have much of an opportunity to participate.

Seven student respondents made the point that the youth facilitators were often quiet, not contributing to the discussions.

Didn't get involved all that much.

They were generally kind but they didn't do very much or say hardly anything.

When we were in Grade 6 and 7, the facilitators just sat there.

When I was involved as a student in this program the facilitators were quiet and didn't really talk but were involved in our activities and helped.

The largest proportion of comments (19) about the youth facilitators was positive:

They were also very helpful with making the participants feel welcome and were key in creating a safe environment.

I didn't see them a lot but it was great having someone my age explain to me what was what when I needed it.

Before I became part of the SAC/Alumni Committee, I found it was great to have peers to talk to about the issues.

They were a lot of fun and were helpful.

Everyone was pretty open.

I found the youth team facilitators to be energetic and interesting. I really enjoyed their input, especially because they were in my age range and definitely identified with the issues I faced.

A key element of the program in my opinion is that the message was not being dictated from upon high, but discussed by adults and students in an equitable and respectful manner; a living model for relationships that R+R seeks to foster, and that young people often find so foreign and/or difficult to obtain.

A final group of seven respondents were youth facilitators themselves and so their responses are considered separately.

I'm a little biased, I must admit, but the students respond well to us.

We were all dedicated and passionate about what we were doing.

These students were those chosen for the students BY the students. Having taken part in this process myself, I think it turned out very well. Responsible and capable students were usually chosen. It wasn't out of the ordinary, however, for a student to be chosen simply based on the fact that they had become friends with one of the SAC students. This was slightly biased, but I don't think it compromised the integrity of the committee in any fundamental way. If anything, it ensured that everyone got along well, making the experience that much more enjoyable.

As a student program facilitator, I found that we worked very well as a group. Each year I was very impressed with my peers on the committee, all of the youth were committed to the program and worked hard to make the weekend conferences a success.

Two adult survey respondents commented on the youth facilitators. With respect to SWOVA's Respectful Relationships program, an adult stated, "Good rapport with kids." An adult respondent from Making Waves/Vague par vague commented, "Energized. Very interactive, engaging for the students. Using university students closer to teenage years is the way to go!!"

Feedback on the Program Sessions

With respect to the previously presented data in Table 17 from both students and adults concerning the programs' sessions, a little less than half (48.4%) considered these "good", and another almost half (49.5%) rated them as "excellent."

Table 21: Students' Views of the Program Sessions by Program

Program	Poor	Good	Excellent	n
R+R (SWOVA)	5 (3.2%)	103 (66%)	48 (30.8%)	156
HRY	0 (0%)	28 (23.3%)	92 (76.7%)	120
Making Waves	0 (0%)	7 (18.4%)	31 (81.6%)	38
Fourth R	3 (6.8%)	38 (86.4%)	3 (6.8%)	44
Totals	8 (2.2%)	176 (49.2%)	174 (48.6%)	358
Pearson chi square = 107.3; p = .000; Cramer's V = .39, a very strong effect				

Across programs, about half of the students considered the program sessions good, another half as excellent. In the comparison of programs, there was a statistically significant difference with respect to this item, such that Making Waves/Vague par vague and HRY respondents rated the program sessions as "excellent" more often.

Thirty-nine students commented on the program sessions: R+R = 20; HYR = 8; Fourth R = 1; Making Waves = 10. Of these comments, two were negative: "They could be more organized though" and "didn't care". Seven student respondents commented that they found at least some of the program sessions boring:

Needs to vary more. It is really repetitive each year.

Too boring, too predictable. Respect--way one uses not explained. Respect-answer to every question.

Boring and always did the same things over.

Other student survey respondents wrote mixed comments regarding the program sessions:

Obviously, there were highlights to the weekends that everybody liked and some parts that were a bit tiresome. But overall, good mix of parts.

Depends on the workshop and grade.

Lots of pointless ones but some very good ones.

There were some I really liked and some not so much.

Sometimes boring but mostly they were interesting.

Sometimes a bit dry but it improved over the years!

Nevertheless, the majority of the student comments (23) with respect to the program sessions were positive:

Each year everyone helped make the sessions more informative as well as interactive - and it showed.

I really benefited a lot from them.

I liked having it all in one weekend, it made a strong impact.

They were very informative. The facilitators also knew when to have fun moments and when to be serious, and set the tone for everyone else.

They were fun filled and included everyone in a way that we could all learn.

I loved attending R+R workshops because as they helped myself and others find positive ways to resolve interpersonal conflict. More importantly, they opened my eyes to social injustices and how we make decisions in our lives that can positively impact our community and the world.

Loved it.

Two of the 16 adults, both of whom were connected to Making Waves, commented positively about the program sessions:

Sessions were varied. They were energetic and gave out a lot of information.

Some sessions were more relevant than others. Overall, they were all quite enjoyable.

Feedback on the Program Information Making Sense

The next question was with respect to whether the program materials made sense to the students. As was previously presented in Table 17, across programs the majority of student and adult respondents stated that the materials made “a lot” of sense (43.6%) and “some” sense (38.6%). Across programs (see Table 22), over 40% of the students considered that the program information made “a lot” of sense and another almost 40% rated the materials as making “some” sense.

Table 22: Students’ Views of the Program Information Making Sense

Program	A bit	Some	A lot	n
R+R (SWOVA)	31 (19.6%)	69 (43.7%)	58 (36.7%)	158
HRY	20 (16.5%)	52 (43%)	49 (40.5%)	121
Making Waves	7 (18.4%)	3 (7.9%)	28 (73.7%)	38
Fourth R	6 (13.6%)	20 (45.5%)	18 (40.9%)	44
Totals	64 (17.7%)	144 (39.9%)	153 (42.4%)	361
Pearson chi square = 21.9; p =.001; Cramer’s V = .17, a minimal effect				

In the comparison of programs, there was a statistically significant difference with respect to this item such that Making Waves/Vague par vague respondents considered that the program information more often made a “lot of” sense as compared to the others.

Twenty-three students commented on the program information/handbooks: R+R = 14; HYR = 1; Fourth R = 1; Making Waves = 7. Two students suggested that the handbook be better organized. Four students commented that they saw little need for the handbook:

I don’t really like the idea of the handbook.

Don’t really see the point.

Eight students had mixed comments with respect to the program information making sense to them.

It was a bit heavy, a lot to take in at once.

Sometimes it had confusing wording.

We didn't use it much...Maybe not needed.

Sometimes the materials were a bit hokey and bordering on "not cool." This would normally not be an issue for informative materials but the reality was that these were trying to attract the attention of a very young modern demographic, and that is hard to target.

The final set of comments (9) was positive with respect to the information included in the student handbooks:

The facilitators really took the time to expand on the subject matter and make people feel comfortable enough to ask questions.

Everything was understandable, and it still applied to today's generation.

Really opened my eyes to a lot of things that's for sure, and we learned things in a way that was fun and enlightening.

I helped so we knew it inside out.

They were very well laid out and easy to understand.

The handbook was helpful because it reinforced and expanded on issues being discussed in the workshops.

One adult survey respondent commented on the Making Waves/Vague par vague handbooks and information:

I have used the materials and some of the activities in the classroom.

Helpfulness of the Role-plays and Exercises

The question with respect to role plays and exercises was worded as follows: "The role-plays and exercises helped me know more about what to do if a problem came up." As was previously presented in Table 17, across programs about one-third of both the student and adult respondents stated that the role-plays and exercises assisted them "a lot" (33.2%) or "some" (44.8%).

Across programs in Table 23, almost 45% of the students considered the role-plays and exercises as somewhat helpful if a problem came up; another almost one-third (32.7%) as helping "a lot".

Table 23: Students' Views of the Role-plays and Exercises by Program

Program	A Bit	Some	A Lot	n
R+R (SWOVA)	35 (22%)	77 (48.4%)	47 (29.6%)	159
HRY	32 (26.7%)	50 (41.7%)	38 (31.7%)	120
Making Waves	3 (7.9%)	11 (28.9%)	24 (63.2%)	38
Fourth R	13 (29.5%)	22 (50%)	9 (20.5%)	44
Totals	83 (23%)	160 (44.3%)	118 (32.7%)	361
Pearson chi square = 21.8; p = .001; Cramer's V = .17, a weak effect				

In the comparison of programs, there was a statistically significant difference with respect to this item such that Making Waves/Vague par vague respondents found the role-plays and exercises more helpful compared to the others.

Thirty-five students commented on the role-plays and exercises: R+R = 24; HYR = 3; Fourth R = 0; Making Waves = 8. Eight students commented negatively about these, the most common complaint being that the scenarios were not realistic:

The scenarios are, as of yet, horribly unrealistic.

Not very helpful. Too outdated.

Not practical. Wouldn't act that way in real life.

Another six students had mixed reactions or negative responses to some exercises and role-plays:

I don't like role-playing.

They would be applicable only in a perfect world in some cases.

A bit corny...

Some role plays didn't help me, because it was a bit artificial and not realistic.

Twenty-one students responded positively to the role-plays and exercises, at times countering the complaints from the other students, such as perceiving the role-plays as realistic and relevant.

I think the role-plays are essential. It's great to talk about situations and what to do, but acting out an actual situation with dialogue makes the whole thing more relatable and memorable.

Role-playing puts you in the character's position so you know how it feels.

It helps to actually move through the situation.

You realized firsthand how challenging some situations can be and from different perspectives.

The information provided to the youth became clearer once we had a chance to put it all in context through the role-playing and skits.

I liked how if you didn't want to participate you weren't forced to.

It provided specific details, and a framework within which a discussion could then take place between the students and facilitators.

As with anything at that age, some of the role-plays and exercises were taken too lightly, but combined with the materials/discussions that followed, everything was very informative.

The role-play exercises help deal with intense and difficult real-life issues in a light but surprisingly realistic way.

Two adults commented on the role-plays and exercises, both from a critical stance. An adult connected with SWOVA's R+R program commented, "Groups too large for it to be justly appreciated", and an adult associated with Making Waves, wrote, "I'm not a role-play kind of gal."

Helpfulness of the Follow-up Activities

Only students from Making Waves and the Fourth R responded to the question about follow-up activities: “The follow-up activities (such as plays and poster campaigns) helped me understand the issues.” Notably though, the Fourth R program does not have regularly planned follow-up activities in the same way as Making Waves/Vague par vague does.

With respect to the data in Table 17, many fewer students and adults (only 91) answered this question than the other items. These respondents saw the follow-up activities as helpful “a lot” in almost one-third of cases (35.2%), “some” in another almost third of cases (31.9%) and “a bit” in the final third (33%).

Table 24: Students’ Views of the Follow-up Activities by Program

Program	A bit	Some	A Lot	n
Making Waves	8 (21.1%)	14 (36.8%)	16 (42.1%)	48
Fourth R	21 (50%)	11 (26.2%)	10 (23.8%)	42
Total	29 (36.3%)	25 (31.3%)	26 (32.5%)	80
Pearson chi square = 7.4; p = .025; Cramer’s V = .30 indicating a strong effect				

Similarly, across the two programs, about one-third of the students considered the follow-up activities “a bit” useful, another almost one-third rated them as “somewhat” useful and the final third (32.5%) as useful “a lot”. In the comparison of programs, there was a statistically significant difference with respect to this item, such that Making Waves/Vague par vague respondents rated the follow-up activities as more often useful compared to students from the Fourth R.

Only eleven Making Waves/Vague par vague students commented about follow-up activities. Seven comments were regrets that the follow-up activities had not occurred.

I didn’t find that when I was involved that enough was done on my (and fellow class-mates) end at my school. I think it would have been helpful if the teacher had taken charge to co-ordinate(as it can be hard for a student to direct their peers on their own)/have teachers let students know before the weekend that this is expected and to start thinking of ideas.

I wish there was more opportunity for follow-up support from the organization.

We haven’t really done a lot since the weekend. Our teacher, who attended with us, hasn’t called any meetings since. We don’t know whether to do it without her or not. But we are definitely interested in doing activities with our school to share the knowledge we received from Making Waves.

Wasn’t always followed up on after the weekends, so in their respective schools there was not a tremendous amount of follow up I don’t think.

My school did not follow through with any follow up activities much to my regret.

In contrast, four students commented positively on the follow-up activities and their effects on their schools:

The “Faces of Abuse” play was awesome. It really moved me.

They helped reinforce what I already knew.

They helped us spread the word to others.

They also allowed our communities and schools to be involved.

Two adults, both connected with Vague par vague, commented on the follow up activities. One simply implied that follow-up activities did not occur, "*Ne s'applique pas pour moi.*" The other commented that they did lots, "*Nous en avons fait plusieurs!*"

Most Useful Aspects of the Program

Two hundred and forty-six student survey respondents answered an open-ended question with respect to what was most useful about the healthy relationship program, "What was most useful about the program?" (R+R = 136; HRY = 65; Fourth R = 13; Making Waves = 32). The answers fit within four themes: Content about communication, respect and awareness; specific program aspects such as discussions, role-plays, or the program manual; group process and; peer interaction. Since some respondents commented about more than one issue, the totals do not necessarily add up.

Several survey respondents wrote primarily negative (15) comments about the programs:

I already knew everything they talked about.

Getting time out of class. I think it is useful but my class was not into it and didn't seem to help.

It didn't really affect me at all. I thought it was really annoying.

Get out of class time; didn't feel like real work.

To me all of the stuff we did was equally useful. Except for the "Rights" sessions cause it didn't really make sense to me.

One hundred and fourteen student survey respondents described specific topics that they found beneficial. The most commonly mentioned was learning the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, noted by 36 students:

Helped me feel more stronger and helped me know what unhealthy relationships can do and how to respect others and to stay strong in my own bubble.

Learning how to have a healthy relationship.

Probably identifying unhealthy relationships, and becoming more aware of different types of abuse.

Knowing what's healthy and what's not in a relationship and knowing how to deal with it.

Seventeen student respondents noted that they saw conflict resolution as the most beneficial:

The boundaries and conflict resolution. I was never really sure what to do before.

Gives resolutions/ideas on how to prevent and deal with problems that are occurring or preventing them from occurring

It gave me language to deal with conflicts in my life.

Thirteen students commented that learning about different forms of abuse was the most helpful aspect of the program:

Abuse in relationships and how to make it healthy.

Learning about abuse in relationship and how to deal with it.

The information about different forms of abuse and the sexuality information.

Knowing what to do if you were getting abused...

Twelve students noted that learning about boundaries was helpful.

I loved the boundaries workshop. I really learned a lot about myself in that session.

Learning to say no when someone is in your personal space bubble.

Understanding boundaries.

Understanding where your boundaries are and how to protect them.

Eleven students mentioned learning communication skills as being the most beneficial for them.

The most useful part of this program was the different ways of healthy ways to communicate.

How to communicate when you're mad.

Learning how to communicate with people you are having problems with (or just to always have good communication with the person).

Other topics that were identified as “most beneficial” included learning about bullying (6), sexuality and sexual orientation (6); rights and drugs and alcohol (3) (this issue is specific to the Fourth R):

Feeling like something was being done about these issues, especially bullying

Finding out about different types of bullying.

Helped me learn more about sexuality, bullying, abuse, etc

The sexuality and drug unit.

To me, the unit on sexual orientation.

Finding out about what guys want in a relationship.

To know what you want in a relationship.

The information about rights and laws around dating and relationships.

Learning about “dating rights.”

It showed us the many different types of racism and things going on and helped us see how to deal with it.

Finding out about different types of bullying.

Learning about diversity.

Fifty-seven student survey respondents commented about generally positive aspects of the program content such as respect and awareness/knowledge as being the most useful aspects of the programs.

The most useful aspect was that it empowered me to use the tools I was taught. Also it encouraged me to become involved, not just in the program but with others in the field of healthy sexuality and relationships.

It gave me language to deal with conflicts in my life.

It really opened a person's eyes to the different types of abuse, even in its most subtle forms. By being aware of an issue, we can prevent it and help anyone in a violent/abusive relationship.

The weekend workshops were very informative and, as students, we were left with helpful tools to spread the awareness of dating violence and abuse and hope to deal with it as young people.

Thirty-three individuals identified the group interaction and process as the most useful aspects of the programs.

The real life ways to deal with stuff that everyone deals with, and most importantly, I very much believe that the weekend made me feel "okay" or "cool" even to speak out to such issues and that everyone at the weekend realized how un-cool those negative types of behaviour were. The class conversations and discussions. I enjoyed hearing everyone else's opinion.

The fact that [the program] was addressing such heavy and important topics in a fun and easy to learn environment made the experience that much better!

Being able to understand issues from another point of view. Empathy.

Feeling like something was being done about these issues, especially bullying.

Being able to share opinions and talk about important issues. Learning about violence in relationships.

Engaging even the most introverted students.

Different incorporations of all learning styles.

Thirteen student survey respondents commented about specific exercises, program strategies as being most helpful.

The check-in.

Movies, talking, supportive exercises.

Les cahiers d'informations et les ateliers de jeux de rôle car cela fait en sorte qu'on se met plus à la place de l'autre. (The information books and role-plays that help you consider somebody else's place.)

Role playing, and when the teacher talked about personal stories because some students could relate and help them deal with their problems.

The brochure they send home with you because there is too much information given in the weekend to remember it all.

The books are also very helpful for the groups when they go back to their schools. It great to have all of that information available.

The most useful aspect was when we had a myths discussion between the adults and the teens.

Definitely the books they gave us, I read mine every once in a while just so I don't forget things, but it has really helped a lot.

The time where they made us bound (sic) someone in the chair and it showed how people who are getting abused feel that they have nowhere to go when it gets bad.

It showed us the many different types of racism and things going on and helped us see how to deal with it.

Eight students mentioned the importance of having some time in separate gender groups for various discussions.

Guy talk. I think the separation of the sexes made it much easier to communicate.

The most helpful aspect of the Making Waves program was the talk where you were put into groups and had discussions.

He says / she says.

Separating genders and talking.

Finally, seven respondents mentioned the importance of the students being involved in presenting materials and leading sessions.

The interaction with the students instead of just working in the workbook.

There was so much. I think the idea of teens teaching teens. The aspect of peer education is crucial for this type of awareness to be most effective.

The respect it showed youth and the relationships that young people deal with was quite unique and important. By having the youth facilitators so involved in the construction of the program from the beginning made it transfer to the youth population smoothly. The workshops were interacting and we were always looking for fun ways to get students involved.

I really think the workshops and activities done by the Student Advisory Committee reached out to me the most. It really hit the spot when it came to allowing me to understand the severity of some situations.

The most useful aspect of Making Waves was the fact that the information was being transferred from students to students.

The encouragement that students can make a difference and the supportive camaraderie that is developed over the weekend.

Identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships and discussing them with peers. The impact of having youth deliver the information and then reflecting upon it as a group is amazing.

I found the emphasis on youth to be the most useful aspect of the program. Bringing youth together to discuss the important issue of healthy relationships, with open minds and clear information, is very effective. Same with the leadership opportunities presented to students through the Student Advisory Committee.

Several students made powerful statements about their programs that encompass several of the issues already mentioned.

I feel it has made a noticeable difference on the level of tolerance in our school- each younger grade is more tolerant than the one before.

Provides a basic toolkit for those students who care enough with which one can create healthy and respectful relationships in their own life, and the safe atmosphere created by the facilitators grants a forum for those issues that are often taboo between youth and adults.

The Making Waves weekend was such a powerful experience. I think it has such a huge impact because the students are just completely immersed in the issue for an entire weekend. This is different than simply going to the gym for an hour or two in the middle of a school day for a presentation. While they are having a lot of fun, they are also learning so much. The experience really did take my breath away, and has impacted my life so much. I became passionate about dating violence prevention, and I think that the complete immersion over the weekend was responsible for that.

Fourteen of the 16 adult survey respondents commented about what they perceived as the most beneficial aspects of the programs: SWOVA's R+R = 4, Fourth R = 1, Making Waves/Vague par vague = 9. With respect to R+R, the adults made the following comments:

Engaging even the most introverted students.

Conflict resolution.

The overall themes.

Learning the difference between assertive and aggressive.

The one adult associated with the Fourth R commented that the most useful aspect is, "The information on healthy sexuality and affects of substance abuse."

Three adult respondents with Making Waves mentioned specific exercises or information as being most beneficial:

My students really enjoyed the weekend spent with new people. The most useful aspect was when we had a myths discussion between the adults and the teens.

Opening communication lines between youth and adults.

Différentes formes de violence et la partie des medias. (Different forms of violence and the media session.)

Another four mentioned the activities and resources as being most helpful.

Interactive activities and students working with students from other schools.

The hands on activities, presentations.

The resources were very useful as were the student led activities.

Contact with all schools and resources.

The final two adults from Making Waves made more general comments about the program being useful beyond the weekend.

Getting the information out there to the students. Bringing back materials for our guidance dept.

Additional Topics for Program

The survey respondents were asked whether they would recommend additional topics for the program, “Are there other issues/topics that the program could have covered but didn’t?” A slightly higher proportion of adults responded “yes” to this question. However, because the number of adults was relatively small, statistical tests were not conducted on this analysis.

Across programs, as can be seen in Table 25, only 13.6% of the students suggested additional topics for the healthy relationship programs.

Table 25: Additional Topics for Program

	No	Yes	Total
Students	255 (86.4%)	40 (13.6%)	295
Adults	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	16
Total	267 (85.9%)	44 (14.1%)	311

Table 26: Students’ Suggested Topics by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	104 (82.5%)	22 (17.5%)	126
HRY	90 (89.1%)	11 (10.9%)	101
Making Waves	31 (86.1%)	5 (13.9%)	36
Fourth R	30 (93.8%)	2 (6.3%)	32
Total	255 (86.4%)	40 (13.6%)	295
Pearson chi square = 3.7; p = .29			

In the comparison of programs, there were no statistically significant differences with respect to this item.

Twenty-eight students suggested additional topics: R+R=16; HYR = 7; Fourth R = 0; Making Waves = 5. The topics were broad and some students made more than one suggestion. Six students suggested adding more information about normal sexuality, sexual orientation and teen pregnancy:

Sexuality - expecting youth to define informed boundaries for themselves is impossible without teaching them what they need to know about their sexuality (including the dangers involved).

More on healthy sexuality, people in our school need to know more about safe sex! We did not really learn much as of yet.

The importance of contraceptives. We talked about sex, but not a lot about protection.

Parler plus de sexualité. (Talk more about sexuality)

Teen-aged pregnancy, sexual orientation.

Another six students suggested adding information on relationship abuse of various sorts,

Probably more about separate gender bullying and separate gender in general and then talking together after. Rape. What to do. Sexually abusive boyfriends/ girlfriends.

D’après moi, il serait excellent d’avoir des témoignages, ou des rencontres avec des personnes qui sont parties d’une relation malsaine. (For me, it would be excellent to have presentations from individuals who have left abusive relationships).

Sexual abuse. They just really only talked about if you were fighting with your friends and stuff.

Five students suggested including information about drugs and other substances:

Drug + alcohol. Its role in relationships is sometimes dangerous and definitely crucial @ this age. We hit on it a bit with role-plays but not enough.

Pressure teenagers are facing – drugs.

Drugs--the effects on you, the come downs, the permanent side effects.

Two students requested more focus with respect to divorce.

Real life, real teenage problem: Divorced parents,.

Parents separating and dealing with new girlfriends etc.; who to contact for counselling.

Four students briefly mentioned adding more on “self-confidence” or “being yourself.” Two students mentioned eating disorders and three questioned what to do if two friends both liked the same person. Finally, two wanted more on racism and homophobia:

Racism was only touched on the surface.

More on homophobia please.

One individual summed up the dilemma of knowing how much information to include:

There are always more issues that we could have spent more time on, but you can only cover so much and still make an impact. SWOVA has done a good job of getting the community to realize the issues facing youth and give the young population tools to help them recognize and obtain healthy relationships of all kinds.

Five of the 16 adult survey respondents commented about additional topics; however three of these (one from SWOVA and two from Making Waves) did not recommend adding new topics due to time restrictions.

I am sure there will always be topics that need to be discussed since our young people are always experimenting and trying new things. Keeping current with their world will always challenge us.

Not in the time available.

An adult associated with the Fourth R recommended, “Review of human sexual anatomy. Effects of teen pregnancy.” A final comment from an adult from Making Waves suggested including the topics: “Automutilation, cyber-sexualisation and sexualisation très jeune.” (Self mutilation, online sexual exploitation and sexual activity at very young ages.)

Suggestions to Improve the Programs

The survey included a question with respect to suggestions to improve the program, “How could the program be more effective?” Two hundred and eighty-nine students wrote suggestions or comments about how their respective healthy relationship programs could be improved: R+R = 88, HRY = 71, Fourth R = 8 and Making Waves = 12. In answer to this question, the students often made comments that fit under more than one theme, thus the totals in each theme do not add up to 289.

As before, a very small number of students (7) did not perceive the programs as useful:

Waste of time- just to me could be beneficial to people with less common sense.

It sucks.

It could just not exist!

By not talking about stupid things like passive, aggressive and assertive stuff.

Thirty-nine student survey respondents wrote suggestions with respect to specific program topics or components. These comments were diverse, with few clear themes emerging. Four students suggested smaller groups or speaking to individuals rather than students in group.

Talk to people personally and not over a group.

With smaller classes.

Others suggested more opportunities for student discussion:

More interactive and less long chats in the circle.

More open topic discussion (Socratic circles).

A number of comments were unique and did not reflect commonly proposed suggestions. Nevertheless, they are worth reviewing:

More modern. Get new topics and movies.

Learning to deal with ways on how to be yourself around others.

Showing girls and guys how to deal with the problems and feelings that the workshop has brought up.

Ask the kids what they want. Take their suggestions and build it into the program.

Signing up for it so only people who actually want to be there are involved. But still during school.

It seems to be aimed more towards women and how men are in the wrong. Sometimes it seems to isolate the guys as the bad guy. Maybe show circumstances in which guys are being abused emotionally?

Four students suggested adding field trips or getting out of the classroom.

Could maybe take the students out of a school atmosphere (then maybe more students would enjoy it).

More moving activities outside.

Thirty-one students suggested fewer presentations of material and adding more active exercises and “games” to the programs.

Less time talking. More games

Get people involved. Don't just talk at them.

More games, fun activities. This will increase people's attitudes in supporting the program.

More active activities that make students voice and act their opinions.

Twenty-three students respondents suggested either expanding or shortening the program length, or moving to a different age-group either instead of or in addition to the current program population. Thirteen of the 23 students making the sessions longer or adding more classes.

Possiblement avoir plus de temps comme groupe. Comme une longue fin de semaine. (Possibly more time in group, with a longer weekend)

If it had more sessions.

It could be longer classes and less book work.

It should be all year and it should be in every class. It was a while ago. However it was a great experience.

They could of [sic] had it every day.

More spread out. Not all 11 sessions in one time.

Three students suggested less time for the programs, either per session or by not providing over a number of years:

Not have as many classes.

Have shorter classes.

Not so many years: Too repetitive.

In contrast, four student survey respondents suggested starting the programs at younger ages:

Maybe try adapting the program so that it can also go into elementary schools (lots of games; info sensitive to age of kids.)

Start at younger grade level, like Grade 5.

Three students suggested expanding the SWOVA or Fourth R programs to additional grades in high school:

Be taught more often in higher grades (10, 11, 12).

Another group of 17 student survey respondents suggested that the examples be made more realistic and relevant to students.

More realistic examples / real life scenarios. Could target peer pressure a little more.

More direct relation to the things we know. We need to be able to make connections with things around us

More depth on important issues.

Real life situations / visitors that come in to share (if they are comfortable) about the topic.

Nine students suggested that youth be involved even more than currently (not made by student respondents from Making Waves or the Fourth R).

Getting more youth involved.

If there were more students/youth teaching it.

Eight students recommended that the programs incorporate additional gender separate components.

I think they could use more separate gender work. Because then you can really open up and be yourself.

I think they should do more spilt sex classes. We only had one.

More gender separation days then get together to see what each other think.

The most common theme, across all programs, was that the healthy relationship curriculum was useful either as is or with some additional components.

People talk about how they think it is a waste of time but eventually realize how you can/have learned a lot.

It was an excellent program for young people.

It already is effective. It should be at every school.

It was a great program. I loved it so much. I look forward to it next time.

Think it's very good and should be in all schools!

I loved this program and wish that I could do it again. You are truly lifesavers for so many people and everyone involved feel so proud of themselves.

It's very sad that every high school student in the province doesn't have the benefit of this program; our schools would certainly be a better place.

Only four of the 16 adults survey respondents wrote about suggestions to the programs: R+R = 3; Making Waves = 1. Two of the four adults simply stated that the programs were good as already developed:

Je ne changerais rien! (I would change nothing!)

I think it is good as is.

The final two adults agreed with the previously reported student suggestion of working with smaller groups:

More flexibility in time-tabling. Smaller classes.

More small group "active" activities to relax group and get a talk happening faster than when working with whole group of 35 kids.

Problems and Benefits of the Programs

Several questions were included to capture both challenges and benefits of the programs, from asking directly about problems and benefits to queries about disappointments and unanticipated positives. The first was, "Do you have any problems with the program?"

Table 27: Problems with the Program

	No	Yes	Total
Students	283 (87.9%)	29 (12.1%)	322
Adults	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	16
Total	293 (87.3%)	43 (12.7%)	338

Across programs, only a little more than 10% of the students perceived problems with their respective healthy relationship programs. The students from R+R and Making Waves identified more problems with the programs to a statistically significant degree than students from the Fourth R and HRY.

Table 28: Students' Views of Problems by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	121 (82.9%)	25 (17.1%)	146
HRV	99 (95.3%)	5 (4.8%)	104
Making Waves	32 (84.2%)	6 (15.8%)	38
Fourth R	32 (94.1%)	2 (5.9%)	34
Total	284 (88.2%)	38 (11.8%)	322
Pearson chi square = 10.59, p = .01; Cramer's V = .20, a moderate effect			

Only 34 student survey respondents wrote comments with respect to concerns with the programs: R+R = 24, HRY = 3; Fourth R = 1, Making Waves = 6. The one student comment about the Fourth R was that "I don't really remember it." The three comments with respect to Healthy Relationships for Youth had to do with the program facilitators:

Adult advisors participated too much while student/ youth facilitators too little.

They are weird.

About the R+R program (SWOVA), which offers students 12 sessions each for four years, the most common themes were that the examples or material was not a good fit (6) and that the students disliked missing physical education classes for the program (5). (Notably, R+R staff and school personnel addressed the PE issue.)

Need to update material. Content doesn't always seem applicable, i.e. conflict resolution needs more shocking things to show kids what's really happening

Too much emphasis on issues that are not relevant here.

Some of the situations seem a little unreal.

It took some of our PE time away, which I disliked.

Four R+R students considered at least some of the material repetitive over the years:

Too repetitive each year. Need to charge it up.

Just a bit repetitive (the material).

Two R+R students commented that they perceived a bias against men.

The name SWOVA implies only women are victims.

Made men sound like dirty dogs.

Several R+R students made unique comments that were not echoed by others, but deserve mention:

Because so many people have so much to say, it gets a little overwhelming. That's why I liked the gender sessions, because there were smaller groups.

It seems to ostracize youth that have opinions different than others. Although there is an attempt to keep discussion open, adult and youth facilitators clearly have a liberal bias that is not directly relevant to the curriculum.

Some people are forced to go to SWOVA. I believe you should have the choice.

It brought up a lot of feelings and they didn't show us how to deal with them.

Six students from the Making Waves program identified problems. Three were with respect to access to the programs, either to the weekend, or for students throughout the entire school.

I'm concerned that [my] high school won't be involved next year, and I really, really want to. And if they are, I'm concerned I won't be chosen for it, because unlike [another] High, we have limited room for members. This year, four spots.

Needs to be thru [sic] the whole school.

That the few it does reach with great depth, will not be enough to merit the resources and funding \$ that it can receive. Dedicated workers like Simone will devote their lives to a cause but at the end of the day they need to feel respected and compensated for their efforts.

Two comments were about the Making Waves follow-up activities and how difficult it could be to enact these:

The continuation of the "wave" once students return to school. Momentum is easily lost, and the impact on the student participants is not necessarily shared by their peers at school.

Il devrait y avoir quelqu'un qui vient parler dans les écoles ou s'assurer que les activités sont mis en place par les jeunes. (It would be helpful to have someone speak in the school to assure that the activities by the youth are in place).

A final concern questioned that students could be productive when the workshops are held at the end of the week when they are tired.

Je ne suis pas certain qu'est-ce qui aurais pu produire cela mais la dernière journée de la fin de semaine les jeunes étaient vraiment fatiguées.

Three adult survey respondents listed perceived problems with the programs. The two associated with SWOVA's R+R program made the following comments:

It took 12 classes (1/6th of our year) from the Grade 9 PE classes.

Timetabling and duration.

The final adult comment was with respect to expanding Making Waves so that students could go more often:

I would like to be able have students from our school go every year. I do believe we sometimes share available spots with a neighbouring school.

Negative Effects of the Program

Although similar to the previously reported question about problems with the programs, the survey included the following question with respect to negative effects, "In general, have you seen any negative effects of introducing the program?" This query implies that the program had a negative impact on students and other

school and community recipients. There is, however, overlap in the themes that emerged from the two questions.

Table 29: Negative Effects of Program

	No	Yes	Total
Students	302 (94.1%)	19 (5.9%)	321
Adults	15 (93.8%)	1 (6.3%)	16
Total	317 (94.1%)	20 (5.9%)	337

Across programs (see Table 30), fewer than 6% identified negative effects of their respective healthy relationship programs.

Table 30: Students' Perceptions of Negative Effects by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	135 (91.2%)	13 (8.8%)	148
HRY	97 (95.1%)	5 (4.9%)	102
Making Waves	38 (100%)	0 (0%)	38
Fourth R	32 (97.0%)	1 (3%)	33
Total	302 (94.1%)	19 (5.9%)	321
Pearson chi square = 5.3, p = .15			

In the comparison of programs, there were no statistically significant differences with respect to this item.

Eighteen students commented on what they perceived as negative effects: R+R = 16, HYR = 2. Three students noted missing Physical Education classes as a negative. Two students perceived the program's messages as biased and too strong:

The only thing is that some people do not like it when other people force their beliefs on others strongly.

My being upset about the biased opinions.

The most common theme (n = 7) was with respect to students feeling vulnerable and emotional in reaction to program sessions:

Some people are too uncomfortable but that is their stuff.

Sometimes I felt a bit too much "in the spotlight" pressure to thoroughly explain our thoughts and feelings.

People are very emotional and sad after the workshop.

No major consequences but I've found that people afterwards are often a lot more sensitive and vulnerable to hurt feelings whereas before, they might have not thought twice at a joke directed to them. I'm not sure if that's positive or not.

Sometimes I feel really self-conscience when we discuss things with both genders in the room.

Just immature kids make a joke of it or tease other for things said during session.

Two comments were with respect to students skipping out of class during R+R sessions:

Some kids get made to feel uncomfortable so they skip out.

More kids skipping class during SWOVA.

Only one adult survey respondent perceived any negative effects as a result of the program, in this case, SWOVA's R+R program. The negative effect noted was, "Losing time in numeracy, writing and reading."

Disappointments with the Program

Another question intended to elicit possible concerns about the programs was the following, "Were there any unexpected disappointments in taking part in the program?"

Table 31: Any Disappointments?

	No	Yes	Total
Students	263 (86.5%)	41 (13.5%)	304
Adults	15 (100%)	0 (0%)	15
Total	278 (87.1%)	15 (12.9%)	319

Across programs, only 13.5% of the students identified disappointments with their respective healthy relationship programs (see Table 31). In the comparison of programs (Table 32), there were no statistically significant differences with respect to this item.

Table 32: Students' Disappointments by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	120 (85.1%)	21 (14.9%)	141
HRY	84 (87.5%)	12 (12.5%)	96
Making Waves	33 (86.8%)	5 (13.2%)	38
Fourth R	26 (89.7%)	3 (10.3%)	29
Total	263 (86.5%)	41 (13.5%)	304
Pearson chi square = 0.59; p = .90			

Thirty-one students commented on what they perceived as unexpected disappointments: R+R = 16; HYR = 10; Fourth R = 5; Making Waves = 5. Nine students said they already knew the material or found it boring:

When I first took part in SWOVA in Grade 7/8 they spoke of healthy relationships, even when none of us were in relationships. They taught the same lesson every year for the next 4 years. BORING and we would give the same general answers they expected, "Respect."

Sometimes it was boring because there wasn't interesting activities.

Half the time it was stupid and not necessary to know half the stuff.

It didn't teach me much that I didn't already know.

Three students noted disappointments that imply ways that the programs could be improved including previously made points such as the need for newer videos and more games.

More free time would have been nice, just to get to know everyone and make relationships.

The remaining comments were with respect to somewhat unique circumstances.

Lack of teacher enthusiasm.

There was supposed to be more networking between schools to see each other's progress but to my knowledge that didn't happen.

Was not able to get other school-work done. Make the time for the class shorter.

Only one adult of 16 survey respondents commented about any disappointments. An adult associated with SWOVA's R+R program wrote, "Just in how it takes away from other subject areas."

Unanticipated Surprises

To gather information about positive aspects of the programs, the following question was included in the survey, "Were there any positive surprises of taking part in the program?"

Table 33: Any Positive Surprises?

	No	Yes	Total
Students	166 (59.5%)	113 (40.5%)	279
Adults	4 (26.7%)	11 (73.3%)	15
Total	170 (57.8%)	124 (42.2%)	294

Table 34: Students' Positive Surprises by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	67 (54.5%)	56 (45.5%)	123
HRY	69 (75%)	23 (25%)	92
Making Waves	7 (18.4%)	31 (81.6%)	38
Fourth R	23 (88.5%)	3 (11.5%)	26
Total	166 (59.5%)	113 (40.5%)	279
Pearson chi square = 46.1; p = .000; Cramer's V = .41, a very strong effect			

Across programs, a minority of the students (11.5%) identified positive surprises. In the comparison of programs, there was a statistically significant difference between programs such that students in the Making Waves/Vague par vague and SWOVA programs were most likely to identify positive surprises.

Seventy-one students clarified the nature of the positive surprises: R+R = 34; HYR = 13; Making Waves = 25. The most common surprise, mentioned by 29 students, was the change in the nature of their relationships with friends, classmates and program facilitators.

Boyfriend is more understanding. So am I.

Being able to be very open about my opinions.

Got to know my classmates more, learned some new skills.

Get involved with your classmates and school.

I like the check ins. Feels like someone is listening.

The amount of open conversation between the people.

I didn't expect some of these kids to change.

Finding out how decent and cool many of my peers are.

I didn't expect to meet so many great people and remain friends with some of them. To this day I still keep in contact with some of those people.

Being able to contact people to talk in SWOVA.

How great the SAC members were, as well as the adults facilitators. I was really surprised after the bridging the gap session...really opened my eyes.

Everyone was welcome there. I got a few new friends and I really, really felt welcome.

I met many lifelong friends in the program. That was pleasant indeed.

Fifteen students commented on their learning as a surprise, some mentioned specific topics or exercises.

I learned a lot about things that I hadn't really thought of before.

I actually found it interesting.

Gender work.

Opened up many other doors to do things.

I thought I knew quite a bit about healthy/unhealthy relationships and dating violence, but I learned a lot more than I expected from my Waves involvement.

Another twelve students commented that they were surprised that the program was fun.

Good conversations, Games, Everyone had fun at sometime throughout.

How much I enjoyed it!

I expected lectures, but I found fun-filled learning.

The environment of the weekend - an unexpected level of "fun."

I enjoyed some of the class activities we did.

Well I thought it was going to be boring but I actually had a lot of fun and met some new friends.

Six students' surprises were with respect to becoming or the experience of being youth facilitators for the programs.

I realised I would like to join the youth team.

I enjoy new surprises each time I facilitate a session...new insight pulled out of the curriculum.

Being chosen to be part of the CAFE/Student Advisory Committee.

It became a bit of a support group for the facilitators, with a respect and a companionship that was quite unexpected.

I admit I didn't really know what I was getting into at first. I needed a job, the position sounded interested, it was kind of related to what I was learning in the peer-counsellor program at school and my friends said to go for it. I got so much out of it, I can't imagine how different I would be if.

A final nine students' surprises were with respect to a generally profound impact of the program on aspects of their lives.

I met some REALLY unique and amazing people! I came out of the experience much more confident and secure with myself as well.

The passion that it created in me.

I was so happy with the friends that I made and also with how much I learned. I wasn't told much about the program so I had no idea as to what I was going into.

Making Waves introduced me to the ideas of activism as well as feminism. I am now both a feminist and activist.

The entire experience was a positive surprise. As a Grade 10 student, I expected the weekend to be fully boring. It was definitely not that, and it changed my life.

I learned so much. The program boosted my confidence and allowed me to make so many important decisions. I met really amazing people, and SWOVA has opened so many doors of opportunity for me.

Ten of the 16 adult respondents commented about unanticipated positives with respect to the program: R+R= 2; Fourth R= 1; Making Waves = 7. Six commented specifically about the student interactions and reactions:

Student interaction was awesome.

Some of the answers my students gave in the "ask a teen" part of the weekend.

My students were a little shy in their participation at first, but they quickly came out of their shells. Did a WONDERFUL job in their presentation back at PALS.

J'ai eu l'occasion de connaître mieux les jeunes qui ont participé à la fin de semaine. (I had the opportunity to get to know teens who participated better during the weekend).

The team that went to the weekend conference certainly became close.

The sessions where youth and adults discussed what each group does not understand about the other was very surprising and enlightening.

The other four comments were about surprises more with respect to the program as a whole:

The range of topics covered.

How well the information was put forward and how well the students got involved.

Long-term Benefits of the Programs

One of the central reasons for conducting this research was to discover whether dating violence/health relationship programs make a difference over time. The survey respondents were asked, "Have you seen any long-term benefits of the program?"

As can be seen in Table 35, about 60% of the students and 80% of the adults across programs noted that they had perceived long-term benefits from having participated in the healthy relationship programs.

Table 35: Long-term Benefits of Program

	No	Yes	Total
Students	113 (41.4%)	160 (58.6%)	273
Adults	3 (20%)	12 (80%)	15
Total	116 (40.3%)	172 (59.7%)	288

Table 36: Students' Views of Long-term Benefits by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	40 (33.6%)	79 (66.4%)	119
HRV	46 (52.3%)	42 (47.7%)	88
Making Waves	3 (7.9%)	35 (92.1%)	38
Fourth R	24 (85.7%)	4 (14.3%)	28
Total	113 (41.4%)	160 (58.6%)	273
Pearson chi square = 47.5; p = .000; Cramer's V = .42, a very strong effect			

In the comparison of programs (see Table 36), there was a statistically significant difference between programs such that students in the Making Waves/Vague par vague and SWOVA programs were most likely to identify long term effects.

The student survey respondents had been program participants as recently as the current year and as long ago as six years. One hundred and thirty-one students commented on the long-term benefits of having participated in the program: R+R = 78; HRV = 31, Fourth R = 2; Making Waves = 32. Of these, a small number (9) had negative perceptions (4) or saw negligible effects (5) as a result of their program participation:

Kind of. I don't really see any changes afterwards.

People forget what the class was about the minute they walk out. At least that's what my friends say.

No, most of the course is common sence (sic).

In contrast, 132 student survey respondents described effects that ranged from generally positive, to having noticed changes in others, to personal experiences. Seventy individuals saw generic positive long-term consequences.

It helps teens know how to learn about different relationships so when they get older they can recognize whether they are in a healthy relationship and know how to fix/get out of it if they aren't.

It will get the community more involved with each other.

Make better decisions; treat people well; find ways to ensure that you are being treated fairly.

As mentioned before, it empowers youth to make the right decisions and introduces them to the idea of activism and the importance of participating within their own communities.

It is information that will stick to a young person's mind as they go through life and meet up with different people. It will hopefully lead them to make responsible choices for themselves and break the cycle of violence. Relationships are something one has to deal with his/her whole life and this is information that doesn't get old.

It teaches people about how to deal with conflict and how to say no.

L'implication des jeunes dans l'école, développe de l'empathie envers les autres. (It helped students develop empathy for others).

This issue of violence in teen dating (or at least unhealthy relationships) is definitely more prominent than I had thought prior to attending.

To help people going through rough patches.

It could help with choosing the right partner for you.

The lessons that stood out the most can be remembered for later problems in life.

I wish my parents would have learned some SWOVA, because they argue quite a bit, and it bugs me that they don't know this. Although, I don't think much of this is useful in my life right now.

There were subjects that probably not many people know a whole lot about until learning it through this.

I noticed the high school became more accepting of other people (LGBT). I think that violence and bullying within the school decreased. The program really got people talking and thinking.

Eight individuals specified that they had seen changes in other's general behaviour and understanding of relationship dynamics that they linked to program participation:

Students becoming more confident through their involvement. Students recognising and offering support to individuals in tough situations. General school population ARE getting the message.

Some kids have expressed themselves and have been able to stand up for themselves to bullies.

Not only does it help students improve their public speaking and confidence, but I have seen the improvements in many individuals after the weekends. I notice all of the students who attend the weekend become much more aware of their words as well (i.e. stop saying "slut" or "fag" etc.).

Moins d'intimidation à l'école entre les jeunes. (Less bullying between youth at school)

I have come in contact with other youth who have participated in the program, and felt that the program made a lasting difference in the way we think about relationships due to this.

It empowers youth to make the right decisions and introduces them to the idea of activism and the importance of participating within their own communities.

The way people talk to each other in the hallways were great.

Several of these comments were specific to changes that they had noticed in other's dating relationships.

I hear students discussing the affects of unhealthy relationships outside of the classroom. It tells me that there is a carry over into their lives outside the classroom and they realize when someone is in an unhealthy relationship.

In some cases, students had a better idea of how to get out of unhealthy relationships they were in.

Some people staying out of trouble and making the right choices.

People getting out of bad relationships.

One member who attended with me has changed a lot since this event. Before, she'd allow boys to use her in almost any way they pleased, but now she has her boundaries and her feet on solid ground. This happened with a few other people at the school because of the activities we presented at Making Waves.

Six students, all from the Making Waves/Vague par vague program, in which a key component is taking the message back to their home school, mentioned strategies that they had used to educate other students.

Students were very enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge.

Our Making Waves team created a poster with the signs of an unhealthy relationship, and the next day a student informed the adult leader of the group that she had broken up with her boyfriend because she realized she was in an unhealthy relationship.

As a result of attending a Making Waves weekend and becoming part of the Comité Avisoir Francophone d'Élèves, I have been able to further educate others on healthy and unhealthy relationships between teens.

My school has been involved in Making Waves for as long as I can remember, so our students have been exposed to lots of information. This year, students who attended Making Waves in the fall are more willing to talk to their friends about the issues.

The long term benefits are endless, from improving self-esteem to making youth aware of the characteristics of unhealthy relationships before they enter into one themselves. By going through Making Waves I also feel more prepared to help others who are going through difficult times.

Finally, 52 students mentioned ways in which they had personally changed as a result of program participation.

On a personal level, I have been with this program from the tenth grade until this, my graduating year, and I've seen positive, long term effects from the program reflected in my own mentality and behaviour. I'm more conscious of the subtler types of relationship abuse, which I hadn't really examined before the program (things like verbal abuse, isolation etc.). I recognize the key steps to having healthy, secure relationships within my own life. I'm also more focused on keeping an open mind against labels and stereotypes.

My perception of almost everything in my daily life and relationships was changed by what I learned.

Even just in myself. I am far more confident, self-assured and comfortable speaking up about what I think than I was before I started working with SWOVA. I loved working for them (Lynda in particular) and I know the experiences I had developing and implementing programs for SWOVA had a large impact.

Started making friends with my brother.

Better able to deal with the people in my life.

Better relationships with my mom, boyfriend and friends.

I have used the strategies in SWOVA and they work beautifully. Thanks to that I still have my friends and I'm not crying

In the past I have helped people in abusive situations and I'm sure I'm not the only one. It's too bad Making Waves isn't part of the secondary school curriculum.

Au niveau personnel, je trouve que je connais mieux mes limites et je peux mieux conseiller les autres. (On a personal level, I know my own boundaries better and I can counsel others better).

It has helped me a great deal, personally. I feel confident in my ability to communicate with my partner, and I feel like I am knowledgeable enough to recognize abuse that is taking place in not only other people's relationships, but my own, as well. In fact, I have experienced a relationship characterized by fairly severe emotional abuse, and was able to recognize it and leave. I'm not sure if I would have left if it weren't for Making Waves.

This issue of violence in teen dating (or at least unhealthy relationships) is definitely more prominent than I had thought prior to attending the Making Waves Conference. Attending this conference not only helped me give advice to friends, but it helped me see signs of an unhealthiness in my own relationships, and provided me with the skills and confidence to deal with them.

I don't fly off the handle anymore. I try to understand now.

I am now able to communicate and listen effectively to people whether they need advice, guidance, or just a friend to talk to. Making Waves really developed teens' ability to counsel and some of the best counselling comes from peers.

Knowing somewhat how to deal with conflict issues that arise in my life.

Not having a spaz when angry.

Yes, I can more determine healthy/ unhealthy relationships in my own family.

Personally the program helped me to be able to better recognize a bad situation before it goes on too much further.

Just the way I deal with people and relationships. It has helped worlds with me. Unfortunately it is hard to spread unless everyone had the same opportunities I did.

From what I have learned I have been able to work on my own issues and talk to people about theirs.

Fourteen of the 16 adult survey respondents commented about whether they saw any long-term benefits to the programs: R+R = 3, Fourth R = 1, Making Waves = 10. Two adults associated with the R+R program had not seen long-term benefits to date:

The adult commenting on the Fourth R, wrote that she perceived long-term program effects, "*When I hear the high school participants and their comments.*" The remaining 10 adults all mentioned seeing generally positive long-term effects that they attribute to Making Waves. Three commented on the effects for a small number of students:

I've had a few young people come to the guidance dept. about their relationships. I was better equipped to handle questions and had literature for them.

For some of our students, the information was helpful. The two students who went to the conference spent an afternoon going over what they had learned with our school. They re-enacted the activities they did at the conference and they were a HIT! Peer teaching is awesome.

For individual students who attended becoming more assertive in their own personal relationships.

Others made more generally positive comments about the program's long-term effects:

I hear students discussing the affects of unhealthy relationships outside of the classroom. It tells me that there is a carry-over into their lives outside the classroom and they realize when someone is in an unhealthy relationship.

It is information that will stick to a young person's mind as they go through life and meet up with different people. It will hopefully lead them to make responsible choices for themselves and break the cycle of violence. Relationships are something one has to deal with his/her whole life and this is information that doesn't get old.

Students are talking more about the issues. They recognize different forms of abuse. They are evaluating the media closer. More respectful of others.

Students becoming more confident through their involvement. Students recognising and offering support to individuals in tough situations. General school population ARE getting the message.

Use of Program Skills

The survey respondents were asked a series of questions with respect to the program in general and whether it had any effects on a variety of possible targets including dating relationships, other relationships, other students, the school and the community etc. It is worthwhile noting that it was not expected that the programs would necessarily have such far-reaching effects, but program personnel suggested including a wide range of possible groups that might be impacted by the programs. After each target, the respondents could write a comment. Although the major focus of the programs is students, since a proportion of the adult respondents answered these impact questions, their responses are also documented.

Program Used with Dates

The survey respondents were asked, "Have you used the program information and skills with your dating partners (boyfriends/girlfriends) in any way?" Although it was not anticipated that the adults would respond to the question about using the program in dating relationships, about half did. About 40% of both adults and student respondents used program materials with dates, interestingly, more adults than students.

There was a statistically significant difference between students' self-reported use of program information by program (see Table 38) with students from Making Waves more likely to have used the information.

Table 37: Used the Program Information with Dates

	No	Yes	Total
Students	147 (59.8%)	99 (40.2%)	246
Adults	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	7
Total	150 (59.3%)	103 (40.7%)	253

Table 38: Students' Use of Program Information with Dates by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	72 (63.7%)	41 (36.3%)	113
HRY	55 (63.2%)	32 (36.8%)	87
Making Waves	2 (8.3%)	22 (91.7%)	24
Fourth R	18 (81.8%)	4 (18.2%)	22
Total	147 (59.8%)	99 (40.2%)	248
Pearson chi square = 32.01. p < .000; Cramer's V = .36, a strong effect			

This finding is, however, difficult to interpret. Firstly, not all teens will be dating. If they are dating and have not used the program materials, this could indicate that their choice of a partner may have been influenced in a positive way by the program materials. As noted earlier, many of the students in the R+R program are rather young.

With respect to comments about using the programs information with dates, students from all programs took the opportunity: R+R = 32; HRY = 19; the Fourth R = 1; Making Waves = 19. The majority of the comments (n =39) were with respect to using the communication or conflict resolution skills with dating partners.

First I want to be treated in a fair manner. It has given me a great way of communicating with my partner on an understanding level and because I know how to approach situations better and portray my problems, I get more respect and they get a better understanding.

I have communicated with him more and told him how I'm feeling. If there is a fight involved, I handle it, in a healthy way.

Yes, the way me and my girlfriend resolve conflicts.

I came out with a different outlook on relationships after Making Waves and found some communications skills really helpful.

When I feel I'm being isolated or controlled, I tell him up-front, either he is more careful of the way he treats me, or there won't be a relationship. But of course, I'm careful not to threaten him for my own selfish purposes or I'd be abusing him.

I feel that I am good at communicating with my partner about things that can be tough to talk about (e.g. sex, jealousy, etc). I also feel that my knowledge about the different types of abuse has saved me from such a relationship.

It helped me with my communication skills around my dating relationships. As well, realizing I have inner power and confidence.

Another 23 individuals described concepts that they understood better after the program, such as boundaries, and that they applied to their dating relationships.

I know the kind of treatment I deserve and I am not willing to let anyone (a partner in particular) take advantage of me or disregard my feelings. I am willing to put a lot of love and work into a relationship, but I expect to be treated with equal respect and will speak up for myself if I think this.

I always try to be empathetic and put myself in her shoes.

I respect myself enough to say no.

I told him about boundaries and what one looks for in a partner.

Helped me realize what abuse really is.

I know what a good relationship is now and how everything should go. Also I learned about a lot I would not have unless I had this program.

Jealousy has been the biggest issue in relationships. Making Waves clarified that jealousy isn't good in any context and needs to be dealt with through healthy communication - not just tolerated, or thought of as someone really liking you.

Five individuals commented on using the information to leave abusive relationships or to realize that their own behaviours were abusive.

I realized that I was the abuser in my relationship. I never let my boyfriend ever do anything, but Making Waves helped me see how he felt and how much pressure I put on him. I never thought that I was doing anything wrong until this program.

I had a relationship that I could tell was not healthy for me. I used the knowledge I had gained from Making Waves to realize this and get out before I felt trapped.

I've realized when my relationship was unhealthy and how to speak out about it.

Shortly before I entered Making Waves I was just leaving a very unhealthy relationship, she basically emotionally abused me. After Making Waves, I learned that leaving her was the best thing I could do and where to go from there.

Finally, another two commented on assisting friends in difficulty in their dating relationships.

I've been able to help friends deal with unhealthy relationships.

[I've] given advice to friends about their dating relationships.

None of the adult survey respondents commented on using the program materials in dating relationships.

Using Program Materials with Friends

The survey respondents were asked, "Have you used the program information and skills with your friends in any way?" Across adult and student respondents, slightly less than half have used the program materials with friends.

Table 39: Have used Program Information with Friends

	No	Yes	Total
Students	155 (52.5%)	140 (47.5%)	295
Adults	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10
Total	160 (52.5%)	145 (47.5%)	305

Table 40: Students' use of Program Information with Friends by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	66 (49.3%)	68 (50.7%)	134
HRY	61 (62.9%)	36 (37.1%)	97
Making Waves	3 (8.6%)	32 (91.4%)	35
Fourth R	25 (86.2%)	4 (13.8%)	29
Total	155 (52.5%)	140 (47.5%)	295
Pearson chi-square = 45.06, p = .000, Cramer's V = .39, a very strong effect			

There were statistically significant differences with respect to the students' use of program information with friends depending on which program they had attended. Students in Making Waves/Vague par vague and SWOVA's R+R were more likely to have done this.

The students wrote 91 comments about this area: R+R = 48; HRY = 21; Making Waves = 21; the Fourth R = 1. The most common theme was using skills to communicate or resolve conflict and listen respectfully with friends (n = 69).

Every day. My "group" can act stupidly and I use my SWOVA skills to deal. Helps me stay calm.

Understanding how to listen with more than just your ears really helps you help your friends through tough times. I may not always have the answer (and you don't always need one), but as long as you can be a proper medium for them to vent to, you're helping them out!

I have talked about what we learned with my parents and plan on using the skills I learned for future problems/ conflicts in my life.

Je leurs disaient que se qu'ils faisaient n'étaient pas bien. (I told them what they were doing wasn't good.)

I try to communicate what I know about abuse and communications whenever I feel it is needed. However, I am not an expert, and so would be more likely to refer someone to a professional for help if I thought they needed it. This, too, though, was something I learned from Making Waves.

It helped me listen from a different point of view.

SWOVA has helped me become a more empathetic and helpful friend. I also find that the communication skills I learned are helpful in resolving conflicts I experience with my friends.

I talked with them about a problem instead of just flipping out.

I try to think about their point of view when we get in a fight.

Twelve students commented about using the information on abuse and healthy relationships with friends.

Talking to friends about when it's OK to be mad at their boyfriends.

I've used the information to help me tell my friends that their relationships do not look healthy and to help them get out of it and feel stronger about themselves so that they are strong enough to get out of the situation they were in.

I find myself more open-minded and more understanding of my friends' relationships. I can actually help them recognize abuse and make a change...

I'm a lot more useful when my friends are going through similar issues to the ones we learned about. They feel more comfortable consulting in me.

I'm able to give my friends a lot of information.

Three individuals were neutral or negative about this, stating, "Never turns out good", "I'm not sure" and "Perhaps a little".

A unique comment was made by one student who wrote, "A little bit. Being open to when my friend came 'out of the closet.'"

Six of the 16 adult survey respondents commented about using the program information with friends: R+R = 1, Fourth R= 1, Making Waves = 4.

I am more aware of how I speak to others when I feel there is conflict and I try to use assertive communication more.

Lorsque je rencontre des jeunes, relation interpersonnelle et violence dans les fréquentations, stéréotype, etc. (When I meet youth, [speaking of] interpersonal violence, stereotypes.)

Helped some friends out of difficult and sometimes volatile relationships.

When a friend has expressed concern with her own relationship or relationships that her teenage daughter is involved in, I have used the information from Making Waves to inform her of healthy relationships and what to not accept from another person.

Using Program Information beyond Dates and Peers

The following sections focus on students' self-reported use of program information beyond the typical focus: dating and peer relationships. As such, it should not be expected that students would necessarily generalize the skills beyond the program focus. Survey respondents were asked, "Have you used the program information and skills with your parents or other family members in any way?"

Table 41: Used Program Materials with Parents or Family Members

	No	Yes	Total
Students	183 (61.2%)	116 (38.8%)	299
Adults	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)	9
Total	187 (60.7%)	121 (39.3%)	208

Table 42: Students' Use of Program Information with Parents/Family by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	72 (51.8%)	67 (48.2%)	139
HRY	75 (73.5%)	27 (26.5%)	102
Making Waves	13 (41.6%)	18 (58.1%)	31
Fourth R	23 (85.2%)	4 (14.8%)	27
Total	183 (61.2%)	116 (38.8%)	299
Pearson chi-square = 23.1, p = .000, phi = .28, a moderately strong effect			

About 40% of students had used the program information in their relationships with parents or family members. However, there were statistically significant differences between the students use of program information with parents or other family members such that students from the R+R and Making Waves/Vague par vague were more likely to do this.

A number of students commented on this focus: R+R = 50, HRY = 13, Fourth R = 1, Making Waves = 11. The largest theme in the comments was respect to how the students used the program information with parents or other family members (n = 48).

I now can make my points clear without getting them angry.

Did the steps for resolving a conflict.

A little. I realize just how important communication with them is, and we had really great conversations after the "Bridging the Gap" session

Standing your ground and acting grown up when it comes to conflict.

I am trying to be more respectful.

De la même manière qu'avec mes amis. (The same as with my friends.)

I'm able to step away from the situation and listen a little bit more.

My sister and I have both taken SWOVA and work/talk together better now.

Not as much as other relationships, but increased communication and recognition of diversity has certainly been a factor.

Not only have I been able to give my friends some very valuable information to help them with their relationships but also a family member of mine. This person was having a hard time in a relationship and I was able to tell her just the right information on who to talk to and what to do. It made me.

My sisters and I did not always get along, but SWOVA's program taught me to deal with our disagreements in other ways i.e. talking it out.

I learned to stay cool and calm in most situations.

If my parents are having an argument I will bring up things I learned at Waves and explain it to them.

Eight individuals simply commented that they have discussed the program with their parents:

I tried to talk to my dad about it.

My mom and I talk about it often.

My parents were, of course, curious as to what I had been learning, and I was happy to share.

A final eight students described trying to use the skills to a limited degree, with mixed results:

Tried to use conflict resolution. Sometimes works, sometimes doesn't.

Tried.

My dad and I can talk civilized if we have an argument. Doesn't work with my mother.

Four of the 16 adults commented on using the program materials with family members: R+R = 1, Fourth R+ 1, Making Waves = 3.

I am more aware of how I speak to others when I feel there is conflict and I try to use assertive communication more.

Giving advice to my children on what to accept and definitely not accept in a relationship and what to look for in a partner.

My children.

Using Program Information with Teachers or Other Adults

Another possible generalization of the program skills is using them with adults including teachers. The survey asked, "Have you used the program information and skills with other adults such as teachers?"

Table 43: Used Program Information with Teachers/Other Adults?

	No	Yes	Total
Students	219 (76%)	69 (24%)	288
Adults	4 (36.4%)	7 (63.6%)	11
Total	223 (74.6%)	76 (25.4%)	299

Table 44: Students' Use of Program Information with Adults by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	97 (74.0%)	34 (26%)	131
HRY	78 (78.8%)	21 (21.2%)	99
Making Waves	18 (60%)	12 (40%)	30
Fourth R	26 (92.9%)	2 (7.1%)	28
Total	219 (76%)	69 (24%)	288
Pearson chi-square = 9.8, p = .026; Cramer's V = .18, a weak effect			

Overall, only 20% of students reported using the program information with teachers or other adults. However, students from Making Waves/Vague par vague reported using the information to a greater degree than students from the other programs ().

A smaller number of students (N = 34) commented on this area: R+R = 19; HRY = 7; Fourth R = 1; Making Waves = 7. The most common theme was examples of using the program information with teachers and other adults (n = 22).

If I've ever had a disagreement, or felt like something an adult or teacher has said was inappropriate/offensive I've talked it out with them, so they can understand the negative effects of the things they've said and how it makes one feel.

Trying to understand both sides. Stay patient and find a way to resolve the problem.

Keeps me calm and able to express myself rationally.

One of my teachers would abuse her authority and finally my SWOVA leaders helped give me courage to talk to her.

I respect them and don't complain or talk back.

I know how to state my boundaries and concerns without being disrespectful.

I am definitely more assertive and confident in myself when I deal with teachers and employers as a result of going through SWOVA's R+R program.

The information is very useful and you can take it back to your school and use it in your classes.

One student claimed that the skills did not work with teachers or other adults. Another three described working together with teachers to present the Making Waves/Vague par vague materials to other students.

Nous avons fait des présentations en avant des enseignants. (We have made presentations for our instructors)

I worked a lot with teachers to bring more of the Making Waves information to other students.

While still in high school I used the information as material in a Sociology class. I adapted the presentations given at the Making Waves weekend for class presentations.

Six of the 16 adult survey respondents commented about using the materials with teachers or other adults: R+R = 1; Making Waves = 5.

Any time information is needed for a course at school concerning this subject matter, I make the information available.

I have told other teachers about the Making Waves group and encouraged them to invite them into the school.

I found the program information useful for a colleague's sociology class. She used some of the information in her teaching.

I have passed the information on to other teachers.

Program Impacts

The next set of questions attempt to gauge the impact of the programs on students, schools and community. Again, these were not necessarily anticipated consequences, since they go far beyond assisting students to develop healthier relationships. However, several program personnel suggested that these broader impacts are worth examining.

Table 45: Program Impact on Students in your School

	No	Yes	Total
Students	92 (37.7%)	152 (62.3%)	244
Adults	1 (7.1%)	13 (92.9%)	14
Total	93 (36%)	165 (64%)	258

The survey respondents were asked, "Has the program information had an impact on students in your school in any way?" Across programs (see Table 45), about two-thirds of the students perceived an effect of the program on other students in their schools.

Table 46: Students' Perceptions of Program Affecting Students by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	30 (25.4%)	83 (73.5%)	113
HRY	41 (50%)	41 (50%)	82
Making Waves	6 (20%)	24 (80%)	30
Fourth R	15 (78.9%)	4 (21.1%)	19
Total	92 (37.7%)	152 (62.3%)	244
Pearson chi-square = 29.0; p < .000; Cramer's V = .35, a strong effect			

However, there was a statistically significant difference between programs such that students from R+R and Making Waves/Vague par vague saw more impact on students, especially as compared to students from the Fourth R.

Ninety-five students commented on the extent to and ways in which they perceived the healthy relationship program affecting students in their schools: SWOVA = 51; HRY = 21; Fourth R = 2; Making Waves = 20. Two comments were negative.

I know this isn't yes, but I feel I should tell you why it wasn't. It hasn't because our group sucks. We haven't done anything to raise awareness at our school, so these people know just as much about relationship abuse as we did before we went to Making Waves (very little).

We did not get PE (Physical Education).

Eleven students wrote comments that either identified minimal changes or stated that they could not assess whether there were changes.

To the few that I felt we reached maybe...but there was not widespread adoption of what we brought back.

Only in small scales though.

However, the majority of the comments (n = 62) were with respect to improvements in awareness or attitudes:

I definitely see the difference between students who have gone through SWOVA and those who have not. Those who have gone through have a heightened awareness of relationship abuse, interpersonal conflict and social justice.

We've worked on poster campaigns and ways to get the information out to all the students. Helping them to see what a healthy relationship is and isn't.

Students are more comfortable being themselves than other schools I've been to.

Students respect themselves more and know how they should be treated.

The media is not such a huge factor. People can be what they want to be.

I think people think a bit more about rights and choices, and are more accepting.

I don't know if it's actually the R+R program, but students in our school are extremely understanding and accepting to other "races".

We are a very respectful school.

Giving them self-confidence.

They have thought about the other feelings of people.

Our MW team created a poster with the signs of an unhealthy relationship. The next day, a student informed the adult leader of the group that she had broken up with her boyfriend because she realized she was in an unhealthy relationship.

We made some people cry they were so emotional on the subject. It was very profound.

When I used to deliver presentations with the Making Waves group, we would share personal stories with younger children about what we went through. I would have so many children find me after and tell me their stories, some would break my heart. Some just needed someone to talk to who understood them. It made me feel so good as a person to have made an impact and to let them know that they are not alone.

*The Making Waves group within my own high school is still gaining recognition within the school, but we've done presentations such as the play (*The Many Faces of Abuse*), as well as a PowerPoint for the entire school on the different types of abuse. It was information that the students really seemed interested in, and afterwards we received a lot of positive feedback.*

Il eu des rencontres avec certains membres de notre école qui voulaient me parler de leurs relations abusive. (I met with certain people from my school who spoke to me about their abusive relationships)

Moins d'intimidation. (Less bullying.)

It has helped a lot of people. They have learned a lot of stuff they would not have at home or anywhere else.

I think so. It takes time for youth patterns to change, but I saw the material effect my friends and I see it in my younger sibling who went through the program as a student.

We used the information in our Peer Mediation program when we came across situations where students were in unhealthy relationships that they wanted out of.

Another thirteen comments were with respect to utilizing the skills in various situations. Having the information about skills is an important first-step in learning, but actually putting the skills into practice is even more critical: A step beyond awareness.

For some yes, for others, no. But some know how to better handle a situation that they are in because of the skills provided.

The information we brought back helped get many people out of unhealthy relationships.

It probably did. I noticed some of the guys stopped acting so immature.

I think changing some students' opinions makes a huge impact on what they do.

We started groups for women, Inspire groups and GBS and T people.

Of particular note, six students mentioned reduced homophobia:

Lowers levels of gratuitous homophobic comments, I think.

I think it has probably made people more comfortable in portraying whether or not they like boys or girls.

Students started to express themselves without fear of being ridiculed or attacked verbally/physically. One student even started the "Gay-Straight Alliance," a student-led group creating awareness of the gay community and to help students feel safer about coming out.

Twelve of the 16 adult survey respondents commented on program impacts on students in their schools: R+R = 2; Fourth R = 1; Making Waves = 9. Six adults commented about the awareness and information about health relationships in their schools:

Hopefully yes, through student interactions with the participants, and students and staff knowing that the goals of Making Waves are embraced by the school as a whole.

They have been introduced to the information and hopefully will recognize signs in their own relationships or in watching their peers.

Any information is valuable when it comes to starting and stopping relationships and having the knowledge to help them be confident in the choices they make.

They are more aware of relationship issues and how to handle these.

Created awareness about the topic.

The comments of the other six adults referred more to actions or observations of changes with respect to their students.

Have language they are using.

I feel they are making healthier choices in their relationships.

Some are coming more respectful. Other students have joined the group when we do activities.

Les élèves du programme Vague par vague présentent aux autres élèves de l'école, atelier fait par des jeunes pour des jeunes. (The Vague par vague students presented the workshop to the other students, made by students for students.)

The two students who went to the conference want to go back. They have done a good job spreading the word. Others are interested in attending next year.

Program's Impact on School

The survey respondents were asked, "Has the program information had an impact on your school in any way?" Considering the responses of both adults and students, almost 60% believed that the program has impacted their schools. By inspection, the adults were more likely to agree with this than the students.

Table 47: Program Impact on School

	No	Yes	Total
Students	98 (42,2%)	134 (57.8)	132
Adults	2 (13.3%)	13 (86.6%)	15
Total	100 (40.5%)	147 (59.5%)	247

Table 48: Students' Use of Program Information with School by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	29 (27.1%)	78 (72.9%)	107
HRY	44 (55%)	36 (45%)	80
Making Waves	8 (33.3%)	16 (66.7%)	24
Fourth R	17 (81%)	4 (19%)	21
Total	98 (42.2%)	134 (57.8%)	232
Pearson chi-square = 29.1; p < .000; Cramer's V = .35, a strong effect			

Across programs, more than half of the students perceived an effect of the program on their school. However, as before, there was a statistically significant difference between programs such that students from R+R and Making Waves saw more impact on their schools, especially as compared to students from the Fourth R.

Eighty four students wrote additional comments with respect to the impact of the healthy relationship programs on their schools: SWOVA = 51; HRY = 17; Fourth R = 2; Making Waves = 13. The five negative comments primarily repeated previous complaints such as not being able to have physical education classes:

The majority of comments (n = 59) reported improvements in awareness and behaviours, rather similar to the responses to the previous question about effects on students. In fact, eight additional individuals simply wrote, "see the above."

Made others in abusive relationships hope in finding a resolution, knowing they can get help.

The teachers seem more aware of what's happening and understand better.

I believe people are more aware of others around them.

The students in our school heard about the program and had many questions for us and they all seemed to be satisfied with answers we gave them. Many were interested in attending the program.

It has taken up our PE block but it helps keep the school healthy.

L'école comprend plus qu'il y a différentes sortes de relations malsaines. (The school understands more about different types of relationship abuse).

It's made the whole school aware of how situations can be dealt with more effectively.

It brings us together as a school community.

We make sure everyone has the information they need and the help they need.

You just see it.

To help the students with everything that we had learned through this program everything that you said was true and happens a lot.

Less bullying, judgment and more understanding.

Starting to develop more open policies, and acknowledge different issues.

I don't know but kids have changed.

Two students mentioned that the difference was apparent if one looked over time, an important consideration.

You can see a difference in the kids over time.

Yes, but progressively over the years.

One student made a unique response that inadvertently endorses the impact of the program:

I don't think SWOVA is needed here because there isn't much hatred, racism, homophobia etc.

Nine of the 16 adult survey respondents commented on the program's impact on their schools, although four of these simply referred to earlier positive comments they had written: R+R= 2; Fourth R= 1; Making Waves = 6. The comments all implied that the program had impacted the school, especially the students.

They are more aware of healthy and unhealthy relationships. More respectful of others.

Students recognize bullying sooner/easier.

Students are more aware of the cycle of violence and healthy relationships.

Les élèves sont au courant de l'existant de Vague par vague et de la violence dans les relations. (Students know about Vague par vague and about relationship violence)

How can it not? They know the concepts.

Program Impact on the Community

The survey included the following question, "Has the program information had an impact on your community in any way?" Across adult and student respondents about two-thirds responded "no." The adults more often responded that the community had been impacted by the program information.

Table 49: Program Impact on Community

	No	Yes	Total
Students	155 (67.1%)	76 (32.9%)	231
Adults	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	8
Total	157 (65.7%)	82 (34.3%)	239

Table 50: Student Views of the Program Effect on Community

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	54 (52.4%)	49 (47.6%)	103
HRY	68 (79.1%)	18 (20.9%)	86
Making Waves	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	20
Fourth R	21 (95.5%)	1 (4.5%)	22
Total	155 (67.1%)	76 (32.9%)	231
Pearson chi-square = 24.1; p < .000; Cramer's V = .32, a strong effect			

Across programs, about one-third of the students perceived an effect of the program on their community. As before, there was a statistically significant difference between programs such that students from R+R and Making Waves/Vague par vague saw more impact on community, especially as compared to students from the Fourth R.

Forty-six students wrote additional comments with respect to the impact of the healthy relationship programs on their communities: SWOVA = 31; HRY = 7; Fourth R = 0; Making Waves = 8.

Several students (11) were unsure or diffident about whether the program had impacted their communities:

It was within the school that we had the program. I'm not sure if it affected the community at all.

For our community it has made somewhat of an impact.

I really don't know. It might but most people haven't heard about the program.

I don't really know. Maybe just it being in the community.

The majority of the comments (n = 33) suggested that the healthy relationship program had, indeed, affected the community.

I think the biggest impact is within the schools and the youth community, but I know it has also touched the Saltspring Island RCMP, among others. I know representing youth and SWOVA at school board meetings blew some peoples socks off as well. I was involved in the program a long time ago so all the results were just beginning to show. I can only assume and hope the impact has continued to grow.

The community has seen many events held by SWOVA, and has given bloom to other programs. One I was involved in creating was a sexual exploitation awareness workshop that we taught to Grade 8s and 9s.

Through the school and how the students have further spread the information.

Le message fut passé par présentations et de bouche à oreille. (The message has spread through presentations and by word-of-mouth.)

The media made presentations more public, and I think the community was glad to know that these issues were being addressed.

We are small community so we are all close and it helps out; it shows people we want to learn about it.

Given more comfort/freedom for gay/lesbians.

We learned ways to get along as a community.

It's taught the community to deal with things healthily and responsibly.

Teaching healthy resolutions to problems that can affect the community.

SWOVA is a big thing here. A lot of people practice what they learn.

I don't know. It just has!

The students live in the community.

PALS students (special needs students in New Brunswick) feel more at ease.

Nine of the 16 adult survey respondents commented about whether the program had an effect on the community: R+R = 3, Making Waves = 6. Three individuals stated that they did not know, "Hopefully, but I am not sure." The other six commented more specifically on ways that they perceived the program as making a community-wide difference:

With informed youth making better decisions it can only have a positive impact on the community

Several local groups attended the sessions. I am sure they were able to bring information to their groups.

Avec la marche contre la violence faites aux femmes (medias). (With the March against gender-based violence [media coverage])

More enlightened students.

As above - for the school community, and perhaps the wider community too.

Program Impact on Leadership Abilities

The survey respondents were asked, "Has the program information affected your leadership abilities in any way?" Leadership is another factor that has not necessarily been associated with healthy relationship programs in general. However, it has specific relevance to the three programs in the current evaluation that utilize youth to teach at least some of the program content (SWOVA's Respectful Relationships, Healthy Relationships for Youth and Making Waves/Vague par vague).

Across programs, a little fewer than half of the students perceived an effect of the program on their leadership abilities.

Table 51: Program Impact on Leadership Abilities

	No	Yes	Total
Students	140 (51.3%)	133 (48.7%)	273
Adults	6 (54.5%)	5 (45.4%)	11
Total	147 (51.4%)	133 (48.7%)	284

Table 52: Students' Leadership Abilities by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	63 (50.4%)	62 (49.6%)	125
HRY	54 (62.1%)	33 (37.9%)	87
Making Waves	2 (5.7%)	33 (94.3%)	35
Fourth R	21 (80.8%)	5 (19.2%)	26
Total	140 (51.3%)	133 (48.7%)	273
Pearson chi-square = 29.3; p < .000; Cramer's V = .39, a very strong effect			

Again, as is apparent in Table 52, there was a statistically significant difference between programs such that students from Making Waves/Vague par vague to a great degree and Respectful Relationships and Healthy Relationship for Youth to a lesser degree saw an impact of the program on their leadership abilities.

Ninety-four students wrote additional comments with respect to the impact of the healthy relationship programs on their communities: SWOVA = 46; HRY = 20; Fourth R = 2; Making Waves = 26.

Thirty-nine students commented on the extent to which the program affected their leadership skills such as facilitation, communication listening skills and empathy.

I improved my leadership skills through the R+R program. I became more comfortable as a public speaker and better at working in a group setting.

The opportunity to be a part of the weekend, as a participant, SAC member, and facilitator has certainly helped me develop social and leadership skills beyond what I had before.

I'm more empathetic and will think of how others feel.

It has abled (sic) me to respond and communicate better.

Don't be afraid to be heard. That is the best way for people to understand.

Meilleur communication avec les autres. (Better communication with others.)

Thirty-five students commented that the programs had given them improved confidence, and assertiveness,

Yes, I can comfortably speak in public and have the confidence to voice my opinion and debate my view. I also can confidently stand up for the "underdog" who is being picked on.

Yes, finally I can say what it HAS affected! I feel so much more helpful now. People can come to me for information, and I actually have the answers for once!

Made me more confident and helped me feel like I could help others. I do this all the time now and I feel like SWOVA helped nurture my passion for helping.

Thanks to the role playing and talks with the class my confidence has shot through the roof.

Being a part of the Student Advisory Committee/Alumni Committee [Making Waves] gave me the chance to develop my public speaking skills and learning about the actual content gave me extra confidence in that area.

Yes. I feel much more comfortable speaking in public and stating my opinion. I also feel more confident about leading seminars and taking to not only my peers, but to adults as well.

I was extremely shy before I became a part of Making Waves. Part of my duties as a member of the SAC and the AC required me to come out of my shell a bit. I am extremely grateful for this. I am now able to give good talks and presentations, and am confident in my abilities to do so.

Nineteen students made comments that were more general with respect to leadership:

I have gone on to be involved in many non-profit organizations, and am now working with children. Participating in Making Waves has had a huge part in developing my leadership skills.

Given me a chance to show leadership.

If someone is being bullied, I will stand up for them. People do not have the right to think they are better than anyone else.

I have learned to be more organized, and also can learn and accept adversity and look at the differences in people as good things rather than bad things, and have learned how to be a leader in many situations.

As a community leader today, I often reference my experience with the program in developing my leadership skills.

I feel comfortable talking to students my age but also students who are younger, and adults about relationships. I want to help, and when we know the information, it's that much easier to help.

I am able to facilitate discussions, direct a large group and teach from a curriculum.

I have taught as a youth facilitator. It made me a stronger leader in Air Cadets.

I absolutely believe that since I've been a part of Making Waves I've been able to take more initiative and rise to the occasion more easily now. I have always been seen as a leader in other's eyes but now I see myself as a leader more than before.

Four of the 16 adult respondents commented about ways that the program had impacted their own leadership abilities: Fourth R = 1; Making Waves = 3.

I feel more confident sharing information about relationships in the Grade 8 curriculum and with helping students with questions from any grade.

Better communicator.

More confidence.

Program Effect on Career Choice

Another survey question that inquires about outcomes beyond the scope of most healthy relationship programs, but that was suggested by several of the evaluation program partners was, "Has the program information affected your career choices in any way?"

Table 53: Program Impact on Career Choices

	No	Yes	Total
Students	247 (87.6%)	35 (12.4%)	282
Adults	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	10
Total	256 (87.7%)	36 (12.3%)	292

Table 54: Students' Career Choices Affected by Program

	No	Yes	Total
R+R	116 (87.9%)	16 (12.1%)	132
HRY	80 (87.9%)	11 (12.1%)	91
Making Waves	25 (80.6%)	6 (19.4%)	31
Fourth R	26 (92.9%)	2 (7.1%)	29
Total	247 (87.6%)	35 (12.4%)	282
Pearson chi-square = 2.1; p = .55			

Across programs (see Table 53), only a minority of students saw any impact on their career choices because of the healthy relationship program. There was not a statistically significant difference between students from different programs on this item.

Twenty-six students wrote additional comments with respect to the impact of the healthy relationship programs on their career choices: SWOVA = 13; HRY = 5; Fourth R = 1; Making Waves = 7. Apart from one negative comment with respect to the question of interest, did the program affect your career choices in any way ("hell no!") and two students who responded "maybe," the most common theme (n = 17) was identifying a specific career, primarily teaching or counselling.

I want to help others so I plan to be a high school teacher so I can be in a similar situation with students.

Je sais que je veux aller dans le domaine de la psychologie. (I wish to study psychology).

I currently study criminology and am interested in victim offender mediation, a model of conflict resolution that I feel is in-line with SWOVA's mandate.

After I got a taste in SWOVA, knew I always wanted to feel like the work I was doing was having an impact. I worked for the government in schools.

I used to hate people jobs (e.g. SWOVA workers, therapists, psychologists). Now I am interested in psychology.

[The program] added to the assurance that I want to work with children in a learning atmosphere.

I want to be a counsellor. I want to make the world a better place.

I am now working with children, with the intention of soon working in High Schools. I use the information I learned through Making Waves to inform how I interact with the children. (The ideas of gender roles, etc)

I am currently a master's student in experimental psychology. Throughout my undergraduate career, I conducted research projects concerning dating violence, and I applied to several master's programs to continue this research.

A further six students commented on more general ways that the program had affected their career choices:

No matter what my career choice is, I will use the knowledge that I gained from Making Waves throughout my life, for instance, when raising my family or in any of my relationships!

I want to be involved with a career/company that practices non-violence, one that is open, and green. I will not work with individuals or companies who are homophobic, abusive (verbally or physically,) and not conscious of the environment. I like to align my own morals or feelings with that of my workplace.

I hadn't anticipated that SWOVA would have such a profound effect on my program of study and lifestyle choices!

How to handle bosses and other situations.

Making Waves will shape a lot of decisions in my life.

The question about career choice was not one that was anticipated to apply to the adult survey respondents. However, one of the teachers had previously attended Making Waves and had the following statement about its effect on her career choice:

I became a teacher so that I could be involved in programs such as Making Waves and help students who may be facing difficult relationship and everyday life decisions.

In summary, previous evidence on the efficacy of such programs has been limited to about one year-post program. That a number of former program student and adult participants have such positive comments about the impact on their lives several years later is impressive. They noted improvements two or more years later, and ones that impacted not only their intimate partner relationships but those with their friends, family members, adults and bosses.

Concluding Questions

The final sets of questions are about the program in general and constitute what many see as consumer satisfaction. For example, "how pleased were you with the program generally" and "would you recommend this program to others?" The results of these questions are presented with both adult and student comments. As before, because of the small number of adults, statistical tests were not performed on the data.

The first question was with respect to knowing more about how to keep relationships happy (see Table 55). Across students and adults, 90.6% of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 55: I know more about how to keep my relationships healthy

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
Adult	4 (57.1%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	0	7
Student	84 (27.8%)	190 (62.9%)	21 (7%)	7 (2.3%)	302
Totals	88 (28.5%)	192 (62.1%)	22 (7.1%)	7 (2.3%)	309

With respect to whether the program participants now are more likely to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship, 90.1% of the students and adults agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case (see Table 56).

Table 56: I know more about the signs of an abusive relationship

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
Adult	4 (44.4%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	9
Student	105 (34.5%)	169 (55.6%)	24 (7.9%)	6 (2%)	304
Totals	109 (34.8%)	173 (55.3%)	25 (8%)	6 (1.9%)	313

The data in Table 57 are with respect to whether the program participants know where to seek help if necessary. Across students and adults, 82.6% endorsed this item or strongly endorsed it, a somewhat smaller proportion than positively answered the previous two questions.

Table 57: I know more about where to get help

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
Adult	5 (62.5%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	8
Student	70 (23.7%)	173 (58.6%)	43 (14.6%)	9 (3.1%)	295
Totals	75 (24.8%)	175 (57.8%)	44 (14.5%)	9 (3%)	303

In response to a question about the friendliness and approachability of the program adult facilitators or teachers (see Table 58), 87% agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 58: The adult facilitators/teachers were friendly and approachable

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
Adult	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6
Student	103 (34.2%)	158 (52.5%)	24 (8%)	16 (5.3%)	301
Totals	108 (35.2%)	159 (51.8%)	24 (7.8%)	16 (5.2%)	307

Asked whether the program adult facilitators or teachers were helpful and supportive (see Table 59), 87.8% agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 59: The adult facilitators/teachers were helpful and supportive

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
Adult	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6
Student	94 (32.4%)	160 (55.3%)	25 (8.6%)	11 (3.8%)	290
Totals	99 (33.4%)	161 (54.4%)	25 (8.4%)	11 (3.7%)	296

With respect to an item on whether the adult facilitators or teachers were sensitive to culture (see Table 60), 88.3% of students and adults agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 60: The adult facilitators/teachers were sensitive to my culture

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
Adult	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6
Student	88 (33.1%)	146 (54.9%)	22 (8.3%)	10 (3.8%)	266
Totals	91 (33.5%)	149 (54.8%)	22 (8.1%)	10 (3.7%)	272

A key question with respect to consumer satisfaction is whether program participants would recommend the program to others, in this case, students (see Table 61). Across adults and students, 87.4% of the survey respondents would agree or strongly agree with this statement.

Table 61: I would recommend this program to other students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
Adult	7 (58.3%)	4 (33.3%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	12
Student	104 (35.1%)	148 (50%)	25 (8.4%)	19 (6.4%)	296
Totals	111 (36%)	152 (49.4%)	26 (8.4%)	19 (6.2%)	308

In summary, the responses to these final, more general consumer satisfaction survey questions are overwhelmingly positive. These results, along with the responses to the survey overall and the multitude of comments that provide rationale and context for endorsing the healthy relationship programs, speak to the power of these interventions.

Chapter Five: Do the Programs Make a Difference?

“There’s too much focus on the extreme examples and not enough credit given to just giving people the ability to look at things differently and what a huge difference that could make.” (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

This chapter presents information from the qualitative individual interviews and focus groups with respect to the overarching question for the evaluation, “Do the programs make a difference, either in the short or the long-term?” The themes were raised by students, youth facilitators, teachers and other school staff and program staff.

Although the themes mirror those that emerged from the survey, in most instances, the interviewees explained their reactions and perceptions in more depth and with added context, as compared to the written survey comments. Some quotes are fairly detailed; these were included to keep the continuity of the points they were making.

Immediate Impact of Program from Adult Perspectives

A number of the adults described changes that they had observed in students during or shortly after participating in the healthy relationship programs. Notably, the changes that they perceived were all positive.

The school is amazing. The difference is unbelievable. I worked with youth in really poor neighbourhoods in Vancouver and Saanich. Trying to run this program there would be suicide and it’s desperately needed. I was amazed when I first started working here how the kids are into it. They want to talk about this stuff desperately, you can see it. At first they’re hesitant and they pretend to be, “This is really uncool” but once you get past that wall, they spew it out. They really want to talk. (R+R staff)

On Friday, first there’s the play and then games. Two boys in the group started rating and putting down the girls. Incredibly derogatory and I couldn’t really address it at that point. Then we played a game where everyone had to close their eyes and walk through the room. It was an icebreaker. But these guys were pinching girl’s bums. Basically harassing. I did say, “This is inappropriate. We’re going to ask you to leave if you do it again”. Over the next 24 hours, I saw the biggest transformation I’ve ever seen in two boys. They were the last two to leave. They came around with tears in their eyes saying what a change they’d had and I heard from other people that it was the talking groups that changed them. I guess kids challenged them. They told me that it was a life-changing experience for them. So respectful, their language changed and everything. It couldn’t have been contrived because these were tough looking kids. They were very young. Then they were very instrumental in the follow-up activities, back at their school. They made sure that activities happened. They got to see that people were trying to show them respect and involve them. I think that’s what did it. They got to see that people valued them. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

Grade 9s think that harassing other students is funny. You hear a lot of, “I was just being funny,” “I just called them gay.” There’s a lot of excuses and even parents will say, “If you were just joking, it should be OK.” The Fourth R changes that because they have to play the role of the victim. They say you can’t build empathy but playing the roles of all in a bullying situation where other students are saying “No, that’s not OK,” lets Grade 9s know that it’s not a joke. In real life, when all of their friends are supporting them in the good roles, it gives them more self confidence and understanding. I’ve seen that happen. Permission to say, “That’s not OK,” because they know that their peers don’t think it’s OK. It’s so much less threatening in the practice environment. I’ve seen that change in Grade 9s. (Fourth R staff)

[For] the talking groups, they got to write their own questions to ask the other kids. What amazed me was that when someone would say something inappropriate, the challenges came from who you wouldn’t [expect]. They were usually quite respectful. The success of Making Waves, it’s not rocket science. You treat people the way you want to be treated, including people younger than you. (Making Waves Board)

We do a workshop on verbal abuse and what they are experiencing in the school. Often it's, "It's a pretty good school. We don't experience that much." They write all the words that they hear day-to-day. You would not believe the list. It's atrocious, the names, the swears. They're usually shocked to see the really terrible stuff. So verbal is prevalent. But, there's a new awareness of it. The students are starting to speak up a bit more. They know that it's unacceptable. There's more a culture around knowing that's not acceptable and stepping up and supporting friends. (R+R staff)

It's really worthwhile, because they set up a trusting environment; I'm surprised at the reticent boys who are happy to take part in the discussions. I think I'm pretty well-connected to the kids but they surprise me sometimes with revelations about their family situations. So if you want the kids to be thinking and discussing in that group atmosphere, they are very effective. (R+R school personnel)

There's always some disclosures that really made a huge difference in somebody. They would say they wouldn't have bothered talking about it because they think nobody would care about it or it's an issue that you never talk about. So it's more bringing it up out of the blue. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

In addition to low rates of physical violence, if you were to talk to not only kids on our Youth Team, but if you walked the hall and did random, "Is this violence?," they have a savvy understanding of violence as not just physical, that it can be emotional, sexual, verbal. In this culture, that's pretty savvy for youth. A lot of adults don't have that understanding. That creates a community where people feel accountable. Not that all the kids are best buddies, but there's a standard of basic respect that I think differs from other school communities. (R+R staff)

The kids are actually different when they leave on Sunday. The biggest example was the Alt Ed (Alternative Education or PAL) kids. The barriers were so magnified to begin with [but] it has the exact same effect on them. They got there feeling different or excluded from kids in the regular school system. But they left with the exact same impact: the barriers had been broken and they left best friends with the other kids. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

I love it when things hit them (laughs). My favourite is doing the "He said/she said". This last one I did a group of girls. One of the questions is, "What's the best thing about being a girl?" The girls start out saying, "I love shopping" and, "We get to look pretty..." You go along, you write it down but gradually they start to realize that there's more to themselves. A couple of times, you can just see girls having this sudden realization like, "Oh, there's real things about being a girl that I really like that don't have to do with shoes." (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

One individual simply noted the extent to which students and teachers remembered the program years afterwards:

Sandy Byers evaluated our program. I helped, phoning students and teachers. What struck me was how strong it still was with them, especially the young people. They still were committed and talked about it as something that was very valuable to their lives. Most of the teachers felt the same. They were very, very impressed with the program. Some of the people I talked to were in it 5 or 6 years ago, so that speaks to the validity of the program. (Making Waves Board member)

Experiences as Youth Facilitators

One important aspect of these healthy relationships programs has been the opportunity for some students to take leadership roles as youth facilitators. Answers to the question, "What difference did that make to the students who took on those responsibilities?" is the focus of this section.

A number of the students and two adults who had previously been youth facilitators described their experiences or the role of the youth in their particular programs:

The Youth Team experience a lot of cool things. I was there for Evelyn White [author] and we got to do a school transgendered workshop last year and extra ones inside the Youth Team. I've learned so much going to classrooms and all the facilitation skills... Going on the Youth Team was a great decision. We are cool and I like that. We're going to carry our school forward. I've had students of all ages come to me, "I heard you were in the Youth Team" or "I need help". It's good to know how to talk to them and it's pretty amazing, especially when the same kids that say, "I hate SWOVA" come to you, "I need some help." Everyone likes it but they won't actually speak about it. (R+R student female)

I was a mentor, so once a week for an hour over lunch hour, we would meet, just a group of us, and hang out and talk. It was fun. I met a lot of other students I'd never talked to before. It was loosely designed. There wasn't a lot of pressure to talk about specific things. There were certain games that they wanted us to play to get to know each other better. [I: Did the students ask for advice around relationship issues?] I never encountered that as a mentor. Rarely, students came up to me and were asking my advice. But I know that has happened in the other high schools that run peer mentoring. It does happen, it just didn't happen to me. (Fourth R student female)

It (R+R) made a huge different in my own confidence. By the end of high school, I was speaking in front of assemblies. If you had asked me at the beginning of Grade 10 whether I ever would have ever stood in front of a class and done a workshop by choice, I never would have. (R+R previous student female)

(Student Advisory Committee members) are still in high school, and the students are still their peers, which is one reason that students relate so well to our workshops. They recognize the amount of respect. The way that we're trying to empower them is to say, "We want to talk about what's really going on in your life." We're not talking by textbook; we're not talking like your parents or teachers. We want to talk about how things really are. The Student Advisory Committee can say, "This is what's working for students," or "When we go back to our school, this is what people were raving about." (Making Waves former student)

They feel more comfortable talking around us because we're not teachers. We're so much closer in age. Programs make people willing to talk about what's going on. People feel comfortable enough to talk about something like that. Knowing that there's other people that can help them if they're in a bad situation. Knowing that, they might be more willing to talk to one of us. (HRY student female)

Several students described their reasons for becoming a youth facilitator:

I was always interested in helping people. Relationships are a big deal with me. So I learned about it and I got to teach it. It was interesting. (HRY student)

This is my first year here. I've been at boarding school the last two years. Saltspring has its own little society and I don't think it's quite like the real world. But it's more like the real world than [boarding school] was. It's amazing how much this type of program can really influence you and people around you. It's a great program. It's really taught me a lot. (R+R student female)

It was more about helping people. A new experience. I'm kind of interested in teaching. I wanted a taste of that. When we had our Healthy Relationships we had a student come in. It just seemed interesting to be on the other side of it. I was curious. I wanted to do that. (HRY student)

I teach Cadets. I love teaching and want to be a teacher. So having a chance to help with the younger kids. I found it very rewarding to be able to communicate with them and it makes things a lot easier in the school. (HRY student male)

Further, several students mentioned challenges associated with taking on that role:

I'm likin' it. It's kind of hard since like they're close to my age and I'm friends with a lot of them. So it's hard to like, "OK, you guys, I can't joke around like that" like I have to be the facilitator person. But I'm likin' it. (HRY student)

It was mostly helping out. They have people who have done it for quite a few years. [I: Could you have been used more?] Yeah, definitely. (Making Waves student male)

It depends on the kids. Some people have problems. Different things you'll talk about, some of the students might have those issues at home. It makes it harder for the students and for the facilitators if they bring it up. (HRY student female)

[I: Did they listen to you?] Not all the time. But, you get around it. We play games with what we're teaching to make it fun and interesting. It's easier to learn when you're doing something that is fun instead of just sitting there and listening. (HRY student male)

Difference having been a Youth Facilitator

This section documents the reported impact of having been a youth facilitator for the healthy relationship programs. The majority of the comments from students were positive about the experience in general:

It gives you a better understanding of certain things and makes you think before you say stuff so you don't hurt someone else's feelings. (HRY student female)

I think before I talk more than I used to because there could be somebody that it would be offensive to. (HRY student female)

It's neat being on both sides of it; when you're helping to facilitate you've got another year of answers. Last year's He Said/She Said was very different from this year's. This year's was really serious but we enjoyed it and the Bridging the Gap, the one where students tell adults stuff and the adults tell students things, was much different. So it's neat having both years of that. This year, Bridging the Gap was super intense. One of the adults ended up crying because of one of the questions we asked her. It's very real. We had some comical ones but there were serious questions, too. We were all having fun. (Making Waves student female)

I liked doing it and the meetings were always fun. Meeting new people: It's fun; it's a good learning experience to be a teacher. (HRY student female)

That was lots of fun. It was kind of the same, except we had more responsibilities. The activities were fun to put on rather than to see. But we knew what effect we got from it so we wanted the same effect on the newcomers. (Making Waves student male)

Confidence, too. I don't think I would have considered myself able to teach people. You just grow confident. Even in the class with the students talking about subjects with their classmates, it feels like it brings them together almost like a team, which is good for the class. (HRY student female)

One of the things in the Youth Team that we're really working on is self awareness, self worth. If you have those skills to better yourself in relation to yourself then it's a lot easier, relating to other people. (R+R student female)

Several adults described differences that they perceived in some of the youth facilitators over time:

The Youth Team has been a real bonus for this school because we've got kids who are learning some really important facilitation and leadership skills around some pretty sensitive issues. (R+R school personnel)

This program is worth its weight in gold just for the effect it's having on the Youth Facilitators, let alone the actual students the program is aimed for. (HRY staff)

The youth teams, they're dazzling kids pretty much. Probably dazzling before they got in the door and dazzling in the context of the work that they're doing, especially the ones that really connect to it. Most have a pretty high degree of self confidence about what they can do if they go into the classroom. (R+R staff)

Even if kids aren't leaders in the typical ways, there's a level of just "presentness" or being reasonable or able to negotiate. Negotiate would be a big one that, when people come out of the program, they have those skills and tools. (R+R staff)

Student Reactions to Youth Facilitators

A number of the students, both youth facilitators and non-facilitators, commented about their reactions to having youth assisting in the presentation of the healthy relationship program materials. All saw the youth involvement as a very positive aspect of the programs.

[Does it make a difference hearing this from somebody close in age?] Definitely, because we're also going through stuff. You're more likely to listen to someone closer to your age. Someone who is older, you might think, "They're just telling you that." Easier to trust us too, because less communication barriers. You can talk to them a lot easier, I find. (HRY student)

Student Advisory Committee members come back and teach. When you bring new people in, they take what they learned from last year and it all flows. It's not preachy because it's coming from your peers. We're going through the same things and we want to share it with you. Adults obviously help us teach but it's different than having a teacher who is 10 years older than you, that you're like, "Get it over with, already." You can relate more to somebody the same age or really close. Nothing against adults... (Making Waves student male)

It's great to have a class not taught by teachers. They [students] found it pretty rewarding. I did when I was in them. Probably too, "Maybe we should listen" maybe it's interesting if we're doing it. You can tell that students are interested because when we're in the hallway some students will come up and, "Are you teaching us today?" We play little games like check-ins and that way we get everyone to talk. The little games, the kids enjoyed; at the same time we're teaching them. "You're now in our session so move your butt." They love that. I find that the students are more open to us. When we first came in, they were kind of sceptical of us teaching them. Now they respect us a lot more. (HRY student)

It's easier to relate to people closer in age than to your teacher. You can say stuff to us that you wouldn't normally tell your teacher. (HRY student female)

It's a good idea, definitely. Younger students don't necessarily want to talk to a teacher; they want someone who can relate to them more. Teachers are exposed to it all the time. Sometimes our guidance counsellors get frustrated with Grade 9'ers who cry over a broken up relationship. (Making Waves student male)

Adult respondents also expressed views with respect to the Youth Facilitators:

Working with the Student Advisory Committee, something that stuck out is they want to stay with the program in some way. I'm still in touch with them. I'll be in a restaurant and have this big hug, because they're just so excited about the program and how much it meant to them. When I do training with the SAC (Student Advisory Committee) they talk about how much it is needed and they got so excited about the information. That stands out so much; how great an impact it had. Sometimes they'd talk about their experiences. Mostly, these kids didn't seem to have personal experience with it. The majority of them talk about friends and how they felt so helpless when friends experience these things and not know how to handle it. So we added a workshop on how to help a friend. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

They're extremely helpful in the classroom. Just their presence is enough sometimes. Just being there, it's a major help. The kids really look up to them and they listen to everything they say. They're ready to take it on; we provide the foundation for them to take on that responsibility and they fill it in. (R+R staff)

The young people move the program forward and keep it fresh and relevant. The play that opens the weekend didn't even have boys in the beginning. They introduced a couple where the female was the abuser. A few years later, they said, "We should have a gay couple" and this came from young people who meet once or twice a year to say, "What needs to happen to keep it relevant". I find it amazing that they brought that forward. It's a totally different play than when it started. (Making Waves Board)

Long-term Involvement of Individuals in Program

One dynamic that stood out with respect to the programs that fostered youth improvement was examples of adults involved as program coordinators who had started their involvement much earlier, often as students. This illustrates the power of the programs to engage youth.

A good example of a long-term benefit is that one of our facilitators is a graduate from this school that went through the SWOVA Program. Now she's a facilitator, which builds a lot of rapport for our students to see one of our ex-students facilitating the program. (R+R school personnel)

I was in the first weekend in '95 and I was in the play, the Many Faces of Abuse, for 3 or 4 years. I started facilitating probably '97 or '96. I've been doing it ever since because I had fun. It made a long-term difference for me and I started when I was a kid. It wasn't a big time commitment and you can see results fairly quickly - you spend a weekend, you could see people changing and making friends. Things happen fast. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

Something clicked in high school that this is where I need to be in my life. I'm not sure I specifically decided, "I'm going to be a youth facilitator." This all fell into place perfectly but the program sort of confirmed what I already knew; that I want to be doing this work and I can be effective in this capacity. So it helped nurture what was already there. I think that's happening with a lot of youth team members and other students who are going through the workshops. (R+R staff)

I went to Making Waves as a student in Grade 10. It was probably 1999. I became a member of the Student Advisory Committee and did that for two years until I graduated high school. I stayed involved in various ways and after a few years started facilitating. Now I facilitate and I'm on the board. (Making Waves Adult Facilitator)

When I started high school, I had been in correspondence for two years and was really, really shy. I wasn't very social and I didn't know a lot of people. Because it was a small island, a lot of people had already known each other for years so it was hard to get into that group. In the end of Grade 10, I started to make a few more friends and be a little more confident. I was interested in becoming a peer counsellor. They do a retreat where you train for the following year. That helped build my confidence. When I came back from that, SWOVA had just posted the job for Youth Facilitators. I was hired and the following year, I was hired as the SWOVA Youth Coordinator. So I actually worked with a lot of their program development and facilitating the workshops. (R+R previous staff)

I was one of the first facilitators and one of the only facilitators to stay attached to the program for its duration. In that program, we were doing Grade 7, 8, 9, and 11. We worked in pairs of male and female facilitators. I worked in one school, but two years into it I started doing both schools. (HRY staff)

Look at [former SAC member]. They're so lucky to have him teaching. He's come up through the program. He was little trickster Kenny in the play and now he's teaching kids in a rural, and not an easy school. He's doing all this Waves stuff there, workshops, all kinds of stuff. (Making Waves Board)

Differences in Students Because of the Programs

While the previous section focused on youth involved in co-facilitating the programs, this section focuses on the "regular" students in the classrooms. The students and adults interviewed in focus groups and individual interviews mentioned both personal and more general differences that they had noticed and that they

attributed to the healthy relationship programs. These differences included students changing their language in conversations, the comfort or confidence level of the students, knowledge and awareness of relationship issues, personal examples and more general school-wide examples.

A commonly reported difference was that students and school staff, as well, were using the respectful language and conflict resolution skills offered in the healthy relationship programs in their conversations or interpreting other's words differently.

We have community standards; I'm noticing that being played out, even in the hallway. People are watching what they're saying and if something is out of line, somebody will say, "You shouldn't say that" or they'll stop them. The Grade 9 lockers are right across from me and they are actually doing that. (HRY student male)

It does make a difference. It gives them more knowledge and, it'll make them think like, "Maybe what I'm saying is offending somebody even though I don't mean it that way". It kind of makes them think before they speak. (HRY student female)

You see the world differently. You see the value of people around you a lot differently in the situations. You hear it a different way now. Everything's interpreted. It's like putting a filter on your ears. (Making Waves student male)

It made a difference, especially with my vocabulary and what I do and don't say. Something that really hit home was the equality thing and talking about homosexuality. It's really eye-opening, I'm still learning things. It has changed me. There's words that I won't say anymore. (HRY student male)

Several teachers and program personnel also commented on the importance of having a common language.

We observed both the teachers and the kids using the same language about the victims, the aggressors, the passive, the language that was in the Fourth R. They enjoyed it, the teachers liked it, the Grade 9's liked it. (Fourth R staff)

Whether SWOVA was the catalyst, it gives us something to rally around; common language and ways of approaching problems with kids. We've got a system that's restorative justice, where parties meet and come to an understanding; working respectfully together to come to a resolution that means that everyone co-exists peacefully in the school. While that could happen without SWOVA, I think that the kids come to the words more easily because they've had the training. They know what we're trying to get to in those meetings. (R+R school personnel)

I hear from teachers that the Youth Team, but also the kids in the program, once they leave the classroom with us, incorporate the different skills. Whether it's conflict resolution or assertiveness or boundaries, kids are using the language. Some teachers have even had the experience of kids saying, "You've crossed my boundary when you talk to me this way," and being able to say, "We learned this in R&R" and negotiating with teachers around power. It takes a certain teacher to be able to step up and feel comfortable. (R+R staff)

[I: Do they utilize those skills?] I think they do. It depends not just on the materials but on the relationships of the teachers with the kids. Whether or not it becomes the fabric of conversation throughout the school year... It's that common language. Kids are using it and the teachers are using it, even when they're not doing a lesson, it comes up in a novel study. It comes up in conversation. It's the same language they're using in the hallway, in the administrator's office. In some places that has happened and I think that there is way more impact than in other places. (Fourth R staff)

Others noted improvements in the comfort or confidence levels of the students.

I've noticed the comfort level. When we first started, the random few love to talk. But some you were too shy. In our last session, I noticed different people expressing themselves. (HRY student)

We know that's where Grade 9's are at mentally. They're more in their relationships than they are in the reading, writing, arithmetic. Yes, those things are important, but they have to be comfortable in their relationships to be able to be comfortable in their classroom. So it doesn't make them necessarily better in math, but it would give them more comfort asking questions in math because they're more comfortable with themselves and their peers. I think it gives them more confidence. (Fourth R staff)

In the first class they held back except for maybe three people. But by the second class, they got comfortable pretty fast, most of them. Except for a few here and there but, the separate genders [session] really helped them. (HRY student)

They grow more comfortable. If someone else is talking, because the ones that you hear are outspoken, they kind of wait, instead of interrupting. They've got more respect for each other. It's a chance to let out what they're thinking because they don't say that very often outside the class. (HRY student female)

A number of the interviewees/focus group participants spoke about improvements in knowledge and/or awareness either for their fellow students or for themselves.

After that weekend, you notice little things that you wouldn't before. Sometimes it can almost bother you because you're seeing something you don't think is healthy for someone else, but they don't see it. (Making Waves student female)

A lot of the Grade 9's aren't knowledgeable when it comes to that, especially the equality thing. It's just important that they talk about it and they get educated [about] genders and sexuality. (HRY student)

But it kind of did make me look at stuff differently and it kind of gave me more respect for myself and people around me. (Making Wave student male)

Absolutely. For younger kids in the community to see that there are resources. Maybe they didn't remember everything from the workshop or maybe they wouldn't get it until the next year but they knew that there were places that they could go if they needed help. (R+R student female)

Aside from meeting these really nice people that I still associate with, I had no idea... dating violence wasn't something I particularly thought about. I realized that this stuff is happening so prominently, but no one assumed it to be dating violence. That's when I realized that it was happening more and more. (Making Waves student male)

I was disappointed in myself after I learned about stereotypes. The town I came from was tiny and I didn't watch a lot of TV, so I wasn't exposed to media and different races. When I saw somebody from a different race, I was like, "They're different." After Waves I was like, "They're the same as us, except a different colour." Also people with different sexual orientation. Generally seeing two girls or two guys hanging onto hands would be radical. I stopped thinking that they were so different than myself. It opened my eyes a lot. (Making Waves student male)

I wouldn't say we're using the skills personally but we're using the skills to teach other people who might be in situations where they need skills. You look at stuff differently after that weekend. One of the activities was you looked in a magazine for things that were inappropriate. You didn't realize it before. It's changed my view on a lot of things. (Making Waves student male)

It helps you redefine relationship abuse. Most people think physical but that's far from true. Everywhere, guys or girls get so possessive of who they're with. You never really think of it as abusive even if you know it's not completely healthy. But after that [weekend], you notice what's unhealthy. It makes you question things like, when you're always together and you don't realize that you've drifted from your friends and, "Maybe we need to redefine what it is." (Making Waves student female)

It helped me get to know other teens better. Through that I found there were different programs around the school that I didn't really know about before. It was mainly stuff like that. (Fourth R student female)

It helped me with people. I have a temper. So, with school, [R+R] helped me understand what other people were going through, why they were doing it, sort of like Psychology 101. For the first couple of years, you're not even aware. Like you're like, "Oh this is fun." Then, as you mature, you start to understand. Even after stuff that I learned last year, like going in and facilitating with the Grade 9s it's like, "Oh I get it" now. I'm out of it; I can see it, "This all makes sense now." (R+R student female)

A number of the respondents provided examples of other students using the materials or speaking with them about relationship issues as a result of the program:

Even my little brother who asks me certain things, he's like, "That's not healthy is it?" My little brother is not that deep. (Laughter.) (Making Waves student)

One young woman student mentioned the session on homophobia and how difficult that had been with one male student who had challenged the youth team throughout. Those who know him mentioned that he has now loosened up a lot. Turns out that his sister is gay. He now hangs out with her and her friends. [I: Did you feel comfortable presenting this? Some would think the teacher should present this]. The student stated her conviction that it is easier for students to hear it from her than from the teacher. (HRY student female)

Someone I knew very well was a victim of dating violence. I didn't really think of it as dating violence until after (MW weekend). I was like, "Now I have tools to help this person. I have contacts and I can talk to the person in different ways." It really helped me out, not only with the dating violence thing. (Making Waves student)

I was seeing signs of an abusive relationships and she wasn't really getting it. I went on the Making Waves website and got the list and showed her. It didn't really work but...we're trying. If you can shine a light at somebody it gives them a bit of hope even, it might not be today, it might not be tomorrow. (Making Waves student male)

Just hearing about my friend's relationships and things that happened, I'm like, "That doesn't - 'You're being controlling'. It's like all these terms are coming to mind and I was like, "I don't think that's right". So if someone says something in my mind I'd be like, "That's verbal abuse." (Making Waves student male)

People that used to be my best friends, I don't talk to because they're very immature. A lot of it had to do with their relationships. It's like so much drama. I'll see them and they tell me the same things I've been hearing for four years and I really don't care. If you can't say anything, don't be around it. The approach I took was, "I'm not going to preach to people." Obviously I can't do anything to help them so I can't be around it all the time. (Making Waves student male)

Other students spoke of the differences that participating in the program had made to their own relationships:

The mentors go through one-day training. They show us how to tackle different situations. I've also done videos for the Fourth R. I believe some were used in health classes to demonstrate healthy relationships and how to deal with certain situations. I was able to blend that into my life to help me deal with bad situations. I hope other younger students watch it and take positive away from it. (Fourth R student female)

It's been several years since Making Waves, but it has been instrumental in the way I deal with problems, like jealousy. Funnily enough, my current girlfriend of three years sometimes gets a little mad because I am always so calm when we get into heated discussions, and I respond with, "This is how I feel," I-statements, etc. I never yell, and if I do something that could have a belittling or an intimidation effect on her. I realize right away and either apologize, or catch it before I say it. As for choices in relationships, I have made my share of bad ones, but I know to never stay in an abusive, unhappy, relationship. I credit a lot of my abilities,

with the people and lessons I learned at Making Waves. I have a strong sensitivity to equality rights for women, which was an underlying message of Waves, justifiably so. I may have gotten more out of the program than some because I got very involved. I always remember my weekends and the ideas that they shared. (Making Waves student male)

They made me think, and I ended my relationship with that person. (Fourth R student)

Other students spoke of noticing more general, school-wide differences:

One thing is sort of the result of SWOVA, gay couples--accepted wholeheartedly in this school. A lot of gay couples have been accepted pretty well. (R+R student)

I play soccer so I know the kids on my team and I've been to some of their schools. I know that what's accepted here would be unheard of in other schools. Here you see these colourful posters advocating great stuff like stopping violence against women and gays, supporting all that. In other schools, you wouldn't see anything like that. If someone saw a poster like that they would look at it with disgust. Rip it down. Only on Saltspring are you going to see stuff that's actually being respected and appreciated and understood. (R+R student male)

It's an amazing program, there's lots of work to do. Like there's lots that can be done to make it better. So that's great, I'm really looking forward. (R+R student male)

Several students and a program staff member commented on how the program affected the career choices of some youth:

After the program, I wanted to help everyone. I looked at people and saw they were having troubles. My friends especially, I wanted to help. We started doing programs at school, like the play. That play was huge; it really opened my eyes to a lot. It was four years ago and still I remember it. So I've been volunteering for a while and helping younger people. Since I started doing programs like this it makes me more apt to do them. So that's a really good benefit. (Making Waves student male)

Out of the whole group of people, I'm sure that weekend had some effect like, "Maybe I should go into psychiatry" or something along the lines. Somebody told me I should be a psychiatrist. (Making Waves student male)

Two have been on the youth team for three years and had four comprehensive years of the classroom, and the leadership and facilitation training as well. It's clear to me that, as they're graduating from high school, they're making choices to go into social services and applying for scholarships about leadership, social justice, personal awareness. Those are the issues that they want central in their lives. That's an indicator that the program has had an impact as they're starting to create what their adult lives are going to look like professionally. (R+R staff)

Adult Observations of Changes to Students

Several adults noted that they had seen changes or had spoken with former program participants who had commented on the difference the program materials had made with respect to their relationships.

I've talked with kids who graduated two or three years ago and are in relationships now and who articulate that part of how they operate within those relationships is based what they received in skills or knowing their rights and what they have to offer in terms of healthy communications. (R+R staff)

I see a difference between these kids and kids in a lot of school districts in how they talk to other kids, how they relate to adults. I don't know exactly what to attribute it to but because I know what they're learning in Respectful Relationships, it looks like this is the result of it. I see it in action, I see them using the skills they've

been taught. It's nice to know that when your kids go to another school in a sports tournament and all the kids there say, "Boy I really like those kids from the Gulf Islands". And people just say, "They're nice, they're friendly." They also do well at the sports, so it's not just a consolation. We get that whenever people visit. (R+R school personnel)

I can recall kids who, in working through a role-play were really poor at it. A few girls lacked self control and were rude, loud, aggressive. It's evident to all the kids that that person doesn't have these skills. The situations are really good; they're what's going on in their lives. This student would just spit back what they wanted to do so we'd have to say, "Let's talk about this". I can remember comments by some of these kids later in the halls, "I'm still getting those communication skills down" or "I'm listening a lot better, Mrs. M." (Fourth R teacher)

It's had a huge impact on the student population. You wouldn't know it this year or last year, but five, six years ago, the kids weren't as, I always think of them as being really kind. We get a lot of that feedback when people come through the door. They're helpful, they're kind, they reach out to people. They see strangers and, "Are you looking for the office?" I don't think that's usual for high school kids. There's probably lots contributing to that but SWOVA is one of them. (R+R school personnel)

Even the students in the classroom, you can tell they're processing, thinking about stuff. It may not make a lot of sense now but in five years when they get to the instance where a friend is going through a bout of relationship violence, maybe it will make a difference. Maybe they'll be able to step in as a friend and help this person or family member who's experiencing violence. That could be big. (R+R staff)

When those kids come through those four years, whether or not they're on the Youth Team, they are part of a school culture. What's happening in middle and high school is foundational for the rest of where they're going. There is a way that the community holds itself that all people who are in it, whether or not they're on the Youth Team, agree to create. I do think that kids who come through the four years of the workshops recall that. They've had four years of being in a high school where the code of conduct supports people having healthy and respectful relationships. (R+R staff)

Especially the Aboriginal projects, some of the stories are compelling. One man came to an early meeting and was quite hostile, "Are you going to come in and do a project for youth for one year and be gone? What kind of commitment are you making?" But over the last couple of years, he cornered Ray and was going on and on about this one particular student saying, "Everybody in the community knows that your program changed that kid's lives and probably saved it." Somebody who was initially very critical is accosting you with these kinds of stories...and then they awarded us their Educator of the Year. (Fourth R staff)

Changes to Adults involved in the Programs

Several key informants also noted instances in which adults made substantial changes that they attributed to the healthy relationship programs.

If you give the teachers enough warning, they adjust and they understand. Actually a lot of them now are, "This is great. This is a good time to sit in on the facilitation and get to know the students in a whole different way." Some of the teachers really, really benefit from this. It's just part of our culture here and people are really accepting and respect what happens. (R+R school personnel)

Doing the research with Sandy [Byers], I was talking to a young teacher. One of the questions was, "Did this have any impact on your life?" She said, "Well I broke off an engagement." (Making Waves Board)

There's a new relevancy. To take those principles and say to teachers, "Some of the crap that you're faced with every day, has to do with what's culturally oppressive." We've seen it with teachers; we've got six intense hours in small groups. One who worked with us was so awakened, she quit her job. (R+R staff)

I think that messages and content on the whole is continued to be used. I know that staff are still talking. It did a lot for our staff. (Fourth R teacher)

Changes to Schools

Several key informants mentioned changes to the schools in which the healthy relationship programs were offered. All of these comments are from students, staff and community representatives from the Respectful Relationships program, a notable dynamic. R+R is the longest of the programs with the most sessions, targeting all students in every school, the likely reason that individuals see it impacting the schools to this extent.

There's a culture of acceptance, diversity and respect in the school. It's very noticeable to almost anybody who enters this space. I don't think that's pure chance. I'm the youngest of three girls in my family and the experience my eldest sister had at this school is absolutely different than the one that I had. I was a student coming in when the program was starting. I personally think that's a testament to the program and to its effectiveness. We learn our behaviours from all different sources. One of them happens to be SWOVA and I'd like to think it's a positive one. (R+R Staff)

I went into the high school and hanging in a very prominent location was a massive banner promoting the Gay/Straight Alliance in the school. That's not so unusual, but it was massive and it was paper and it was hanging on a handrail with tape. In what other school would that still be there, without somebody writing something stupid on it? I asked, "How long do you think that's going to be up?" He said, "Well it's been up for three months." I couldn't believe it. Then I started noticing no vandalism, only accidental vandalism, being a little too rough, but nobody is out wrecking things. Posters aren't written on, they're not torn down. People leave things out, lockers not locked. It's a very, very different place. (R+R school personnel)

We met with the trustees a couple of months ago and had a teacher speak very eloquently about how this program – when this program came in nine years ago there was actual physical violence in the school. She specifically noted that this program is shifting the culture of the school. (R+R staff)

I've delivered [the program] and then, several months down the road after we finished, walked down the hallways and see teachers holding circles. So they're adapting what we've done, bringing that into their classrooms. I would say that most of the teachers deeply value what we're doing. (R+R staff)

A lot of the things we worry about here are so small (laughs). There is such a low level of concern. That's not to say that there isn't violent behaviour but, it's often at the very early end and interventions are how we know that something has even happened, "Such and such was brewing and we intervened and here's the report and it's done now". That's all I've ever seen here for years. Our middle school had a behaviour specialist come who has done a lot of work on system-wide approaches to citizenship and social responsibility especially for middle school. He spent two days in our middle school, it was right after they had just had the youth facilitators in, and he said, "I don't think you need me." So he left. (R+R school personnel)

My high school career was a nightmare. So to see a school functioning as well as it does was amazing. I was really happy to be a part of it. (R+R staff)

Their ability to interact and change the tone of what's happening is interesting to watch. We were in a conference with 400 kids and we took eight kids. They came in and they're different, there's no question. They call adults by their first name, not in disrespect but that's what they do here. They're very comfortable but some people were a little shocked. You could see people looking at them like those strange kids from the Gulf Islands. Then, maybe half an hour later, the kids mixed together and every table had to select a leader to facilitate. At every single table, it was a kid from the Gulf Islands. Every one of the eight was the leader at their table regardless of their age, gender, personality. They're all very different kids. (R+R school personnel)

Changes to Community

Finally, one key respondent described changes to the community that they attributed to the Respectful Relationships program, likely because of the same dynamic noted with respect to impacting the schools—the long-term and wide-spread nature of the program..

In our community, I'm not sure everybody realizes how good they have it. I don't know if people know what the difference is but it's really apparent. It's happened gradually over the years but if you left the community and looked at relationships, it's not anything that the youth are doing or not doing. It's just relationships. I'm used to having conversations wherever I go with people of any age. I forget that isn't always what you experience everywhere. So it's funny... Because of this, we've started some programs that are multi-age, a program where we've got kids in Grades 11 and 12 working with kids in Grades 2 and 3, and a community person. They work in a triad together. But I don't think we would even have attempted that if they weren't already able to do that. So, a teenager walking down the road will see a seven-year old and the teenager will come right over and give them a hug or something. You don't see that anywhere. Huge potential, huge potential! Again, it's so hard to scientifically attribute this to SWOVA. A lot of things have changed in a big way. As a teenager, I used to come here to play sports. It's not the same place at all. A lot of things have changed, but [R+R] is one element that has to be considered. (R+R school personnel)

In summary, key respondents from each of the four healthy relationship programs described substantial improvements in their dating, peer and family relationships that they attributed to the programs. Not only were none of the comments negative, few were neutral. These endorsements suggest the programs' impacts beyond simply dating violence, but as effects that extend into the majority of their interpersonal relationships and leadership skills both now and in the future.

Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions and Implications

This chapter provides a summary of the evaluation findings and suggests implications for future consideration. The first section includes a context for interpreting the results; the second, a summary of the major themes that emerged from both the surveys and focus group interviews. Finally, conclusions and implications from the evaluation results are documented.

The Context of the Evaluation

When considering the previously reported results, several factors need to be taken into consideration. First, it was not intended that these four healthy relationship/dating violence programs be seen in competition. As mentioned previously, each arose in a particular community in response to the needs of that particular community. Each has been evaluated using strong research methodology that has demonstrated their positive impacts on the knowledge and attitudes of students taking the programs. The cluster randomized trials used in a longitudinal evaluation of the Fourth R (Crooks et al., 2008, Wolfe et al., 2009) showed changes in behaviour as well.

Compared with many healthy relationship programs that offer only one to several class presentations, each of these four programs provides from 7 to 48 sessions focused on healthy relationship issues including conflict resolution, communication skills, and information on abusive relationships. While the number of sessions differs, ranging from an intensive weekend to a four-year curriculum, each program provides an in-depth, impactful experience, providing information, and the opportunity to practice the skills offered through role-plays and in-depth discussions. Each is considered an exemplary program, lauded in their community and, in some cases, across the country and internationally.

Also, to reiterate, there are important differences between the programs. Three (SWOVA's Respectful Relationships, Healthy Relationships for Youth and Making Waves/Vague par vague) are external programs in which outside agency staff provide the healthy relationships program with the assistance of student co-facilitators. The final program, the Fourth R, was developed by an external team of academic researchers and teachers, but is an internal curriculum presented by teachers in physical education or health classes and primarily during Grade 9 (although this differs by province). The advantage of providing the program internally is that it is more cost-effective and may be more easily accepted into schools than external programs.

While the core of each program is healthy relationships, each offers somewhat different additional information. The Fourth R was developed based on research identifying connections between healthy relationships and sexuality and substance use and abuse in adolescents. As such, one third of the 21-session program focuses on each of these three factors. As well, it is the only program that offers substantial information about human sexuality and substance abuse, topics that were mentioned in the survey as potentially useful additions to the other programs.

The Making Waves program, conducted as it is on weekends, has less time available to convey its information, although the format seems to powerfully convey the messages to students. Over the years, the curriculum has evolved to include a unique session entitled "He said, She said" where the teens separate into separate gender groups to discuss what each would like to know most about the opposite sex, followed by a joint group in which the students actually ask these questions of their peers. Another unique session, entitled "Bridging the Gap," uses a similar pattern of the adults and teens separating into different groups and reuniting to ask each other questions issues to which they have always wanted answers. Both sessions were mentioned in the survey comments as valuable and unique. None of the other programs incorporate a similar process.

The Respectful Relationships program and Healthy Relationships for Youth are the most similar, reflecting as they do, in-depth curricula offered over several years. Respectful Relationships is offered over four years, starting in Grade 7 until Grade 10. The pilot of the Healthy Relationships for Youth program was originally

offered over four years but because of sustainability issues is now offered for one year, in Grade 9, and utilizes student facilitator teams almost exclusively to present the program materials.

Because the programs invite considerable student input for discussion, these programs may address a number of other issues considered relevant by the students, including such important diversity concerns as gay/lesbian/bisexual transgendered issues (LGBT) and, in the case of the Healthy Relationships for Youth program, unique diversity issues such as the centuries-old African Canadian and Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia.

The Programs and the Evaluation

The current evaluation reflects an attempt to answer the question, "Do healthy relationship programs make a difference in the long run?" As mentioned in the literature review, few programs conduct longitudinal data collection beyond six months to one year and in at least two studies, the students lost the gains they had made post-program (Krajewski et al., 1996, Legge et al., 2004). The current evaluation was intended to answer this question in a qualitative manner, by contacting students who had participated in healthy relationship programs several years before, and gathering their opinions about the extent to which the information had been useful.

Because the programs are so different, a number of strategies were used to invite former program participants to complete the evaluation, which are important to consider in interpreting the results so as not to disadvantage any one program. Ideally, there would have been a similar number of respondents from each program. It was not possible to randomly select survey participants, therefore, convenience samples were used.

The survey originated as a strategy to begin conversations with students who might have more in-depth stories about utilizing the prevention materials and information. Although few provided contact information to offer further details on their personal stories, other survey respondents provided numerous examples in their written responses regarding the impact of the program on themselves personally, on their peers and friends, and their schools and communities.

Nevertheless, the written comments are often compelling and detailed and provide, in many cases, clear answers to the question about whether the program had an impact over time. Although not everyone commented on every question, the students certainly seemed comfortable conveying their opinions in a descriptive and sometimes even blunt manner. An estimated 5 to 15% of student comments could be construed as negative. Notably however, from 20 to 30% of the comments were in the excellent range. The qualitative data analysis of these comments highlights both positives and negatives.

While some might consider that survey methodology captures only consumer satisfaction data, the open-ended nature of many of the comment sections and responses takes the survey well beyond a simple consumer satisfaction data collection instrument. The survey respondents were asked not only what they liked about the program but whether and how they had implemented the information in their lives. While not all availed themselves of the opportunity to write additional comments in response to such questions, the number who did is impressive and the quality and depth of these brief glimpses into their lives are compelling.

The responses of students to the evaluation survey also differed substantially across programs. The survey was offered either online or in hard-copy depending on the opinion of the program staff with respect to ease of obtaining completed evaluation forms. Two of the programs, Respectful Relationships and Healthy Relationships for Youth, were primarily gathered in hard copy in this class. Information with respect to the Making Waves/Vague par vague program was entirely gathered through the online survey distributed to students who had attended the weekends by e-mail and Facebook site. Students from the Fourth R were both handed posters inviting their participation in the on-line survey in Ontario schools and administered a hard-copy survey in a high school at Strathmore, Alberta where the program has been running/ offered for a number of years.

While the total sample of almost 500 responses (N = 489) is commendable and the thousands of comments provide essential context to the survey respondents ratings of the programs, fewer responses (less than 50 each or about 12%) were obtained from students in the Fourth R and Making Waves, despite extra efforts to obtain better participation rates. Because the Making Waves model selects only a few students from several schools for the workshop, it was difficult to engage survey responses beyond those who had attended the weekend.

Regarding the similarly low response to the Fourth R, we cannot ascertain whether this was a function of the way that the surveys were administered or was a result of students being less aware that they were actually participating in a “program,” as the Fourth R is taught by teachers. Comments from some suggested that they did not recall many details about the Fourth R, although in the focus groups with students who had taken the Fourth R, as the conversation continued, they recalled a number of exercises and discussions.

In a number of the program comparisons, students from the Respectful Relationships and Making Waves programs were more likely to perceive the program characteristics or impact as positive. With the reminder that the evaluation was not intended to single out any one program as exemplary, it is important to comment on this repeated finding. First, these are the two most intensive programs, at least as currently offered.

Respectful Relationships is offered over four years. A small number of its students complained that the material was repetitive and “boring.” Nevertheless, these students were also very likely to report on using the skills widely, even into the school and community, which they ascribed to the program. In this context, the term “boring” could be considered a positive as it seems to indicate that the students have learned the concepts. Certainly, students and adults were more likely to ascribe school-wide and community impacts to this program.

Similarly, the Making Waves/Vague par vague program is offered over an intensive weekend, a format that, as the comments convey, is powerful and seems to have dramatic effects on the program participants. The cost of offering the program in this way is that fewer students can participate, and these students are charged with the responsibility of taking the lessons back to their home schools. While a number of the Making Waves student participants successfully incorporate plays, posters, and other activities into their schools, this was the one aspect of the program that was more difficult to achieve, relying as it did on teacher leadership, as well as students taking responsibility outside of the structure of the program. A relatively small number of former students responded to the survey, most via email and the Making Waves Facebook page. Likely, those that have kept in touch with the program over the years are the most devoted and impacted.

The Healthy Relationships for Youth program in Antigonish was originally modeled after the Respectful Relationships program, however it shifted over the years to reflect the needs and issues of the Nova Scotia communities that it serves. In response to funding issues, the program has changed focus several times and the program coordinators have also changed. One of the most dramatic changes occurred in the past several years, when the program shifted to using students as the primary presenters. This innovation was likely not captured in the survey responses, which focused on the program as presented a number of years ago. In fact, having gone through major shifts three years in a row, this program is likely the most disadvantaged by the timing of the evaluation.

Developed by researchers and teachers, and based on decades of findings with respect to adolescents in difficulty, the Fourth R’s internal evaluations use the highest standard of research methodology, with impressive evidence for its efficacy. The recently published cluster randomized trials (Crooks et al., 2008) and the subsequent publication of the 2.5-year follow-up (Wolfe, et al., 2009) showed strong support for changing behaviours and maintaining these over time.

However, since the Fourth R is offered internally, some students do not perceive the classes as a “program” and, as such, had more difficulty recalling the program activities. Despite efforts to encourage former students to complete the survey, a smaller number complied and few took the time to write comments. Further, as mentioned previously, the survey focused almost exclusively on the healthy relationship

programming, which represents only one-third of the focus of the Fourth R curriculum, which disadvantages the program in the current evaluation.

The Evaluation Respondents

As noted previously, the survey responses from participants in two programs, Respectful Relationships and Healthy Relationships for Youth made up over 70% of the surveys. The final quarter of responses came from half Making Waves/Vague par vague and half from the Fourth R. While this is admittedly a limitation, almost 50 individuals from each program answered, representing a respectable response rate.

The 382 survey respondents were primarily students (over 86%), the key focus of the evaluation. Another almost 10% of the survey respondents were youth facilitators or members of the student advisory teams across programs. They have a unique voice, but one that does not overpower the opinions of students who did not receive additional training. That only 16 adults responded to the survey should not be considered a limitation. Although the survey could easily be answered by teachers or other community representatives, this group was not especially targeted.

The survey respondents were female, in almost two-thirds of cases. They ranged in age from 12 years to over 36. Slightly more than half of the students were in the 16 to 18 year range, while another third was aged 14 to 15. The youngest students were more likely to be from the Respectful Relationship program and the oldest from Making Waves. Notably, over 90% of all survey respondents were born in Canada and over 80% were Caucasian. The first language spoken was English for the majority, with another first language spoken by 8.5% of the survey respondents, the majority being French. Interestingly, three-quarters of the survey respondents were from relatively small communities of under 15,000 but more than 500 residents. Most of the survey residents lived in households with both parents (about two-thirds), while a smaller number lived with their mother only or their mother and a step parent.

With respect to how long ago the students had participated in a healthy relationship program, almost three-quarters had taken part from two to over six years previously. This suggests that the survey respondents represent the target group intended to answer the survey. Notably, about one-fifth participated in the program one to two years ago, and about 10% were in the program the year that the survey was administered. Further, a large proportion of the students, a little over 80%, had participated in all, or almost all of the program sessions, again suggesting the appropriateness of the survey respondents.

The 107 individuals who were interviewed individually or in focus groups were students in almost two-thirds of the cases (66 or 62%). The adults interviewed were often program personnel or board members (20.5%), with another 18% from the school or community, who were not directly involved in presenting the programs. Both with respect to the survey and the individual interviews or focus groups, we were successful in connecting with students who had participated in the programs several years previously.

It is important to remind the readers, however, that any of the comments with respect to specific program content or personnel are about the program as offered several years ago. The majority of the surveys were administered in 2008. Thus, admittedly, the program content and staffing may have changed. This is a limitation of any such retrospective evaluation, but should remain foremost while reading the comments about the program characteristics.

Major Themes from the Evaluation

This section profiles the major themes that arose from both the survey and the qualitative interviews and focus groups. The narratives from the focus groups and individual interviews generally confirm the survey findings. The examples and explanations were typically more in-depth, one rationale for taking the time to conduct such research. For each theme, one quote from among the many qualitative responses will be provided to exemplify the perspective, particularly of the youth respondents.

Relevance of the Materials

You could actually use the stuff; this is real! There are things you learned in school that you are never going to use again, like math, algebra. This stuff you're going to use. When we teach them something they could use it the next day. It's not one of these things that will only be good to them years later.

A key question is whether the materials are important and make practical sense to students, school personnel and program staff. One of the clearest results from across both the survey and focus groups and interviews was the extent to which the materials on healthy relationships were perceived as useful. A number of students spoke of the ways in which the program related to real-life and how they could utilize the skills, not only in dating relationships but also with friends and, less often-cited, family members. Although some program materials paralleled information already in the school's curriculum, the manner in which the healthy relationship staff offered the material, for example, using role-playing and group discussion rather than didactic presentations, reportedly made a significant difference to the students.

Further, each program either connected topics in unique ways, such as the Fourth R linking healthy relationships, substance use, and sexuality, or added important new perspectives such as the Healthy Relationship for Youth's focus on issues for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals. Even when the information was not explicitly in the healthy relationship curriculum, the program facilitators, whether youth or adult, often incorporated appropriate examples into role-plays or exercises.

Self-Reported Knowledge Pre- and Post-Program

This theme most closely approximates the focus of the bulk of the outcome research on healthy relationship programs that tracks what student's know before and after participating. To gauge the impact of these healthy relationship programs on knowledge levels, the survey asked students to retrospectively assess how much they knew about various program foci before and after participating. The students self-reported statistically significant improvements in knowledge in all of the areas assessed, including differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, different forms of relationship abuse, healthy ways to communicate, and conflict resolution and boundaries.

Smaller numbers of students responded to knowledge questions that were addressed more specifically by one or two programs. These self-reported retrospective changes were also statistically significantly improved for the knowledge areas of diversity, sexual orientation, bullying, sexuality, and substances and abuse.

Notably, such self-reported estimates are not as reliable as completing detailed pre- and post- knowledge and attitude questionnaires, since they are retrospective and based on opinion. Nonetheless, since the research advisory committee deemed that conducting quantitative pretest-posttest comparisons across the four programs was not feasible, the students' perceptions of their knowledge at those two time-periods provide the best estimate possible and conveys that the respondents believed that they knew more about the topics presented after the program.

Feedback on Program Characteristics

It's great to have a class not taught by teachers. They [students] found it pretty rewarding. I did when I was in them. Probably, "Maybe we should listen" maybe it's interesting if we're doing it. You can tell students are interested because when we're in the hallway some students will come up, "Are you teaching us today?"

Program developers do their best to create curriculum material that is engaging and informative, yet rarely are they provided feedback about how their materials and the program format is viewed. Such information is critical when considering revising programs or creating new ones.

A set of survey questions examined different aspects of healthy relationship programs, gathering student and adults' views of the materials, the adult facilitators or teachers, the youth facilitators, and the program

sessions. With respect to each of these, the majority of survey respondents (over 90%) were considerably positive, ranking each of these “poor” in only a very small proportion of cases (from 2.1% to 7.5%).

Across programs, there were some statistically significant differences in students’ ratings, such that the program materials from the Making Waves/Vague par vague program were more often described as “excellent”, as were the youth facilitators and the program sessions, with Healthy Relationships for Youth respondents also rating their program sessions as “excellent” a substantially higher number of times. For the latter program the adult facilitators were rated as “poor” more often than the other programs, although this represented a small proportion of respondents, about 16%. Student survey respondents from Making Waves/Vague par vague and Respectful Relationships were more likely to view the adult facilitators as “excellent.”

However, more importantly, the majority of the student and adult comments with respect to each of these central program characteristics were extremely positive, suggesting, for example, that the program materials are “relevant,” “carefully planned,” “amazing” and “informative.” The few complaints about the program materials questioned its relevance or suggested that the repetition of concepts over the years was unnecessary.

I have found the material extremely informative and helpful with my students. They can really relate to the tone and vocabulary.

The adult facilitators (or teachers in the case of the Fourth R) were negatively assessed by a very small number of students as being “unfriendly” or “too opinionated.” The bulk of the comments were positive and included such phrases as “sensitive”, “understanding”, “inspiring”, “amazing” and “non-judgmental.”

I really appreciated the effort and time that the adult facilitators put into making the workshops interesting and helpful. I found them to be non-judgmental and open, even when the topic of discussion produced many differing and contradictory responses.

Comments about youth facilitators were not relevant for the Fourth R. For the three other programs that are offered by external agencies, concerns were in relation to several specific youth who had reportedly behaved in an unfriendly manner or that the youth leaders seemed not to contribute or were not as involved to the extent that they could be. The majority of the comments described the youth facilitators positively as “helpful”, “energetic”, and “open”. One student commented that having youth deliver the program message was a key component.

[Does it make a difference hearing this from somebody close in age?] Definitely because we’re also going through stuff. I think you’re more likely to listen to someone who is closer to your age. Someone who is older you might think, “They’re just telling you that.” Easier to trust us too, because less communication barriers so you can talk to them a lot easier I find.

With respect to the program sessions, the small number of negative comments were directed to the issue of being repetitive and “boring”. Others mentioned that the sessions varied, so that some were excellent and others not. Positive comments described the sessions as “educational, “meaningful”, “fun-filled” and “informative.”

They were very informative. The facilitators also knew when to have fun moments and when to be serious, and set the tone for everyone else.

While the information was generally regarded as useful, sessions that stood out as particularly engaging, are the separate gender discussions. These opportunities for meaningful conversations with male or female colleagues were repeatedly noted as unique. Programs such as Making Waves/Vague par vague conclude the separate gender sessions with joint meetings to further the gendered dialogues. Other commonly mentioned sessions were the Fourth R’s sexuality and substance abuse materials; Making Wave’s Bridging the Gap exercise, in which the adults and teens meet in separate groups and then re-group to ask each other questions

developed in the break-out sessions; and the LGBT sessions from the Healthy Relationships for Youth program.

That the program materials made sense, and that role plays and exercises, and any follow-up activities were helpful constituted another set of questions that garnered somewhat less positive results overall. Endorsements for the least positive item stem, “a bit” were checked for the program material made sense (18%), role-plays and exercises (22%) and follow-up (33%). Nevertheless, over two-thirds of the survey respondents were generally positive about these factors.

The question about whether the program materials made sense elicited a few negative comments including that the information was “heavy”, “sometimes confusing”, or “the handbook was not needed.” Positives were that the material was “understandable”, “well laid-out” and “relevant”.

The utility of the role-plays and exercises was commented on negatively by a small proportion of the students, who described these as “unrealistic”, “outdated” and “a bit corny”. The majority of comments were from those who countered these critiques, describing them as “realistic”, “good examples”, and as “essential.”

I think the role-plays are essential. It's great to talk about situations and what to do, but acting out an actual situation with dialogue makes the whole thing more relatable and memorable.

Follow-up Activities

I just participated in the Many Faces of Abuse play. It went really well. The response from a lot people even a few days later was like, “Wow that was kind of intense”. It was all quiet when we were doing it.

A goal for many school-based prevention programs is to urge the students to pass on the information and skills to others. In this way, a much larger audience can be provided the information. In the current evaluation, a much smaller number of students answered questions about the usefulness of the follow-up activities conducted in their home-communities afterwards, as this was primarily applicable to Making Waves/Vague par vague. The most oft-repeated comment reflected regret that the Making Waves/Vague par vague students had not done more when they returned to their home schools, although a smaller group of students noted the importance of activities with which they had been involved or participated.

Nonetheless, comments from the focus groups highlighted the wide-ranging number of follow-up or adjunct activities across programs, from school plays and poster contests and community work, to events such as the December 6th memorial, to consulting with local school district meetings.

Challenges and Benefits of the Programs

Another central contextual question is whether or not the program audience perceives benefits and/or problems to having participated. A series of questions asked the survey respondents about the challenges and strengths of the healthy relationship programs, including any disappointments or positive surprises. With respect to problems with the programs, a small number, about 13% of the survey participants, responded “yes,” a larger proportion referring to the Respectful Relationship program and Making Waves/Vague par vague. The problems identified in the few comments (34) were largely about the repetition and relevance of material over the years and, for Making Waves/Vague par vague, access to the weekends and the students offering follow-up activities in their home schools.

A question with respect to negative program effects garnered a very small 5.9% endorsement rate across all programs and few comments. In the comments section, an important issue raised that had not been mentioned previously related to the need to better address the feelings of some students in reaction to program content that may elicit strong reactions. The survey respondents were also asked about any disappointments with respect to the programs, with a relatively small endorsement rate not in regard to any one program. A small number of comments targeted previously identified issues: repetition of concepts, and missing physical education.

A parallel question was with respect to unanticipated positives (surprises). A little more than two-fifths of the respondents identified surprises (40.1%), more from the Making Waves/Vague par vague and Respectful Relationship program respondents. The nature of the unanticipated positives included changes in their relationships with friends and romantic partners, the interesting nature of some of the program information and sessions, that the program was enjoyable, and the benefits of being a youth facilitator.

I didn't expect to meet so many great people and remain friends with some of them. To this day I still keep in contact with some of those people.

An open-ended question about the most useful aspect of the program resulted in comments from 246 students. Across programs, students mentioned communication, respect and awareness; program discussions and role-plays, the group process and peer interaction. With respect to additional topics for program inclusion, a small number of students suggested adding more information on healthy sexuality and substances (both program components of the Fourth R), abuse in families and diversity, especially homophobia and LGBT issues.

The survey respondents were also asked what they would recommend to improve the programs. The largest proportion of comments reflected that the program was good as developed. The most common suggestions included "more activities", "additional topics and expanding to younger or older students in additional grades".

Short and Long-term Program Benefits

The central question for the current evaluation is whether these four exemplary healthy relationship programs have an impact in the short run, but more importantly, over time. A large number of the respondents in the current study were clear that they use the skills taught with their dating relationships, family and friends.

Of note is that almost as many young men as young women made these observations. Young men have been seen as difficult to engage on violence prevention programming, yet the positive comments were as likely to come from young men as young women.

Surprisingly, and especially with respect to Respectful Relationships and Making Waves/Vague par vague programs, the most intense, a proportion of students reported using the skills with family members, and other adults such as teachers, as well as in their communities.

Almost three-fifths of both the adult and student survey respondents (59.7%) claimed to have seen long-term benefits that they attribute to the healthy relationship programs, endorsed more by students from Making Waves/Vague par vague and Respectful Relationships. Over 130 students commented about the nature of these benefits. Although a small number saw few benefits, others identified general improvements, saw positive changes in others, or reported on personal experiences.

With respect to general long-term benefits, the student comments largely focused on relationship and conflict resolution skills. The outcomes of these improved skills are suggested to be of help with choosing the right partner, helping people go through rough patches, making better decisions, and reducing violence and bullying in schools and communities.

It helps teens know how to learn about different relationships so when they get older they can recognize whether they are in a healthy relationship and know how to fix/get out of it if they aren't.

Other respondents identified changes that they had witnessed in their fellow students such as them becoming more confident, expressing themselves, staying out of trouble, making the right choices, and knowing how to get out of unhealthy relationships. Notably, several mentioned hearing changes in how students were speaking to each other in the school hallways.

Students becoming more confident through their involvement. Students recognising and offering support to individuals in tough situations. General school population ARE getting the message.

In response to the survey, a large number of students, over 50, mentioned ways in which they had personally changed as a result of participating in a healthy relationship program. Similar to the previous comments about seeing changes in self-confidence and self expression in others, the students wrote about their own improved confidence and understanding how to deal with difficult interpersonal situations.

I have been with this program from the tenth grade until this, my graduating year, and I've seen positive, long term effects from the program reflected in my own mentality and behaviour. I'm more conscious of the subtler types of relationship abuse, which I hadn't really examined before the program (things like verbal abuse, isolation etc.). I recognize the key steps to having healthy, secure relationships in my own life. I'm more focused on keeping an open mind against labels and stereotypes.

Students' Use of Program Skills

It's like you see the world differently. You see the value of people around you a lot differently in the situations.

While healthy relationship programs teach information and skills, which studies have shown students often learn (Tutty et al., 2005), whether or not the students actually use the skills when they encounter relationship problems is much more difficult to research. The extent to which the students used the skills was a key question for the current evaluation.

Both those who responded to the surveys and participated in the interviews or focus groups gave examples of using the program materials and skills with other individuals including dates, friends, parents or family members, teachers or other adults, with students in their schools and in their communities. As one might expect, given the previous responses to long-term benefits, a number of students and adults provided additional examples of ways that they had used program materials and information with important individuals in their lives.

With respect to dating partners, 39 student survey respondents commented about using the communication or conflict resolution skills with current boyfriends or girlfriends. A number mentioned being better informed about how they should be treated as an important learning from the programs. Several described relationships from which they had withdrawn based on the recognition that these were unhealthy. Others had provided information to friends to help them deal with their unhealthy dating relationships.

The way I deal with problems, like jealousy was founded in the workshops I did in high school. Funny enough, my current girlfriend of three years sometimes gets a little mad because I am always so calm when we get into "fights" or heated discussions, and I respond with, "This is how I feel," I-statements, etc. I never yell, and if I do something that could have a belittling or an intimidation effect on her, I realize right away and either apologize, or catch it before I say it. As for choices in relationships, I have made my share of bad ones, but I know to never stay in an abusive, unhappy, or negative-feel relationship. I credit a lot of my abilities to deal with my problems, with the people and lessons I learned at Making Waves.

With respect to sharing the healthy relationship program information with friends, students from the Respectful Relationships and Making Waves/Vague par vague programs were more likely to self-report having done this. As with dating relationships, the most common examples were with respect to communicating, resolving conflict, and listening respectfully to their friends. Another oft-mentioned theme was sharing information about abusive relationships with peers. Somewhat unexpectedly, six of the adult survey respondents commented about using the program information with friends and colleagues.

Everything that we've learned in the classroom I actually use. In everyday life, I think back to SWOVA and if I get stuck, I know what to do. It's real life facts that everybody needs to know; learning about life. I have friends from all over the world. I learn about how different the world is everywhere else. I was like, "Wow

these people don't know these things" and it's kinda heartbreaking to know that they don't know it. Helping them is really nice too. If you can help people, almost like a counsellor, but it's learning how to be a friend. I think that's the point of this whole program. To learn how to be a good friend.

While utilizing the information with dates and friends is the primary focus in most healthy relationship programs; that the skills can be used to deal with family members, parents, teachers and other adults is less often directly addressed. Nonetheless, about 40% of the survey respondents noted that they had used the program materials with parents or family members, again with students from the Respectful Relationships and Making Waves/Vague par vague programs more likely to endorse this. Forty-eight students commented that they had used the skills to deal with disagreements with siblings and parents.

In contrast, only a quarter of the survey respondents noted that they had used the program skills and information with teachers or other adults, with students from Making Waves/Vague par vague more likely to acknowledge this. The students gave a number of descriptions of situations in which they were more assertive, dealt more appropriately with conflict, or were more respectful of the adult's opinions.

We observed both the teachers and the kids using the same language about the victims, the aggressors, the passive, the language that was in the Fourth R. They enjoyed it, the teachers liked it, the Grade 9s liked it.

With respect to the question of whether the program has impacted students in their schools, two-thirds of the survey respondents suggested that this was the case. Once again, students from the Respectful Relationships and Making Waves/Vague par vague programs were more likely to agree with this statement. The majority of comments from students noted seeing the effects of the programs on their fellow students, stating, for example that "the school is very respectful," "students are more comfortable with being themselves," "there is less intimidation" and "reduced homophobia." One powerful statement was from a student who wrote, "I definitely see the difference between students have gone through SWOVA and those who have not. Those who have gone through the program have a high awareness surrounding relationship abuse, interpersonal conflict, and social justice."

My high school career was a nightmare, basically. So to see a school functioning as well as it does was amazing. I was really happy to be a part of it.

A similar question was whether the healthy relationship program had impacted the school over-all. Again, about 60% of the survey respondents saw such an impact, with Making Waves/Vague par vague and Respectful Relationships students more likely to perceive this. The majority of the comments were about improved awareness and behaviour including such statements as "teachers seem more aware of what's happening and understand better," "better, more accepting place," and, "It's made the whole school aware of things and how situations can be dealt with more effectively."

Although one might expect a healthy relationship program to impact students in a school, whether that impact extends outward into the larger community is questionable. Indeed, a smaller proportion, but still one-third of the survey respondents, perceived an impact of the healthy relationships program on their communities. These comments primarily described the effects on the school community and the larger community. Although few student respondents described specific community outcomes, they commented positively about holding community events and addressing the needs of special populations including special needs students and those from the gay and lesbian community.

In our community, I'm not sure everybody realizes how good they have it. I don't know if people know what the difference is but it's really apparent. It's happened gradually over the years but if you left the community and looked at relationships, it's not anything that the youth are doing or not doing. It's just relationships. I'm used to having conversations wherever I go with people of any age. I forget sometimes that isn't always what you experience everywhere.

Two final survey questions queried the impact of the programs on students' leadership abilities and their career choices. Again, one would not necessarily anticipate healthy relationship programs impacting these factors.

Importantly, in three of the four programs, students co-present the materials and 10% of the student survey respondents were student facilitators. Nonetheless, the program impacts went beyond simply being a student facilitator; with almost 50% of the survey respondents considering that a healthy relationship program has improved their leadership abilities. The students noted learning skills such as facilitation, communication, listening skills and empathy. Another group of students commented on the effect of the program on their improved self-confidence and assertiveness, skills that, of course, are important to being a good leader.

In terms of leadership, even if kids aren't being leaders in the typical ways, there's a level of just "presentness" or being reasonable or being able to negotiate. Negotiate would be a big one that, when people come out of the program, they have those skills and those tools.

Finally, a small proportion of the survey respondents (about one-sixth), noted that the program affected their career choices, primarily with respect to choosing a specific career. Teaching and counselling were the most often identified career paths. Other students commented on additional ways that the program had affected their career choices, including the freedom to choose what is most appropriate for oneself, and dealing with workplace relationships.

The Importance of Youth Facilitators

Confidence, too. I don't think I would have considered myself able to teach people. You just grow confident. Even in the class with the students talking about subjects with their classmates, it feels like it brings them together almost like a team, which is good for the class.

Providing opportunities for youth to co-facilitate or present the program materials was clearly a major benefit of the healthy relationship programs as documented by both the surveys and focus groups and interviews. The three external programs incorporated this into their programs much more clearly. Since the Fourth R essentially hands its curriculum over to schools, although they strongly recommend additional activities to involve youth, they have no control over whether the school actually implements these. Across the student surveys and focus groups with Fourth R students, very few had participated in additional youth training.

As can be seen from the responses regarding youth facilitating, the training and mentoring provided to the youth teams were of enormous utility. The excitement and sense of accomplishment from these young individuals who took ownership of the materials they provided to their peers was clear. They were proud to be given the chance to take on roles in which they were the purveyors of information that could assist friends and fellow students. A number shared stories of being approached by colleagues and asked for further information about how to deal with important relationships.

With respect to the students who were the audience for the youth teams, seeing their colleagues being given and embracing such important responsibilities, provided both role models and the sense that young people, too, are perceived by adults as valued and respected. Whether or not they then took on the challenge of becoming a youth-team member, a number simply recalled being impressed by their fellow students who did.

In summary, in response to the survey questions and the interviews, not only were the students and adults generally very pleased with their respective healthy relationship programs after several years had passed, but also a number reflected that the programs are being implemented as intended, and students are learning the healthy relationship concepts and applying them to their intimate, collegial, and family relationships.

Conclusions and Implications

The accomplishments of the four programs that are the focus of this evaluation, Making Waves/Vague par vague, Healthy Relationships for Youth, The Fourth R and SWOVA's Respectful Relationships, deserve significant acknowledgement. To have survived for a number of years so successfully in what, for most, has been a very challenging economic and funding environment, is indeed praiseworthy and speaks to the excellence of the programs. The partnerships with schools, that are the hallmark of healthy relationship programs, are essential and entail considerable collaboration and mutual respect.

Each program is led by individuals who are passionate about the issue and who have committed to making a difference to youth in the long-term. Flexibility is another key component of an exemplary program. Each of the programs showcased in this report has changed and adapted over the years in response to feedback and funding challenges. As two recent examples, Making Waves/Vague par vague is now collaborating with Partners with Youth, an established NGO in New Brunswick that is "built on a community partnership model that assists youth to learn, grow, develop positive self-esteem and gain the skills to make positive life choices."

The Healthy Relationships for Youth program, previously the Rural Youth Education Program, shifted from a four-year to a one-year program in the face of significant financial challenges. The latest iteration of this has shifted so that the youth take a much more active role in presenting the program material than previously. While such significant changes can be difficult, they sometimes result in important innovations. The Healthy Relationships for Youth student facilitators in Nova Scotia are an impressive group of young people.

The current evaluation of four in-depth, established and exemplary healthy relationship curricula is unique. As noted previously, few prevention program evaluations look at impacts beyond a year and in these, it is not unusual for students to revert to their original knowledge and attitudes about dating violence, losing any improvements. That did not happen in these programs. The current evaluation can be seen as an important initial, primarily qualitative inquiry with respect to the long-term effects.

That 489 students and adults were engaged in the evaluation is notable: Almost 400 respondents completed the survey and over 100 participated in individual interviews or focus groups. While a very small proportion of the respondents clearly did not support their respective healthy relationship program, the majority of the responses acknowledged the utility and relevance of the programs and their various components, with, at times, glowing descriptions.

The comments with respect to long-term benefits and using the program materials with dates, friends and family are revealing. Importantly, a number of students shared that they had utilized the strategies taught in the healthy relationship programs with boyfriends/girlfriends, siblings, parents and friends. Several students had used the information to either remove themselves from unhealthy dating relationships or to recognize that the relationship might become abusive beforehand.

Interestingly, several young people became able to identify their own behaviours as unhealthy and had utilized the awareness gained from the program to make positive changes. In addition, a number of the adult survey respondents also reported witnessing changes in their students, from them becoming more aware of relationship issues and being more confident and assertive with others.

It is difficult to convey the deep impact of the comments in a summary such as this. The reader is invited to return to the results chapters (3, 4 and 5) to re-read the words of the student and adult survey and interview respondents. A substantial number of students reported that the program certainly had an impact on their relationships and a smaller group reported profound changes to themselves, their relationships, their leadership abilities and career choices. Many of the aspects affected (school, community) are beyond what one would typically expect of a healthy relationships curriculum.

The following are some of the major implications of the current evaluation that could be considered by other programs or those who might wish to develop programs, as well as educators and funders.

The Long-term Impact of Healthy Relationship Programs

These four healthy relationships/dating violence programs had a significant long-term impact on a large proportion of the student participants. Some students reported profound effects, that the program changed their lives. For these individuals, the program was transformative. A number of the survey and focus group respondents noted the relevance of the materials to their day-to-day lives.

Few study participants reported that the program assisted them in escaping abusive relationships. In essence, this is the goal of prevention programs and provides further evidence that these particular programs are effective. Notably, there were several such stories. More commonly, individuals ended relationships that might have become abusive earlier or avoided them in the first place.

Across Canada, the statistics on intimate partner violence collected by Statistics Canada (2005) suggest that only a small proportion of Canadians experience severe partner violence, although young adults are the most vulnerable group. Such abuse often begins in adolescent relationships, often with controlling and restrictive behaviours exemplified by jealousy. Students who responded to both the survey and in focus groups became aware, especially after participating in a healthy relationship program, of friends and colleagues who were experiencing such abuse. Relationship abuse is not limited to adults, and is visible even in the relationship dynamics witnessed in school hallways.

Commitment to Evaluation

Each of these four healthy relationship programs exemplifies how to make appropriate use of both outcome evaluations and monitoring. Not only do the programs conduct evaluations, but they also utilize the results to improve the curriculum on regular annual bases. Each incorporated evaluation from early on in their development. They have used the evaluation findings to refine the curricula, and methods of providing the information. This commitment is not only admirable but also supports other programs using similar inquiry-based processes.

As highlighted in the previously-noted articles in the literature review in which students learned the material post-program but did not maintain these gains over time (Krajewski, et al., 1996; Legge et al., 2004), it is apparent that the knowledge, attitudes and behavioural skills conveyed in these programs are not easily incorporated into students' world-views. Programs need to document that they make a long-term, substantive difference. While it is not easy to evaluate programs over time, the power of the current evaluation with respect to how students had changed their thinking, their language, and sometimes their dating partners is compelling.

Partnerships with Schools

Whether considered an internal or an external program, all four curricula in the current evaluation initially entailed external experts from the community or academia who created working partnerships with schools. In each case, program personnel examined the extent to which the materials that they hoped to provide to the school system, were already included in the provincial standards and recommended curriculum topics. In each case, also, the provincial guidelines included a focus on healthy relationship issues, typically in middle schools. That school systems across Canada endorse their students learning healthy relationship skills can be a tremendous advantage to external agencies.

Considerable negotiations are entailed in connecting with the appropriate local and/or provincial educational representatives to explore how the materials might be integrated. For example, what will be the role of the teacher, presenter or observer? Is there a particular course, such as health, that is the most appropriate venue for the materials, or should they be spread across school courses? Scheduling the program in the least intrusive way is vital yet can be an ongoing challenge.

The Power of Youth

Across programs, youth were seen as important in both teaching and extending the program messages into the school at-large. The impact on youth in the three programs that involved students in co-facilitating or actually presenting some of the program material is most notable.

As noted previously, the Fourth R gives the responsibility for the program to the schools. While also strongly recommending that students create new activities that promote the Fourth R lessons, they have no say in the extent to which this occurs. Several of those interviewed were involved in a peer mentoring program developed for the Fourth R's Aboriginal curriculum, and noted the success of this.

In the three external programs, the youth who took on the responsibility of co-facilitating or presenting the material learned not only the class management skills, but often became leaders in their schools and innovators. Across programs, these youth leaders were often originally picked not for their strong academic standing, but because of their leadership potential.

Based on observations of the accomplishments of these youth facilitators, the faith put in these young adults is not misguided. One of the best examples is from the Healthy Relationships for Youth program that, because of significant funding challenges, has currently shifted to a model in which the youth are responsible for presenting much of the program material. In meeting with these youth teams, their sense of responsibility and excitement in taking the lead was clear and impressive. Even the prospect of such sensitive topics such as homophobia and racism did not daunt these young people. In fact, these were some of their favourite sessions to teach.

The long-term benefits of providing youth with such responsibilities and trust are perhaps the most important study finding. The reported outcomes extend beyond the student body, into the school culture and even into the community.

Beyond Curriculum

When examining healthy relationship programs, one often focuses on the curriculum materials. While important, the respondents to this evaluation point out that it is the program philosophy and respectful way of engaging youth and others that make the difference, not just the content. The respect and commitment to empowerment typically extends throughout the agency and is reflected in the external relationships with the schools and other community agencies. This congruence of philosophy, behaviour and materials is critical.

Respectful relationships between the adult program staff and the students are the foundation of these programs, with the adults essentially role-modelling the behaviours they are asking the students to enact. This dynamic is perhaps easiest to see when it goes awry. The comments of several students in the survey or focus groups described staff or teachers who were delivering the program materials but whose behaviour did not fit. In one instance, a teacher (who did not receive the Fourth R training as it turned out) was described as simply preaching about substances rather than engaging the students in conversation with each other and becoming critical for themselves. In contrast, a woman teacher who had received the Fourth R program training inspired her students and connected with them in a more personal yet still professional manner.

Hiring staff members that connect well with youth in this way is no small task. There is no professional designation for prevention program educators. The jobs are often on contract, relatively poorly paid and lack status. The consistency of the staff in the four programs evaluated speaks to the passion of these individuals and their conviction that they are truly making a difference to their young charges. The fact that the three programs that used youth to co-facilitate the programs each had current adult staff who had previously participated as youth is notable and speaks to the power of the programs that could attract back some of their youth mentors.

Beyond Healthy Relationships

While the comments and narratives from the survey and focus group interviews clarify the utility of the program content and skills in facilitating healthy relationships, the programs affected leadership and citizenship, especially with respect to the youth that became part of the youth teams. This is apparent in many of the follow-up or outreach activities embarked upon by the students, including mentoring programs, connecting youth and younger children and celebrating diversity.

A commitment to social justice and to making the world a better place was apparent in a number of the youths' narratives. Harnessing their excitement and providing them a venue to make a difference were outcomes for many of these young adults.

A Commitment to the Next Generation

Each of the programs included in the current evaluation is complex, in-depth and time-consuming to provide and administer. What might be considered the shortest is Making Waves/Vague par vague at 12 to 16 hours on a weekend compared to the longest, Respectful Relationships at 48 hours over four years. That Respectful Relationships was the one program that survey and focus group respondents described as making a difference that extended into the community and family relationships can most likely be attributed to its targeted focus to all students in a school over an entire four-year period. One typically needs a sustained focus for such significant change to occur, yet from a cost-benefit perspective, none of the four programs is particularly long and Making Waves/Vague par vague has an amazing impact in only 12 or so hours outside the classroom.

One might assume that these or similar programs are widely available in Canadian schools. Sadly, this seems not to be the case. Many schools have no programming specific to dating violence or healthy relationships (Tutty, et al., 2005). The Fourth R program is perhaps the most widely accepted; that it is offered by teachers at minimal cost with teacher-friendly and well-designed curriculum materials has led to its incorporation in many school districts and provinces. However, simply the nature of the three external healthy relationship programs, with the need for program coordinators and staffing and utilizing youth who need training and supervision, makes them more complicated and expensive to replicate.

Sustainable funding remains the single largest challenge for these programs. Even the most celebrated programs are typically funded year to year and by a variety of sources, including foundations such as the Canadian Women's Foundation, and various government departments. While provincial Ministries of Education might seem the logical funder, and must be credited with supporting these programs in a number of ways, none are funding any program entirely. Further, for external programs, full funding from education ministries or school districts might entail handing over the curriculum, while giving up the advantages of maintaining the philosophy and goals of the programs and engaging youth. If there was a simple answer to the funding dilemma, the passion and ingenuity of the developers of the four programs showcased in this document would surely have discovered it by now.

Funding challenges aside, this evaluation provides testimony from almost 500 youth and adults about the importance of healthy relationship programs. The adult evaluation respondents, many of whom were school personnel or from the community, had the unique advantage of being able to recall the students improving over time and noting changes to the school climate before the program was in place compared to afterwards. That they perceived core changes in the school culture such as the hallway language and the value of the many supplementary activities offered by the students after program participation is further evidence that such programs are essential.

Adolescents can be harsh critics and do not routinely complete tasks, such as surveys, that they do not see as valuable. That so many of the student respondents took the time to comment about how these programs have made a profound impact is remarkable. Not only did they find the materials relevant to their lives, but they also enjoyed the programs, commonly mentioning that they had fun!

Almost three-fifths of both the adult and student survey respondents (59.7%) claimed to have seen long-term benefits that they attribute to the healthy relationship programs. With respect to the third or so of the total group of students who reported that the program has changed their lives or that they use the skills and information in their day-to-day relationship, this type of transformation is what one might expect from a therapeutic intervention, not an educational program. The fact that these individuals are as positive about the programs several years afterwards is even more extraordinary.

This document ends with a heartfelt plea for all of us who have raised young people and wish that they could have experienced or might in future participate in one of these exemplary programs to advocate for healthy relationship programs to be Canada-wide. The narratives of these young people about how their lives have changed for the better represent what we want for all of our children and grandchildren. Let's find ways to support these programs in extending their essential work to a much broader number of Canadian youth.

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Appendix 1: Similarities and Differences across the Four Programs

Variable	Making Waves	SWOVA (R+R)	Healthy Relationships for Youth	The Fourth R
Program Genesis	1995: Women's organizations	1996: Women's organization	Women's organization	Child abuse research and intervention with vulnerable youth
Internal versus External Program	External	External (teams of 2-one male, one female)	External: Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (teams of 2-one male, one female)	Internal
Length of program	Weekend workshops with associated action plans taken back to schools	48 sessions (12 per year)	12 lessons	21 session curriculum (includes sexuality, substances)
Gender based?	Yes	Yes	Yes	"gender strategic"
Grades	10,11	7,8,9,10 (or 11)	7,8,9 (11 in a limited way)	9 (varies by site)
Universal?	Not directly	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth engaged	Major focus is youth engagement: each year 15 to 18 Anglophone & 20 Francophone schools are invited to send between 4 & 6 students plus at least one adult to a weekend workshop. Students make Action Plans to take back to their schools.	Trained youth facilitators assist adult facilitators where available	Yes: Youth facilitators	Students involved in Youth Safe School Committees initiated some activities
Teachers engaged?	Some attend workshop and supervise student Action Plans	Yes	Yes	Yes, they deliver the program
Separate gender component?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Offered in some schools for some sessions
Strengths	Well established program Well-evaluated Innovative strategies to engage youth	Well established program Well-evaluated Considerable curriculum time. Multi-year—so builds on knowledge base	Well established program Well-evaluated Considerable curriculum time. Multi-year—so builds on knowledge base	Well established program Well-evaluated Internal to school system. Linkage to sexuality and substances makes sense.
Challenges/Research Questions	How well is the information transferred to students in the leader's home schools? With relatively little time for information dissemination does this make a difference to teens?	Does the in-depth curriculum warrant the time needed to present?	Does the in-depth curriculum warrant the time needed to present?	Is there enough curriculum time on healthy relationships to make a difference to teens? Enough time to practice skills? Does the gender strategic strategy translate into teens understanding the gender difference?

Appendix 2: Previously Completed Program Evaluations

Program/Evaluator	Indicators	Measures/Method
Making Waves/Calhoun Research & Development (Qualitative process evaluation)	Process/Implementation Evaluation	Interviews in 2005 with: Students (92) Teachers (22) Teachers/educators at Alternative Education Centres, School Districts and the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority in Halifax (17) Other Key Informants (24)
Making Waves/Byers (Quantitative outcome evaluation) Pretest posttest/2 week posttest/4 month posttest Developed a 133 item Dating Violence prevention Questionnaire	Knowledge Gain	Knowledge about dating violence (Q11 to 61) 50 items
	Attitude Change	Attitudes about Dating Violence (Q62 to 108) 54 items
	Behaviour & Behavioural Intentions	Dating Violence Behaviours and Intentions (Q109 to 133) 24 items, some with respect to specific dating scenarios
The Fourth R/Wolfe et al., 2005 Interim report. (Quantitative outcome evaluation) Cluster randomized design 22 schools	Knowledge Gain	Knowledge of Physical & emotional abuse (5 items)
	Knowledge Gain	Knowledge of Healthy Sexuality (7 items)
	Knowledge Gain	Knowledge of subtle forms of violence (12 items)
	Behaviour Change	Self-reported relational aggression in past 3 months (16 items)
SWOVA Respectful Relationships (Quantitative & Qualitative-implementation)	Self-reported rates of "disrespect and violence" Behaviour intentions	Pre & Posttest evaluation survey rates of disrespect & violence Personal experiences with violence as perpetrator & victims & witnessing
	Consumer satisfaction	facilitators, teachers students
Healthy Relationships in Rural Youth/Mahon	Implementation Process	Qualitative interviews (about 30 per year with Youth facilitators) Focus groups (Adult facilitators, teachers, parents, students)
	Student Survey	Self-reported changes in knowledge, strategies to deal with violence, self-esteem, relationships, the school Consumer satisfaction questionnaire
Healthy Relationships in Rural Youth/Auguste & Associates		No information

Appendix 3: CWF Healthy Relationship Programs Implementation Interview Guide

1. How did your program originate? What was the original premise? What need or needs was the program developed to address?
2. Initially what challenges (if any) did the program face in becoming established? Have these challenges changed over time? If so, how? Are these challenges unique to your program?
3. Initially what were the program strengths? Have these changed over time? Are these strengths unique to your program? Different from other health relationship programs?
4. How has your project been funded? Did funding represent any challenges? What advice about funding would you give to any new programs?
5. What have you learned about connecting/collaborating with school systems? School boards? Principals? Teachers? What challenges have you faced? What strategies have you developed to make this collaboration work well? What advice would you have for new programs with respect to collaborating with school systems?
6. Did you utilize any particular materials/concepts for your curriculum? Have you changed your materials over time? If yes, how? Have you developed materials to address any diverse populations?
7. How is the program staffed? Has this changed over time? Has staffing presented any particular problems?
8. Does the program make special efforts to engage youth during or in addition to the program? Does your program utilize skill training exercises? Role-plays?
9. Does the program utilize youth to assist with program delivery? In what ways? How is this working?
10. Does the program have any formal or informal ways of keeping in touch with its graduates and or peer facilitators?
11. Has the program changed in any substantial way since it began?
12. How is your different from other healthy relationship/dating violence programs? How is it similar?
13. What advice do you have for organizations wishing to develop a healthy relationship program?
14. Describe the place of research/evaluation for your program. What challenges (if any) have the evaluations placed on your program? What benefits (if any) have arisen from the program evaluations? What advice would you give to other prevention programs about evaluation?
15. What unanticipated challenges or sensitive issues have you faced in implementing your program?
16. What is your vision for your program in the next five years? Ten years?
17. What do you see as the place of dating violence/healthy relationship programs across the country? What strengths and or challenges exist? Do you have any suggestions to address any of the challenges you raise.
18. Beyond programs, what else is needed to create a national venue to address for violence prevention for youths?
19. Is there anything else that you'd like to add about your program?

