

**2016 AJFCA Annual Conference
Kovod Award Submission**

Category: Replicable Programming – Behavioral Health Services

Agency: Alpert Jewish Family and Children’s Service

Community Served: Palm Beach County residents north of Boynton Beach

Agency Budget: \$12 million

Total program cost and funding sources: \$12,500; private donors

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Program: Relationships and Decisions: Teen Trainer Dating Abuse and Bullying Prevention Program.

Program Description:

The Relationships & Decisions Teen Trainer Dating Abuse and Bully Prevention Program is a program that trains nominated local Jewish high school teen leaders to educate other teenagers about bullying and dating abuse. Curriculum content includes the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, both dating relationships and friendships, early identification of abuse warning signs, how stereotypes and self-esteem impact our friendship and relationship choices, types of bullying and prevention, Jewish values, coping strategies, and seeking help.

The teen trainers use innovative and interactive teaching techniques, including large sized magnets, videos, games and websites as a means of engaging the teen audience. Once trained, these teens, under the direct guidance and supervision of the Domestic Abuse Program Director, teach the curriculum to other Jewish teens in the community. This innovative approach of teens hearing this content from peers allows teens to be part of the solution to this social issue, and additionally, allows the teen audience members to feel more comfortable receiving the program from their peers, opposed to an adult professional.

Website: An exciting addition to *Relationships and Decisions* is an interactive website, www.buildingsafersexes.org. Launched in July 2011, this website provides an online interactive educational experience for the teens who participate in our workshops, as well as other teens, both locally and nationally.

Outcomes:

1. At the end of each “gig” or workshop facilitated by the teen trainers, an evaluation form is completed by participants (please see submitted file for example of program evaluation from last year). The program consistently gets over 90% positive feedback from participants including having a better understanding of what a healthy relationship is and understanding how self-esteem relates to bullying and abuse.
2. The Relationships and Decisions program reaches approximately 150 community teens per year who become educated about bullying/abuse and have the tools to combat this in their own lives as well as assist their friends/family. The impact is far reaching, as they will share this knowledge with peers as they enter college and beyond.
3. Our teen trainers also benefit from participating in the program. They report being better equipped to handle their own relationship issues with an increase in self-esteem and self-awareness. Many of our trainers have taken this model to their college campuses and started peer dating abuse and prevention programs.