



Healthy Relationships Plus Program

About The Fourth R - HRPP

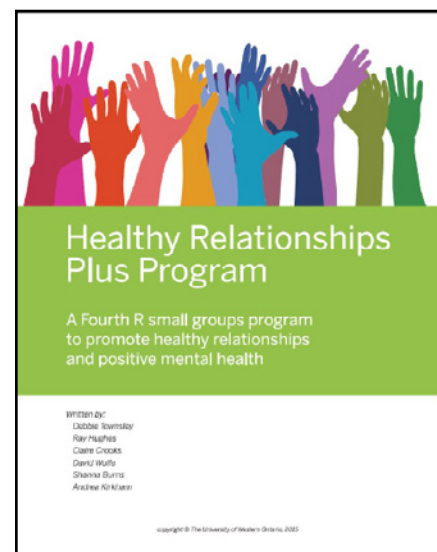
The Fourth R Healthy Relationships Plus Program is an evidence-informed small groups program based on the same core principles of skill-building and awareness as The Fourth R classroom-based programs. The Fourth R is currently taught in more than 4,500 schools across North America, and equips students with the skills they need to build healthy relationships and to help themselves and their peers reduce risky behaviours.

Like the Fourth R classroom-based programs, the Healthy Relationships Plus Program uses open dialogue and role playing to engage students in enthusiastic discussions about peer pressure, help-seeking, media literacy, healthy and unhealthy peer and dating relationships, and healthy communication. The Healthy Relationships Plus Program is a universal, competency enhancement program rather than a treatment. This means that the program is appropriate for all youth (aged 12-18 years), including those who have never been involved in violent or unhealthy relationships. In fact, involving all adolescents in education about safety and risk, rather than just those who show problems, builds resilience for future difficulties.

The Healthy Relationships Plus Program consists of 14 one-hour sessions, and all youth will receive a certificate upon completion of the program. We expect that the Healthy Relationships Plus Program will improve students' communication and problem solving skills, better enabling them to reduce peer and societal pressures.

Session Topics Include:

- Session #1 - Getting to Know You
- Session #2 - It's Your Choice: Friendships/Relationships
- Session #3 - Shaping Our Views
- Session #4 - Influences on Relationships
- Session #5 - Impact of Substance Use and Abuse
- Session #6 - Healthy Relationships
- Session #7 - Early Warning Signs of Dating Violence
- Session #8 - Boundaries and Assertive Communication
- Session #9 - Taking Responsibility for Emotions
- Session #10 - Standing Up for What is Right
- Session #11 - When Friendships and Relationships End
- Session #12 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Session #13 - Helping Our Friends
- Session #14 - Sharing and Celebrating



What Youth are Saying about the Healthy Relationships Plus Program

The Fourth R's ongoing evaluation of the Healthy Relationships Plus Program has shown that youth enjoy the program, consider their time in the program to be a valuable experience, and learn important material.

Youth particularly enjoy the **interactive components** that are built into every session of the Healthy Relationships Plus Program. For example, each session begins with an energizer or ice-breaker activity, and youth reported that these activities made them more comfortable and increased their willingness to "open up" during later discussions and activities. Youth also described enjoying many of the topics covered in the program, such as messages in advertisements, healthy and unhealthy relationships, rights and responsibilities in friendships and relationships, and how to get out of situations in which they feel pressured to do something.

The interactive, **small group** format of the Healthy Relationships Plus Program is one of the program's strengths, and seems to have contributed to what youth take away from the program. For example, youth reported that listening to other people tell their experiences was particularly valuable. As one youth explained, listening to a story that someone else told helped her to understand her own relationships. Likewise, youth appreciated the opportunity to share their own **experiences and stories**.

In addition to enjoying the program and finding it valuable, youth also seem to learn important material from the Healthy Relationships Plus Program. For example, when asked to describe something they learned in the program, youth variously described learning communication skills; how to identify and manage stress; how youth are influenced by their family, culture, friends, and media; how to understand and identify differences between positive and negative encouragement; the role of power in relationships; conflict resolution skills; and communication skills. Importantly, one youth reported learning that "I'm not the only one dealing with these problems."



What Facilitators are Saying about the Healthy Relationships Plus Program

As with youth, preliminary data collected from program facilitators suggests that the Healthy Relationships Plus Program is enjoyable to implement and valuable for youth. For example, facilitators have overwhelmingly stated that implementing the Healthy Relationships Plus Program was a positive experience and that they would recommend the program to a colleague.

Facilitators have also reported **observing positive changes** in youth. For example, one facilitator said, "Students were willing to share and discuss concerns related to various topics. They particularly wanted to know how to help their friends, and students demonstrated improved skills in communicating assertively." Another facilitator noted, "It helped to bring my students together and make the class feel like a community rather than a group of individual students. It also got my students thinking about a variety of subjects, and reflecting on their own thoughts and beliefs and the thoughts and beliefs of others," and still another suggested that "it had a powerful influence on students who were regular consumers of drugs and alcohol to reduce or quit."

What Youth are Sharing that they Learned in the Healthy Relationships Plus Program

I learned to be respectful and assertive when apologizing, ending relationships/friendships, and when not agreeing with peer pressure. I also learned how to be a good listener. - Grade 10 Girl

I learned that throughout group sharing others have the same stress as me. - Grade 9 Boy

The sessions definitely taught me learning relationship skills. I now know how to be assertive, respect my boundaries, properly break up and apologize. - Grade 9 Girl

All the activities and the encouraging environment encouraged me to learn better and engage completely. - Grade 10 Boy

These sessions strongly initiate healthy relationship skills and I felt like I responded openly to them. - Grade 10 Girl

I loved it! Everything was perfect & helpful. Learning about healthy relationships was fun and educational. - Grade 10 Girl

I will definitely use the skills I learned in real life and especially at my age. - Grade 9 Girl

The Fourth R has really made me think about how I treat others. I realize now that I don't treat people very well, and I am going to make changes. - Grade 10 Girl

I liked practicing how to break up with someone in a respectful way because it's not something you ever learn in school. - Grade 10 Boy