

## COMMUNITY ALLIANCE AGAINST VIOLENCE PROJECT UPDATE – FALL 2012

In 2011, The Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE) was awarded a prestigious three-year \$200,000 matching grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to develop and deliver the Community Alliance Against Violence (CAAV) project, an innovative initiative designed to:

1. develop and provide anti-violence training for staff members at three partner organizations serving LGBTQ youth and young adults, including the Ali Forney Center, the Metropolitan Community Church of New York, and the Staten Island LGBT Community Center.
2. provide violence prevention programming for LGBTQ youth/young adults.

Now concluding its first year, the results of a comprehensive evaluation among staff and youth participants are great, so much so that we are expanding the CAAV project to include one agency in the Bronx and a second site in Queens.

In year one, we anticipated reaching 50 youth and served 234 instead in a series of 20 workshops at the three partner organizations. Nearly two-thirds reported having been affected by violence in the three months preceding their involvement in CAAV. Their most commonly identified concerns were with getting jumped on the street, witnessing their friends get harassed and getting harassed themselves where they lived, and getting into fights or bad arguments with their boyfriend/ girlfriend or intimate/sex partner.

Youth reported using the information they gained to avoid potential attacks and de-escalate potential fights. Using verbal exercises, role plays, discussions and physical activities, these vulnerable youth also learned:

- anger-management techniques,
- verbal and physical skills and negotiation strategies for self-protection,
- how to identify healthy and abusive behaviors in relationships,
- their self-defense rights and responsibilities,
- how to access support when they need it,
- how to create a safety plan, and
- how to develop and enhance self-care skills.

While the project is helping LGBTQ young people break through shame, fear and isolation to reduce violence in their lives, staff from AFC, MCCNY and SI LGBT CC assessed the training favorably and developed important skills they acknowledged being able to apply in their personal and professional lives.

- Most of the 76 staff participants reported learning more about each of the key topic areas (self-defense basics, de-escalation techniques, stress reduction and self-care, techniques for effectively working with clients impacted by violence and trauma).
- 95% of staff participants indicated they were “somewhat” or “very likely” to use the strategies and/or tools they got in the workshop to reduce their own stress, and 96% were “somewhat” or “very likely” to use those strategies with their clients to help reduce stress.
- 97% of staff participants indicated that they learned how to offer clients new ways to de-escalate a situation.

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The Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE) develops and implements comprehensive violence prevention programs for individuals and organizations. Through a combination of education, physical empowerment and leadership development, CAE provides underserved communities throughout the New York Metropolitan area with skills to break cycles of violence. CAE's programs focus on women, girls and LGBTQ communities, with a special sensitivity to the needs of survivors. Participants build skills to enable them to heal from, prevent, and counter violence. We do this work to actively create a peaceful, just, and equitable world.