



REDUCING SEXISM AND VIOLENCE PROGRAM

A REPORT ON THE EVALUATION

FY 2008-2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Current levels of violence in high schools are unacceptable to school boards, to administrators and faculty, to parents, to communities, and most especially, to students who experience it on a daily basis. The reality that youth are afraid to attend school because of violence should be of concern to all of us. The 2007 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey data revealed that 27% of Maine students reported being in one or more fights within the past twelve months, that 15% of Maine students carried a weapon (gun, knife or club) at least one day in the past 30 days, and that 5% of Maine students reported they had carried a weapon on to school property.¹

Intertwined with school violence is a greater prevalence of personal violence among youth. A 2003 National Institute of Justice report on Youth Victimization found that 20% of dating couples reported some type of violence in their relationship.² Over the past thirty years, efforts towards raising awareness and providing services to victims of domestic violence have significantly changed the cultural acceptance of violence against women. However, the current generation of high school students reflects that there is still much work to be done. As school administrators, boards and communities search for a way to address gender and personal violence in their schools, curriculums, like the one used in the Reducing Sexism and Violence Program, are increasingly being implemented to educate various school populations, and to change the culture of violence that plagues many Maine high schools.

In 2008, Boys to Men received funding from The Bingham Program to contract with the Maine Center for Public Health (MCPH) to complete an independent evaluation of its Reducing Sexism and Violence Program (RSVP). RSVP is a high school student-based, "training-the-trainers" violence prevention program. The curriculum provides a two-day retreat where students learn about the roots of sexism, homophobia, and gender violence, along with tools to address and prevent it. The retreat is then followed with twelve hours of "train-the-trainer" material (provided in a number of sessions) to support behavior changes they learned at the retreat and to educate peers and teachers on what they have learned.

MCPH designed a mixed-methods evaluation for RSVP with two key dynamics. First, the evaluation was designed to provide quantitative data through the implementation of a quasi-experimental design evaluation using a pre-test and post-test with intervention and control groups. Second, the evaluation sought to provide qualitative data on the impact of participating in RSVP on the student and faculty participants, as well as the impact on school environment and administration. Both types of data were utilized to complete a process evaluation and an outcome evaluation throughout the 2008-2009 school year, as RSVP was being implemented at two southern Maine high schools.

This report presents the results of the comprehensive evaluation, and is divided into five key sections. Section I provides a brief background of the program and its evaluation, and Section II lays out the overall

¹ Department of Health and Human Services. Violence Prevention and Maine Students. Violence Prevention and United States Students. <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/injury/index.htm>. Accessed 17 August 2009.

² National Institute of Justice. 2003. Youth Victimization: Prevalence and Implications. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

evaluation methodology. Sections III (Process Evaluation) and IV (Outcome Evaluation) comprise the bulk of the report as they present the results of data analyses. Finally, Section V provides recommendations suggested from the overall evaluation findings presented in Sections III and IV.

Key Evaluation Findings

This evaluation soundly reflects that RSVP has a strong impact on participants, and is valued by the schools that implement it, as well as the participants who experience it. Both the process and outcome components provide clear indications that the program content is powerful and on target, and that the program is well executed by the Boys to Men trainers. Program objectives were successfully met (and then some in many cases) in all areas, such as behavioral change, fidelity to the curriculum, participant satisfaction, etc. As one “listens” to the voices of RSVP participants throughout this report, one hears resounding praise for the program, and a strong commitment to integrate its effects at both the personal and institutional levels. Among the many evaluation findings included in this report are the following key findings:

- The RSVP curriculum is powerful, effective, and resulted in substantial knowledge and behavior changes for the students who completed all program components.
- The content and curriculum design for RSVP were well-received by participants, and got high satisfaction marks for all groups of participants. The retreat component of RSVP had a tremendous impact on the students. Additionally, the exercises around deconstructing media messages, and on Sexual Assault in the Daily Routine, as identified by each gender, were especially evocative for the students. The consistency of the messages carried across all intervention groups.
- The significance of males hearing from female peers cannot be stressed enough in terms of the level of understanding these young men took away from RSVP. As one young man relayed:
“Going through this course, I notice I have about five times more respect for women and what they have to go through on a daily basis to keep themselves safe and what they go through to feel safe... I have a different view on our culture, like how we view women is just not right... there’s got to be a better way.”
- The RSVP trainers were excellent, or as many noted, “fabulous.” The trainers implemented the curriculum extremely well at both school sites, and the mix-gendered membership of the training team was seen by the students as an essential part of the experience.
- Change in how students see violence in their schools (and their lives), and their perceptions of levels and kinds of violence in school environments are significantly different post-RSVP, and are also significantly different from the other school populations (teachers and administrators) involved in the evaluation activities.
- Quasi-experimental, pre- and post-test survey portions of the evaluation reflect that knowledge, beliefs, skills, and attitudes favorably changed from pre- to post-test for intervention groups, and at higher percentages than the control group.
- There is value in evaluating the program on multiple levels as it continues to get implemented, and the evaluation results suggest that appropriately embedding the evaluation activities within program implementation is a positive next step for the program.

- The different program implementation formats used in the three intervention groups affected the level of program success. From this evaluation data, across the three formats the dynamics that provided greatest success included: (1) fall semester implementation; (2) strong support from school administrators and board; (3) committed faculty mentors; (4) a school environment open to discussions about violence; (5) equal gendered groups across all school social groups; and (6) ample opportunity for RSVP students to practice what they learned, and most significantly, to train adults.

Key Evaluation Recommendations

Throughout the course of the evaluation, concerns raised about the program lay mostly in the following areas: (1) implementation logistics (format and timing); (2) adequate support for RSVP implementation, including support for (and from) faculty and administration; (3) school environment; and (4) on-going support for the students once they have taken RSVP. Those concerns suggest the following key recommendations melded from the results of both the process and outcome components of this evaluation.

- Implementation of the program should happen no later than early spring.
- Develop alternative formats that alleviate the stress of conflict with other school responsibilities, classes, and commitments.
- Secure strong support and buy-in from school administration and faculty before implementation.
- Provide more preparation and on-going support for faculty mentors of RSVP.
- Engage in some type of environmental scan at the school before implementing RSVP.
- Provide follow-up support to the student participants beyond implementation of program curriculum.
- Be prudent in the administrative screening process for RSVP participants.
- Provide clear messages to students about the time commitment required to complete RSVP.
- Utilize the RSVP participants to promote the program.

Conclusion

As of the writing of this report, several quality improvements have already been integrated into RSVP for the upcoming school year. Among these program improvements are: (1) development of Memorandums of Understanding with each school to strengthen accountability and support; (2) online student surveys to increase response rates; (3) stronger school faculty coaching to increase connectivity; and (4) changes to the student selection process. As stated at the start of this report, a key function of this evaluation is to provide data and information to RSVP for continuous program improvement. It speaks volumes about the design and integrity of RSVP that program staff have so quickly incorporated key quality improvements.

I. BACKGROUND

A 2003 National Institute of Justice report on Youth Victimization found that 20% of dating couples reported some type of violence in their relationship. For the 500 young women (ages 15-24 years) surveyed in the report, 60% were currently involved in an on-going abusive relationship, and the report

stated that one in three high school students have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship.³ Additionally, a recent study of college students, published in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* (November 2008), reported that 45% of the students in the sample from three urban college campuses experienced violence in a relationship either before or during college. The study's authors stated further that of those 45%, one-third had experienced relationship violence before coming to college.⁴

The period prior to or before college may well include high school, where levels of violence have been increasing over recent years. For example, a 2002 joint report of US Departments of Education and Justice on School Crime and Safety reflected that 8% of students reported being bullied at school in the previous six months, a figure that rose from 5% in their previous 1999 report.⁵ Finally, it should be unacceptable that 40% of teenage girls (ages 14-17 years) report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.⁶

Increasing the safety of high school environments is of concern for those who spend time in them. Data from the 2007 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS) revealed that Maine schools were very reflective of the nation as a whole. The YRBS is conducted every two years during the spring semester, and represents data from 9th through 12th grade students. The 2007 YRBS data revealed that 27% of Maine students (and 36% nationally) reported being in one or more fights within the past twelve months; 15% of Maine students (and 18% nationally) carried a weapon (gun, knife or club) at least one day in the past 30 days; and that further, 5% of Maine students (6% nationally) carried a weapon on to school property. Additionally, 5% of Maine students (and 6% nationally) did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school at least one day in the past 30 days.⁷ It is these types of statistics that are increasingly making Maine high schools receptive to the implementation of violence prevention programs such as the Reducing Sexism and Violence Program (RSVP).

In 2008, Boys to Men contracted with the Maine Center for Public Health to complete an independent evaluation of its Reducing Sexism and Violence Program (RSVP). RSVP is a high school student-based, "training-the-trainers" violence prevention program. The curriculum provides a two-day retreat where students learn about the roots of sexism, homophobia, and gender violence, along with tools to address and prevent it. The retreat is then followed with twelve hours of "train-the-trainer" material (provided in a number of sessions) to support both behavior changes learned at the retreat, and to educate peers and teachers on what they have learned.

The goal of the mixed-methods evaluation of RSVP was two-fold. First, the evaluation was designed to provide quantitative data through a quasi-experimental design, with a pre-test and post-test administered in intervention and control groups. Second, the evaluation sought to provide qualitative data on the impact of RSVP participation on student and faculty participants, as well as the impact on

³ National Institute of Justice. 2003. Youth Victimization: Prevalence and Implications. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

⁴ American Public Health Association. November 2008. The Nation's Health.

⁵ U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. November 2002. Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2002.

⁶ Children NOW National Organization: Results of Kaiser Permanente poll, December 1995.

⁷ Department of Health and Human Services. Violence Prevention and Maine Students. Violence Prevention and United States Students. <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/injury/index.htm>. Accessed 17 August 2009.

school environment and administration. The evaluation was conducted at two southern Maine high schools during RSVP implementation in the 2008-2009 school year.

The original evaluation design was for RSVP to be implemented and evaluated in one high school (Site 1) in the fall of the school year. Another high school (Site 2) with similar dynamics was identified to provide and serve as the control group in the fall. This provided two groups of students in the fall, one receiving RSVP intervention, and one not. In the fall, the control group completed pre- and post-tests, but did not receive the program intervention. In the spring, the control group would participate in an RSVP intervention, which would result in two intervention groups for comparison. Because of the success of the fall RSVP, a second intervention group was added at Site 1 in the spring of 2009. Thus, three rather than two groups of students participated in RSVP training and program intervention during the school year, and are included in this evaluation.

The evaluation was designed to measure both the process and outcomes of RSVP, with special attention being paid to gender differences. The evaluation objectives were:

1. To evaluate RSVP outcomes, with gender-specific implications, including:
 - a. Change in levels of student knowledge and awareness;
 - b. Change in student attitudes and behaviors concerning sexism, homophobia, gender violence, and ability to be an active bystander; and
 - c. Level of media literacy acquired.
2. To document and understand the experiences of students who are exposed to RSVP curriculum, again paying special attention to gender differences:
 - a. Overall student satisfaction with RSVP; and
 - b. Students' reactions to RSVP.
3. To document and understand the context in which RSVP is implemented, including:
 - a. Faculty satisfaction with RSVP;
 - b. School climate, including professional staff's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors concerning sexism, gender violence, and homophobia; and
 - c. School policies, programs and activities already in place to support bystander responses to violence.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In order to provide substantive data to meet both goals of the evaluation, the evaluation framework included two components, process and outcome. The first component was designed to assess the process of providing the program, including the implementation of activities that collectively and theoretically result in improvements in outcomes. The second component was designed to determine the outcomes or

impact of the initiative. To highlight gender differences, the evaluation employed principles of feminist evaluation, and a participatory approach. The intent of the evaluation was to pay careful, considered attention to gender differences, as well as to look thoughtfully at the unique, gender-specific experiences of the girls and boys in the program separately.

A mixed-methodology evaluation design utilizing a variety of data collection tools was employed to ensure both quantitative and qualitative information was collected. Quantitative data was collected through the quasi-experimental design that included administering a pre-test and post-test to a group of students taking RSVP at Site 1 (the intervention/treatment group), and simultaneously to a group of students not currently taking RSVP at Site 2 (the comparison/control group). RSVP was then administered to the control group at Site 2, and a second intervention group at Site 1 in the spring of 2009. Qualitative data was collected from a variety of sources, with the central component being gender-specific focus groups with students who had completed one or both components of RSVP, and volunteered to participate in a focus group.

A. DATA SOURCES

Data sources for each component of the evaluation are outlined below.

PROCESS AND CONTEXT EVALUATION

- Participant Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 1)
- Faculty Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 2)
- Faculty follow-up interviews with Boys to Men Program Coordinator
- Trainer de-brief interviews completed by Boys to Men staff
- Student videos made by students at the retreats with RSVP training staff
- Student testimonials collected by RSVP staff
- Archival data collected by MCPH evaluator
- Focus group transcripts compiled by MCPH evaluator (Focus group questions are Appendix 3)
- Policy Inventory completed by the MCPH evaluator
- Faculty interviews conducted by MCPH evaluator (Interview questions are Appendix 4)
- Administrator interviews conducted by MCPH evaluator (Interview questions are Appendix 5)

OUTCOME AND IMPACT EVALUATION

- Participant Survey Pre- and Post-Tests (Appendices 6 & 7)
- Student videos made by students at the retreats with RSVP training staff
- Focus group transcripts completed by MCPH evaluator

B. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS and METHODS

All tools were developed by the Maine Center for Public Health, based on input from the Boys to Men program staff and a review of the literature of similar curriculum evaluations that have been completed. Northeastern University's evaluation of the Mentors in Violence Prevention program was particularly valuable to this evaluation, in terms of tool development and data collection methodology.

Before attending the retreat, permission forms were secured from parents that included permission for students to participate in evaluation activities, specifically completing the surveys and participating in the focus groups. Pre-test surveys were administered to all intervention groups at the very start of their retreat. The control group pre-test survey was administered later on the same day as the first intervention pre-test was administered. Post-test surveys were administered at the end of all RSVP training for every intervention group, and for the control group on the same day as post-test surveys were administered to the first intervention group. All pre- and post-test surveys were administered by the MCPH evaluators with no RSVP training staff present. As covered in the Outcome Evaluation section, all pre- and post-test survey data were entered, managed, and analyzed by the MCPH evaluation team.

The participant satisfaction surveys were administered by the MCPH evaluator at the end of all RSVP training for the first intervention group at Site 1. Data were compiled and analyzed by the MCPH evaluation team. Faculty satisfaction surveys were distributed by the Boys to Men Program Coordinator, and were sent anonymously to the MCPH evaluator, who compiled and analyzed them. The record of the RSVP trainer de-brief sessions conducted by the Boys to Men Program Coordinator and the student videos were both provided by the Boys to Men Program Coordinator to the MCPH evaluator for analysis. Archival data collection and the Policy Inventory review were both completed by the MCPH evaluator. The MCPH evaluator also conducted key-informant interviews with both school principals and one RSVP faculty mentor at each school site.

Finally, four focus groups were conducted for each of the three intervention groups. There were two female and two male focus groups for each intervention group, for a total of 12 focus groups. The focus groups were held in a conference room at each school, and lasted about 90 minutes each, which is the duration of one school period. Because RSVP trainers were female and male, it was important to have the focus group facilitators also be mix-gendered. Thus, both a male and a female evaluator co-facilitated the focus groups. A set of questions (Appendix 7) was developed with input from the Boys to Men staff, and utilized in each group. Because the dynamics of each group were different, the facilitators took some leeway in expanding (or contracting) some of the questions and the discussions they instigated. All focus groups were tape recorded and then transcribed by MCPH staff so the data could then be coded to identify key themes across the twelve focus groups, as well as to identify differences between intervention groups at each site.

C. PROCESS EVALUATION

The process evaluation component focused on the implementation of activities and strategies designed to bring about changes that were directly linked to program goals. The evaluation of process included documentation of: (1) how, to what extent, and at what level of program fidelity, implementation took place; (2) who received the training; and (3) the context within which the training was implemented. The

intent of this part of the evaluation is that it may provide valuable information that can be used to make improvements to the program, and assist in expanded implementation of the program in upcoming school years.

Specific implementation questions to be answered by the process evaluation include:

- Was RSVP successfully implemented, with program/curriculum fidelity, at all intervention sites?
- Were the student participants satisfied with the quality and content of RSVP?
- Were faculty mentors satisfied with the quality and content of RSVP?
- Was school administration and policy supportive of RSVP implementation?
- How effective was RSVP?
- What worked?
- What improvements, if any, can be made?

Understanding the contextual factors (e.g., environmental, organizational, etc.) that either hinder or facilitate a program's success provides important information that can be used for program replication and decision-making. The contextual component of the process evaluation can answer several broad questions as identified below:

- What aspects of the school environment can be identified as having been strengths or barriers to RSVP?
- How do staff attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors concerning gender violence relate to the implementation of RSVP?
- What policies are in place to support or hinder bystander responses to violence?
- Were there barriers to RSVP implementation? If so, what can be done to remove those barriers?
- Were there strengths and supports to RSVP implementation? If so, do they translate to changes in implementation?

Contextual factors were measured by faculty and administration interviews, faculty satisfaction surveys, student satisfaction surveys, focus group transcripts, and a policy inventory. Contextual factors at the two RSVP intervention sites were measured and compared. Participant characteristics (i.e., demographic data) and their experiences with the program, as well as program strengths and weaknesses, were measured primarily through participant and faculty satisfaction surveys, and pre- and post-test surveys. Participant characteristics were collected from all groups (intervention and control) in order to identify any significant differences in participants across groups and sites.

Additionally, archival data, such as session attendance sheets, were also used to monitor implementation. Finally, the contextual process evaluation relied heavily on data from the focus groups, which helped explore students' experiences with the program, specifically the unique and separate experiences of both boys and girls in the program.

D. OUTCOME EVALUATION

Outcome evaluation is an important component of any comprehensive evaluation plan. The outcome component helps to determine if short- and long-term results of a program have been met. In addition to determining outcomes, this component can demonstrate program effectiveness, as well as any anticipated and unanticipated changes that may have occurred over the course of program implementation.

The major tenant of the outcome evaluation component was the quasi-experimental design with an intervention group and a control group. RSVP was implemented at the first intervention group (Site 1) in the fall, and students from another school (Site 2) were selected to constitute a control group. The second school was chosen based on its willingness to serve as a comparison site in the fall in exchange for receiving RSVP during the spring of the 2008-2009 school year. Moreover, Site 2 was chosen since it was comparable to Site 1 in terms of student demographics and school size. Site 1 is in a more rural area of southern Maine than Site 2; however it is the "city" of that rural area. Site 2 is located in a diverse city in southern Maine, so while school size and demographics are quite similar for the two sites, there were some clear differences in terms of school resources and community involvement at each site.

School personnel recruited students in both treatment and control groups in the same manner, using the same leadership criteria for RSVP (i.e., students representing each social group at the school). While they were recruited as if they were receiving RSVP, students in the control group did not receive any information or training from RSVP while serving as the control group during the fall semester. They were offered the opportunity to participate in RSVP when it was implemented in the spring semester at Site 2, and 77% of the control group students chose to participate in RSVP in the spring session.

For the outcome evaluation, the outcomes measured relate to the groups in the same manner, i.e. participants' increased knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills (KABS) concerning sexism, homophobia, and gender violence. Also included were specific outcomes related to the unique roles for boys and girls. For example, awareness among boys of the unique role that boys and men play in the perpetuation of violence, and understanding among girls of what constitutes sexual harassment. Thus, pre- and post-test questions focused on outcome indicators addressing topics such as media literacy and awareness of the role of the media in the perpetuation of sexism; attitudes about gender violence, sexism and homophobia; an increase in self efficacy to be an empowered bystander; and students' intentions to talk with others about what they had learned.

The initial outcomes were assessed primarily through the use of pre- and post-test surveys administered to all students at the opening retreat, and to the control group before they participated in RSVP. The intervention and control group data were used to evaluate the impact of the RSVP program on students' KABS for students taking the course and those who did not. Because the fall control group became one of the spring intervention groups, pre- and post-test survey data across that change in status provided

another lens for looking at KABS for students who were part of both a control and intervention group. Additionally, the focus group data provided supporting insight into the program's impact.

Among the outcome questions the evaluation hoped to answer were:

- What are the important initial, intermediate, and long-term outcomes RSVP wants to achieve?
- What are the measures of success?
- How does RSVP know it has achieved the expected outcomes?
- What impact is RSVP having on the students? Faculty? School?
- What, if any, unanticipated impact has RSVP had?
- How effective was RSVP?

III. PROCESS EVALUATION

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

As noted above, the intent of the process evaluation component was to measure both the implementation of RSVP activities and strategies (to whom and how) designed to bring about changes as identified in the RSVP objectives, and the context in which the implementation took place. To measure implementation, the evaluation team used a variety of data sources, including the number of pre- and post-test surveys completed, focus group attendance rosters, trainer de-brief transcripts, curriculum outlines, faculty evaluations, and faculty interviews. Data sources were analyzed to identify the four dynamics (#1- #4) delineated below in order to answer the implementation evaluation questions established in the original design, as noted above.

1. NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The ideal design for the evaluation was set at recruiting 32 students at each site for each type of group (intervention or control), with an equal number of male students (16) and female students (16). Since ideal is rarely met, it is not surprising that only one of the four groups had 32 students, and none of the groups had an equal number of male and female students. It was anticipated that the fall control group would then become the spring intervention group at Site 2; however, only 77% of the fall students (13 female and 11 male) were part of both the fall control and the spring intervention group at Site 2. Table 1 delineates the number of participants in RSVP by data source for all students included in the evaluation.

Table 1: Student Participation by Data Source

Student Group	Pre-test Survey	Post-test survey	Focus group participation
Intervention-1 Group (Fall intervention at Site 1)	17 females 13 males	17 females* 12 males* (-8%)	10 females (-41%) 10 males (-23%)
Control Group (Fall comparison at Site 2)	16 females 15 males	16 females 12 males (-20%)	NA
Interventio-2 Group (Spring intervention at Site 2)	17 females 15 males (13 females & 11 males were also in Control Group)	10 females (-41%) 6 males (-60%)	10 females (-41%) 9 males (-40%)
Intervention-3 Group (Spring intervention at Site 1)	20 females 14 males	13 females (-35%) 10 males (-29%)	16 females (-20%) 10 males (-29%)
Totals:	70 females 57 males	56 females (-20%) 40 males (-30%)	36 females (-49%) 29 males (-49%)

*These 29 students also completed the participant satisfaction survey.

2. PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLETED RSVP

As Table 1 above indicates, there was some participant loss each time the pre- and post-test survey was administered to a group. The highest attrition rates are reflected in male students, and Site 2 had the highest attrition rate in reference to implementing RSVP. For the fall intervention/control groups, the pre- and post-test survey numbers held surprisingly well, with only 8% (Site 1) and 20% (Site 2) attrition rates for male students at each site, and no attrition among female students.

Of concern are the spring implementation numbers that reflect substantial declines in the number of participants who took the pre-test versus those who took the post-test. For those two combined intervention groups, over one-third (38%) of female participants did not finish the course, and almost half (45%) of the male participants did not finish the course. As will be discussed later in the report, the spring figures may provide support for the concept of not training late in the spring semester because the remainder of the school year is, as one mentor noted, *“so very busy, with so much going on.”*

Because the focus groups were held at a separate time from the training — about a week after the program had ended — and were voluntary and during school hours, it is not surprising that almost half the students (49% for both males and females) who entered RSVP did not choose to attend a focus group. Students, faculty, and administrators all raised scheduling as an issue affecting RSVP implementation. Examples for each category of participants include the following:

Students: *“One of the problems is planning ahead for days like this [focus groups day] and letting us know what’s going on ...I didn’t know about the focus groups happening, I heard it in the hall...”* and *“Thursday and Friday sessions back at school were hard because of scheduling and [faculty advisor name] was frustrated with all the complaining about the scheduling.”*

Faculty: *“The six workshops [follow-up sessions] are very time consuming and crazy to organize...I think that a couple day-long trainings would be more beneficial to the students than meeting every two weeks... It was hard for them to miss class and remember the dates and times.”*

Principal: *"If you're in an AP class and miss a couple of sections, that really puts kids behind, unless it's an exceptional kid or a kid who has a lot of support at home, but a lot of the kids don't. So too much time away from the classes was a concern for me."*

From an evaluation lens, the number of students who did not complete the full RSVP curriculum (retreat and follow-up sessions), particularly in the spring implementation groups, is a key issue that the program may want to address in the upcoming year. For most of the students who attended the focus groups, some of who did not finish the program, the reasons most commonly cited had to do with the logistics of when or how the follow-up sessions were held, and/or conflicts with previously scheduled activities or requirements. Below is an example of how one male contextualized it:

"It seems like most everybody went to the retreat thing. When we went to the [non-school location], it seemed like there weren't as many people there, because it was really cutting into school. We came to school and then went to [non-school location]. It felt to me like we went over it so fast, we weren't taking it in as much. I remember most of what happened at the retreat because it was a longer period of time."

3. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

The participant characteristics for the students are summarized in the first section of the Outcome Evaluation section (pages 39-59). For the process evaluation component, the characteristics that affected implementation fall into two categories: equality in numbers of female and male participants, and how participants (student and faculty) were chosen to participate in the program. In terms of focus groups, the larger number of female students affected data collection because adolescent females tend to be, and were, much more open and talkative in the focus groups. Only one of the male groups did not need to be drawn out, and they were part of Group #3, which had more females than males in it. The male participants in Group #3 were very verbal about saying that the RSVP experience was so powerful for them partly because they were *"outnumbered"* by the female participants in the program.

In terms of choosing who would be part of the program, it was not completely clear to a number of student participants how they got chosen. A number of students in Group #3 felt they were not chosen for their leadership role, but rather for their participation in other similar programs at the school, such as *Be the Change*. Additionally, for this group, the faculty mentors did not volunteer for their roles, but were assigned to be the mentors, based on other advising responsibilities they held at the school. Both these dynamics combined affected program implementation at Site 2. One implementation impact is reflected in the commitment level to the program, which may be part of reason behind the high attrition rate, and the faculty feelings of not being connected to the program, both of which are reflected in data from Site 2.

4. PROGRAM FIDELITY/QUALITY

Because the two school systems in which this evaluation took place are administered by and answerable to different principals and school boards, it was paramount that flexibility be provided to each school site around the format for implementing the RSVP curriculum. The only consistent component of RSVP implementation across the three intervention groups was the two-day retreat, held off school grounds, which started each program. While the retreats were held in different locations, they were always overnight, and included two full days of the curriculum. The remaining 12 hours of Train-the-Trainer

materials were provided during the school day and/or back at the school. The three distinct formats for providing the non-retreat sections of the curriculum were as follows.

Table 2: RSVP Implementation Formats

Student Group	How RSVP implemented after retreat
Group #1 Fall implementation at Site 1	Four sessions that were each two school time blocks long held over the two months following the retreat. The school blocks were rotated so students would not have to miss the same class each time they attended an RSVP session. All sessions were held on school grounds during the regular school day.
Group #2 Spring implementation at Site 2	Two days when there were teacher training days so students were not expected to be in school – 4 hours in the afternoon (early release day) and 8 hours the full next day – both days of training were held on school grounds.
Group #3 Spring implementation at Site 1	Two school days, two weeks apart, in the month before school ended for the year – both sessions took place off school grounds close to the school.

While it cannot be definitively determined why students chose not to complete the course, there was some discussion in the focus groups about why students might have not completed RSVP. The scheduling of time when there was no school – Group #2 – was the group with the highest attrition rates for both genders – 41% of the females and 60% of the males did not complete the post-test survey. 20% of those males who did not complete the final day of training (when the post-test was administered) did however come to the focus groups (held during a regular school day), and spoke about why they did not attend the follow-up training. The fact that they attended the focus groups speaks to their feelings of still feeling connected to RSVP because of their retreat experience. One young man’s account represents what others also said: *“It wasn’t because I didn’t want to be there. I wanted to go – I just had [another event that he had to attend]. We’re still a family. We shared stories.”*

Regardless of the implementation format utilized, it is clear from all assessment survey data that the trainers held to the fidelity of the curriculum content, and that the exercises within the curriculum were very powerful. As a result of the power and integrity of the content, the knowledge and skills gained from RSVP have had a huge impact on both students and faculty mentors. It will bear watching, as the program is implemented across a number of new schools in the fall, whether the attrition rates continue to vary by implementation format. If they remain at the levels found in this evaluation, then program staff need not be so concerned about whether timing and format make a difference, but rather, they may want to focus on the other dynamics that effect program implementation success, i.e. administration support, how youth are chosen, etc.

The data collected reflects that the quality of the program was perceived as excellent by those participants who chose to complete a satisfaction survey (results of which will be commented upon in a

subsequent section of the report), attend a focus group, or do a key informant interview. The following represent a sampling of comments that capture the level of fidelity and quality of the program:

Faculty: *"The training was unparalleled. They would never have the opportunity to do this in the course of their regular high school education."* and *"The program is so in your face that it can't be ignored...RSVP gets kids to respond and take action because it hits them with reality."*

Administrators: *"...it's a wonderful, wonderful program that the students, and the community, need...it gives kids a strong voice, in a positive way. I'm very glad that we got involved as it is the right program at the right time for our school."*

Students: *"Everything was pretty much covered. I thought it was fantastic,"* and *"There were people at the retreat, I wouldn't say we were close but now when I see them in the hallway, we talk. I think it opened up a whole bunch of things. You saw different people in different lights. People who you wouldn't expect to open up - did - and had really valid things to say...."*

B. CONTEXT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To determine the contextual factors that affected implementation of RSVP, the evaluation team utilized data sources that included the participant satisfaction surveys, faculty satisfaction surveys, student videos, focus group transcripts, policy and archival data, and faculty and administration key interviews. The data sources were analyzed to identify the following dynamics [#1 -#3] in order to answer the contextual evaluation questions established in the original design as noted previously:

1. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

School environment includes (non)acceptance of personal violence, sexist and homophobic language and/or harassment, and overall level of safety that students (and teachers) feel during the school day. There were very clear differences between the two school sites. At each site, there were differences between how student participants experienced the school environment, and how staff (faculty and administrators) talked about the school environment. Assessments of the physical environment and sexual harassment policies from each school also revealed differences between the two school sites.

In interviews with school administrators and faculty mentors, the independent evaluator asked how they perceived the level of violence in their school. Faculty mentors spoke about seeing stuff every single day that is tolerated by students and ignored by the teachers. As one said: *"It has become the norm for this generation to talk to each other in sexist terms."*

Both principals identified that the kind of violence in their school has changed over recent years to being more *"sexualized"* violence and *"girl on girl"* violence, rather than male on male or gang violence of the past. Neither principal acknowledged a level of violence that students portrayed in the focus groups. As one principal stated: *"...we're in a good place right now in terms of violence at the school, but there is always room to grow and we always want to do better."* He saw cultural changes (*"early sexuality for kids, sexism, racism, heightened sexuality..."*) as much more of a concern than physical violence, although he did acknowledge the connection between the two.

For the students, it was a different picture. The student perceptions of levels of violence at the above quoted principal's high school varied greatly across gender and grade level, or how long one had been at the school. For example, perceptions ranged from *"a fight every three months"* to *"oh there are fights every week."* Those perceptions were based on how they defined "fight," as well as where it happened (in the hall, on the grounds, in the classroom, etc.), and on their new heightened awareness of violence at school.

Across the groups, there was consensus that most (not all) faculty choose not to see (and/or address) the violence, unless it is serious or blatant. *"Teachers don't want to deal with it," "hall monitors sit outside their door and work on their laptops rather than monitor the halls,"* and *"there are a lot of fights and tons of verbal threats that are allowed to escalate,"* represent some of the comments. The students could all clearly identify the "hot spots" in the school environment where violence was the worst.

They were definitely questioning the school environment and the level of violence in it differently, after participating in RSVP than before they took the training. Many students identified that they were "hearing" offensive language in new ways since taking the course, and were changing their behavior in terms of using offensive and violent language. For example, one young woman noted: *"My tolerance level changed and I don't put up with what I did before, like name calling."* A male RSVP athlete relayed the following story:

"I was getting ready to go to the weight room and they were talking trash about this girl and I was like 'you guys are really low for talking like that' and they got really quiet" [Facilitator: Do you think someone had ever said something like that to them before?] "No. I was really tense when I said it but when I walked out I felt good about myself."

Finally, another young man shared this:

"It was weird, right after the retreat, when we got back to school, [friend's name] and I looked at each other as soon as we walked in and noticed so many things we normally didn't notice. I noticed, the day after, a girl in an argument with one of her friends calling each other names like slut, all over some guy. I noticed a guy yelling at another guy."

Again, the shared student perception was that there was more violence in the hallways and grounds than there should be in school. As a regional school for a number of small towns, Site1 provides the first "big" school experience for many students from those small towns. One such RSVP student was a freshman girl who told a poignant story about being excited to start high school in September. When she got to school, she found herself being exposed to fighting, name-calling, and violence that she was not used to at her old school. By mid-term, she expressed that on some days, she felt scared to come to school. She did not feel safe in school because of the *"incredible amount of violence ... and I'd never walk the trails for sure."* She went on to say:

"...after doing the exercise and realizing how little power I had to protect myself, I was scared coming back to high school after that attack on the trails ... I'll never go on those trails, not that I went on them before much, I might have once, but I won't ever go on those again for the rest of my high school career."

There were many such stories from the girls about their feelings of needing to protect themselves from violence and potential assault, and one girl even suggested that self-defense classes need to be part of the standard school curriculum for the girls.

As might be anticipated, views of the school environment around personal violence, sexism, homophobia, and sexual harassment vary substantially from students to staff (faculty and administrators). The sexual harassment policy at each school provides a good example for looking at these differing views.

The students' perception of how seriously the sexual harassment policy is taken by staff and faculty was varied at best. Students were aware that their school has a policy but that, like violence, it tends to get invoked when the incident is blatant or clearly unacceptable. As one young man stated: *"Yeah, there's a rule against it. Most teachers don't punish on it though, unless it was severe."* Even from the faculty perspective came: *"It's not enforced except major infractions and there is no one to enforce it in the hallways."*

However, there was also an example of when teachers step in before it gets *"too bad."* The example was given by a young woman about being patted on the rear by a classmate, and a teacher stepped in and invoked the policy. She indicated that if left to her own devices she would not have raised or pursued the incident. However, as the faculty worked through the incident with her, she realized that she had experienced an unwanted and inappropriate touch, and she was glad that the faculty pursued it so that the student experienced consequences from his action.

From the administration's perspective, both schools believe they do a good job implementing the policy *"when appropriate,"* i.e. blatant or brought to their attention. Both schools prefer to deal with complaints *"informally"* at first, and feel that in most cases, informal adjudication works so that a formal complaint process does not need to be initiated. The informal approach to dealing with sexual harassment may lend support to the students' views that sexual harassment is not taken seriously. Further, the informal avenue may reinforce the status quo, thus making it hard for students to initiate action even though they have now learned to do so through RSVP.

2. ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT FOR RSVP

Looking at the data across the three different program implementation experiences, it is evident that the success of RSVP is intimately linked to the beliefs and attitudes of school staff about the key issues addressed in the curriculum, such as sexism, gender violence, and sexual harassment. The greater the staff support for implementing the program, the more successful the program was, and the better chance it will have for being continued in subsequent years at a school. While the data reflects that the program had an impact in each environment, it also reflects that there was greater success where school administration was supportive, and faculty mentors were committed and engaged at all steps of implementation.

For example, for one site the administration was too overwhelmed to give RSVP staff the support needed to logistically run the program smoothly. As the administrator said:

"...school-wide we could have done a better job of selling RSVP...it is that RSVP is just the newest in a line of things people want us to do here in the high school...RSVP is a valuable program but it is one more thing I had to try to do...so I wasn't as responsive to [RSVP staff] as he wanted and couldn't make the level of commitment he wanted us to make."

This site also had faculty mentors who were very busy, and had to be persuaded to take on the responsibilities of RSVP, in addition to their already full advising schedules. As one said:

"They [administration] hadn't found a way to fit RSVP in the school environment before saying 'you gotta do it.'...there wasn't a structure for it to be ongoing here in the school."

In spite of the difficulty in planning for RSVP implementation noted above, administration and faculty at both sites overwhelmingly see RSVP as a valuable and important program with great impact. Even with the struggle of integrating the program into the existing school environment, one of the sites was committed to continuing the program next year. As the administrator stated:

"I hoped RSVP would bring a cultural awareness and a way to deal with cultural issues...I'd love to see lots more kids trained...and have students train faculty every year."

The support provided for RSVP implementation was different at the two sites, and had a direct bearing on both the process of program implementation and the continuation of the program at the schools. From an administration perspective, one school felt it would not continue unless the current RSVP group drives continuation, while the other school wanted to train at least 30 students each year. From the faculty perspective, faculty mentors at one school were not willing to continue with RSVP responsibilities, and at the other school, they were committed to keeping it going, but felt a need for different support and resources, if the program was to survive.

3. PARTICIPANT (STUDENT AND FACULTY) PERCEPTIONS: SATISFACTION & EXPERIENCES

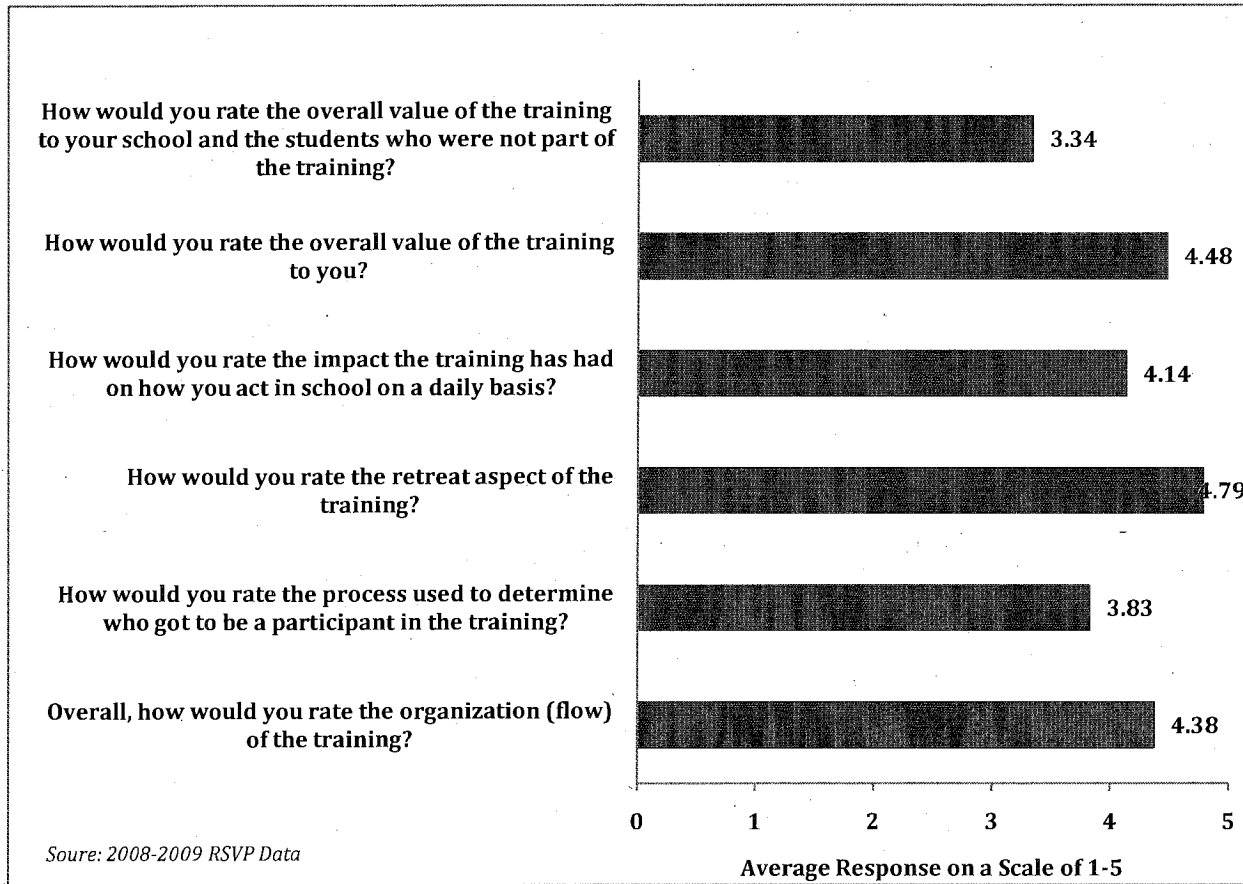
Perceptions of a program's success are comprised of one's satisfaction with the program, as well as one's experiences with the program. Thus, participant perceptions of RSVP can be evaluated for students and faculty, based on data that reflects both satisfaction and experiences of being in RSVP during the school year and beyond.

PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION/FEEDBACK with RSVP

(1) Student satisfaction was measured by a training evaluation survey given at the end of the last day of the training for the fall intervention group. Twenty-nine surveys were completed, and overwhelmingly reflect that the students were very satisfied with program implementation. The survey was comprised of four sections which focused on (1) general information on the overall organization and presentation of the training, (2) whether the training addressed the program goals, (3) skills of the trainers, and (4) other dynamics of the training such as most and least useful aspects of the training, what would make it better, etc. The first four sections utilized a Likert-type response scale (very poor (1) to excellent (5), with NA as an option). The final section consisted of open-ended questions.

Section I questions ranged from an average of 3.34 (overall value of training to school and students not part of the training) to 4.79 (retreat), with 4.48 for the overall personal value of training, and 4.14 for the personal impact of training. Figure 1 summarizes the responses for this section of questions.

Figure 1: Student Overall Satisfaction with RSVP Training (N=29)

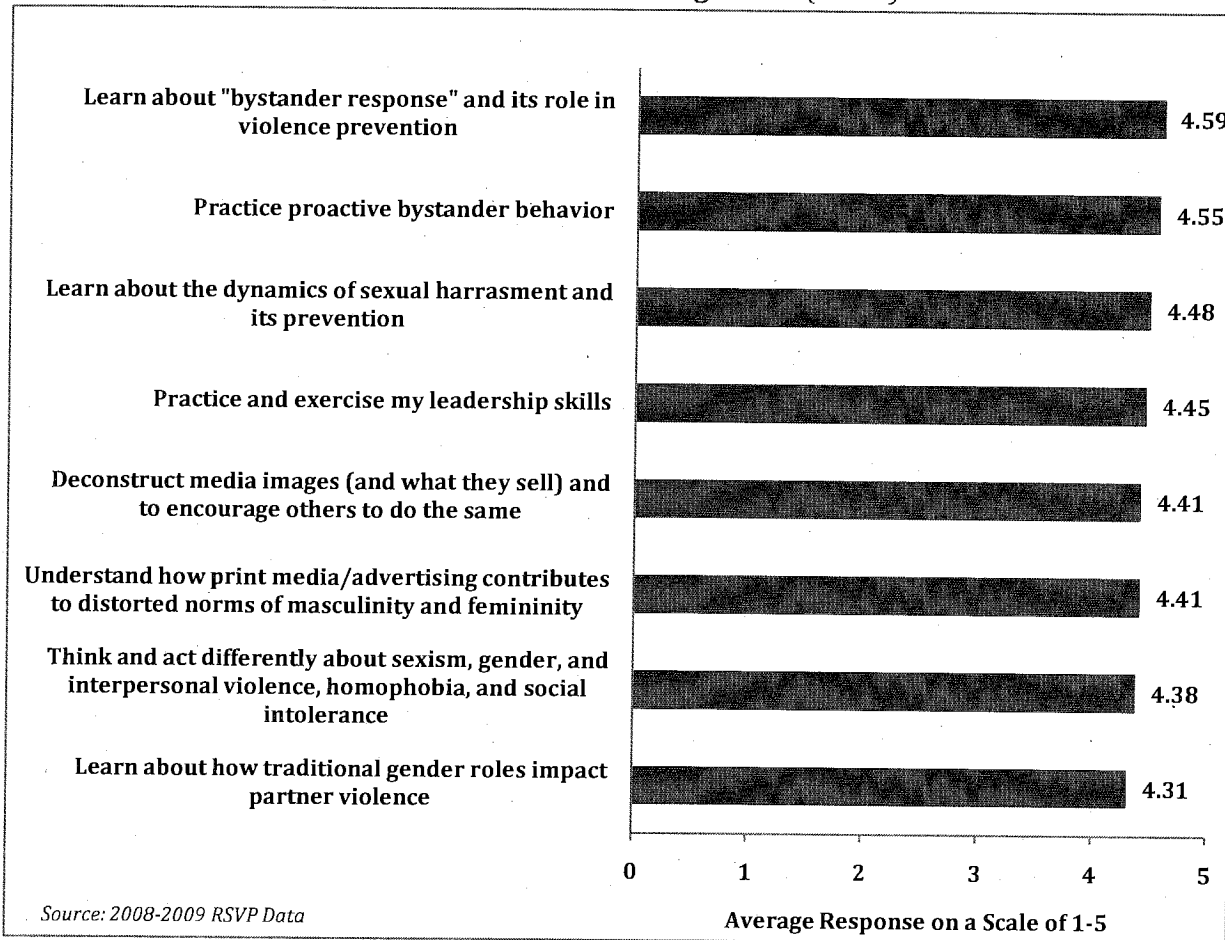


Section II, which addressed whether the training met its identified goals, had averages of 4.31 or better. The top four items the training provided them a chance to do were:

The Training provided an opportunity to...	Average Response on a Scale of 1-5
Learn about “bystander response”	4.59
Practice proactive bystander behavior	4.55
Learn about dynamics of sexual harassment	4.48
Practice and exercise my leadership skills	4.45

Figure 2 summarizes some of the questions from the “Goals” section, which are directly reflective of key skills and behaviors identified in curriculum objectives.

Figure 2: Student Satisfaction with RSVP Training Goals (N=29)



Section III of the survey addressed the quality and knowledge of the trainers. Across the boards, trainers got really high marks – 4.55 to 4.83 averages on the five questions in this section. Results from this section of questions include the following:

- “Trainers knowledgeable and presented the information in a way that I could understand” got 24 fives and 5 fours, for an average of 4.83.
- Lowest score in this section was the one question about bonding with the faculty mentors (whether it was important to them); however, in this section’s responses, “low” is relative as the average was 4.38.
- The trainers were also seen as role modeling the behaviors they were teaching (average score of 4.76 on a five-point scale), as open and approachable (average score of 4.72 on a five-point scale), and as creating a safe environment (average score of 4.62 on a five-point scale).

The final section of the survey asked four open-ended questions: (1) most useful aspect of training; (2) least helpful aspect of training; (3) content/interest areas that could be added to training; and (4) ways to improve training. A summary of responses with examples of key themes follows:

Most useful aspect of training: By far, the most frequent aspects noted were learning about the issues of sexism and violence, especially from another gender's perspective, and then how to talk about those issues. Deconstructing the media was also mentioned often. Of the 29 comments, these few provide a good representation:

- *"Learning about how media affects how society acts and confronting people about sexism/violent behavior."*
- *"I think it was when we split up into our own gender groups at training. Then rejoined back together. It really showed what the other gender thought."*
- *"Learning about how much sexism and violence is out there right in front of us but it's hard to see."*
- *"Doing the scenarios because it gave life examples and showed us how to deal with them."*
- *"The most useful aspect of the training would be when we learned about music videos and the hidden messages in them."*

Least helpful aspect of training: Almost all respondents found it hard to identify anything that was unhelpful in the training other than *"missing class"* and *"it's ending."* Of the 28 comments were the following:

- *"I don't think there was one. Everything we were trained on was very helpful."*
- *"There really wasn't anything that we did that wasn't helpful. We didn't have much time so we used it wisely."*
- *"No real part was the least helpful."*
- *"I found nothing or couldn't think of anything that was the least helpful to me. This program was outstanding and I learned a lot from it."*
- *"It was all good."*

Content/interest areas that could be added to training: While a number commented that the training is great the way it is, many wanted more practice with training skills, and more content matter on homophobia. Among the 23 comments were the following:

- *"I think the training is fabulous as it is!"*
- *"You covered it all."*
- *"All of the areas that I could possibly suggest are included already."*
- *"More talking about problems surrounding gays/lesbians... we didn't do a ton of that and that's one of the biggest problems at our school."*
- *"More scenarios and more interacting games or activities with others."*

Ways to improve training: Again, a lot of the comments indicated that the training is *"good the way it is,"* and the most frequent way to improve the training mentioned was *"more retreats."* A sampling of the 26 responses included:

- *"I think it's already fantastic."*
- *"Practice with other people that are not in the program and more retreats."*
- *"Maybe pick a different strategy for choosing who is accepted into the program."*
- *"More people!!! More involvement with teachers!! More involvement in community!"*
- *"More isolation. It's weird having the rest of the school walking and then just going to class."*

(2) Faculty Satisfaction was measured using faculty evaluation surveys that were administered by the RSVP program coordinator after the RSVP training sessions were completed. The completed surveys were then mailed by respondents to the MCPH evaluator. Seven surveys were completed, and reflect that faculty mentors thought the training program was very good, and that the trainers were excellent. A particularly representative comment was:

"I feel privileged to be part of such a powerful program. It is important that students are presented with information and have the choice of how they are going to use it."

The section on the survey where faculty mentors indicated the training had been less successful for them was in their answers to questions around whether the training provided an opportunity for them to "bond" with the students. The role of the faculty mentors in the RSVP curriculum is a tricky one in terms of putting faculty in the position usually held by students – being taught to. Faculty struggled with not wearing their teaching hat, for example, one suggested: *"Allow faculty to participate – train the faculty first and then have them participate."*

Among the other comments about their RSVP mentor role were the following:

- *"At times, I felt blind"*
- *"We could have benefited more from increased interaction with the students."*
- *"Standing in the background and not participating was hard, especially since I was responsible for working with the group after the training, I felt disconnected."*
- *"I really didn't feel like the training provided me with a chance to connect with students since I was asked to sit out most of the training."*
- *"I would love to see more opportunities for us to engage in some of the provocative training sessions with students."*

Aside from their role discomfort, the faculty unanimously support the content, impact and reach of RSVP. They clearly see it as a valuable addition to their school, even if it involves some work. The following is a sampling of comments from the faculty satisfaction surveys:

- *"Great program! I look forward to continuing my work with it" and "My eyes have been opened to the impact of media."*
- *"The retreat. It was so "clear" there and then to come back was always "rushed".*
- *"I think that a couple day-long trainings would be more beneficial to the students than meetings every 2 weeks. It was hard for them to miss class and remember the dates and times."*
- *"It has given the students a sense that we are taking time to address problems that happen both inside and out of the classroom. It has given me the chance to get to know students outside of my classes and show the students in my classes that I am proud of the school and want to do my part in making it a safe school."*
- *"Students (teens) are so influenced by the media that some of the training has helped my conversations and relationships."*
- *"The more faculty get involved as well as students, the much more powerful this can and will be."*
- *"I think we will see an impact on other students in the near future."*

PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES with PROGRAM

(1) Student experiences with the program are predominantly positive, and have instigated changes in their behavior. The focus groups included insightful and revealing discussions about what it was like to be in the program (struggles and joys), as well as what it has been like to return to school with their new knowledge and skills. In terms of how they experienced being part of RSVP, the following remark from the focus groups gives a good sense of the impact of the program's implementation:

"Everything we did opened up a lot. I'm one of those guys who isn't necessarily vocal about a lot of things; but when we saw that movie where the guy was screaming at the girl, it opened up some memories for me and I cried and had to leave."

From one of the young woman we heard:

"Nothing's changed in the real world and it kind of like, it's hard to like put what you've learned into the real world because there are so many people telling you like it's not okay, you know.....we all got along so well for those two days and we like said so much and learned so much but then we come back here and it's kind of like it is really hard to do something about it (the violence and language, etc.)."

In reference to how RSVP participants experienced returning to school and their everyday lives with the new knowledge and skills they gained from RSVP, the following comment from one young man provides a sense of what many relayed in the focus groups:

"I now know more about how the school works more than I did before I went. I notice what goes on between people now. A lot different. School's still the same, but it's how I see it, how we all act."

From two young women in the same group:

- *"Now being part of RSVP I know that being a leader is a really good thing 'cause then you can really try to get people to listen."*
- *"It's really hard to talk with a group of guys who haven't gone through it [RSVP] 'cause they just seem like so like closed minded, wicked closed minded."*

(2) Faculty experiences with the program focused heavily on their need for more clarity about their involvement in the program, and about a desire to know more about the program before they actually attended the sessions. As noted above, for the faculty, their role in RSVP was a reversal of their role as a teacher, i.e. they do not hold the knowledge and do not impart it to students. In RSVP, the students learn to be the teachers. Faculty was quite honest about expressing their initial discomfort with experiencing this different role; however, they also saw the value of the role, and felt they benefitted from the experience. In their words:

- *"Overall the training is superb for the students, but it leaves the faculty advisors feeling slightly lost and unprepared to move forward with the group."*

- *"It has given the students a sense that we are taking time to address problems that happen both inside and out of the classroom. It has given me the chance to get to know students outside of my classes and show the students in my classes that I am proud of the school and want to do my part in making it a safe school."*

Additionally, the faculty's RSVP experience included some frustration with issues that arose in terms of scheduling and timing of implementing the program, and a few experienced a sense of non-involvement because of the way their role in the program implementation is structured. The late spring implementation, when there are so many other demands on faculty in any school, was seen as problematic at both sites. Working around other school activities and classes was also difficult at both sites. RSVP may want to re-evaluate how they prepare faculty mentors to gracefully move into a different role for RSVP than they have in their other advisor contexts. However, it is important to reiterate that the RSVP experience was very powerful for a majority of the faculty mentors, as captured by these two comments from faculty satisfaction surveys:

- *"It has had a tremendous impact in that my own awareness of these issues has increased and I have gained greater understanding of the lives of students and the influences and pressures they face."*
- *"The information has been beyond valuable. All the information and opportunities have given me insight into how complicated teens worlds are."*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In addition to providing direction for program implementation, process evaluation assessments of both implementation and context can also provide critical insight into the effectiveness of the program. As we have seen above, how and in what context the program is implemented may affect whether students complete the program or not. Also, how and in what context the information/content of the program is provided will affect how the program participants "hear" and use the information.

Therefore, to answer the evaluation question "How effective was RSVP?" from a process lens, a fuller analysis of the focus group findings can shed light on program effectiveness. Effectiveness is of course measured against the objectives set forth for successful program implementation. Among the key objectives for RSVP, as stated in the curriculum, are the following:

- Raise awareness of interpersonal violence and provide tools to change attitudes, behaviors, and norms concerning interpersonal violence
- Challenge thinking about traditional gender norms, behaviors, and their impact on partner violence
- Introduce "bystander response," its role in violence prevention, and tools for implementation
- Build empathy for women as victims of violence
- Understand dynamics of power and control and battery in intimate relationships
- Understand dynamics of sexual harassment

- Understand how homophobia contributes to violence, sexism, and harassment
- Introduce media literacy and acquire skills to read the sexualized images that companies are using to sell merchandise
- Assist students to become leaders, and to use leadership skills

While a number of the above objectives will be measured through pre- and post-test survey data in the next section, the focus group data can help us assess whether other objectives listed above were successfully realized across the three intervention groups evaluated. The four focus groups were scheduled to be held as quickly as possible after the last session of RSVP was completed. Two groups were open to any female participants, and two groups were open to any male participants. While attendance was voluntary, efforts were made to get all students who completed the course to come to a focus group during the day the independent evaluators (one male and one female) were at the school.

As Table 1 indicates, for all components of the program, almost half the students did not end up in a focus group. However, if we look at the number of students who completed the program (i.e. did both program components and took the post-test survey), the number of students who did not end up in a focus group drops from around one-half to around one-third (28% for males and 36% for females). For two out of three intervention groups, more students attended the focus groups than filled out the post-test survey. An important caveat here is that because only half of RSVP participants who attended a retreat chose to attend a focus group, they should be seen as a self-selected and self-motivated group, and thus, cannot necessarily be generalized to all RSVP participants.

That said, based upon the program objectives, the focus group data collected reflects that the implementation of the program, and the context in which it happened, were positive from the students' point of view. The way the material was presented had a significant impact on them, and further, being part of RSVP has predicated changes in their behaviors around a range of issues that are identified as objectives of RSVP. For the key evaluation indicators tracked for measuring process success, highlights of the qualitative data analysis is presented for the themes identified in the above-listed objectives.

➤ **Student knowledge about violence against women and gender violence**

Students see physically and verbally abusive behavior differently. They identify that both types of abuse are occurring. However, students report that it is not monitored well by adults and that it gets dealt with usually only when it is "*bad*." They state that casual hitting and name calling happen a lot (for ex: "*oh, that's so gay*" or "*bitch*") and that verbally abusive behavior is used so frequently (with no repercussions) that it has lost its derogatory value. Because there is no culture of monitoring or intervening in the halls, students did not feel very supported, nor safe enough to intervene themselves — most students indicated that in a classroom, abusive behavior was more often addressed, and people were "*called out*" for verbal slams by most teachers.

As the pre- and post-test survey data reflects in the next section of this report, the change in knowledge about gender violence, and how violence against women impacts how women act in their daily lives, was greatest for the male students. The training exercise in which each gender had to identify what they do

each day to stay safe was especially powerful, and made it very clear to the young men that women are much more aware of the safety of their environment on a daily basis than males are. One of the more talkative male focus groups provided a trio of remarks about how women view the world, and how the exercise deeply affected these young men.

- *“Along the lines of respect, I’ve always respected people. I wasn’t clueless, but when I saw that huge list the girls made about what they do to keep themselves safe, it made me want to be more respectful.”*
- *“I used to walk around with a hood on a lot because it was comfortable and now I don’t because I noticed that a lot of women get scared really easily. I’m not going to do anything to anyone, women can slap me, spit on me, whatever, and I’m not going to do anything.”*
- *“When you’re hanging out with other guys, you can be aggressive, but when you’re hanging out with a group of girls, you can’t be as aggressive because they can get hurt. Different ways of being in the world.”*

➤ **Students’ knowledge of media messaging and deconstruction of those messages**

Listening to music differently, looking at media differently, and understanding the messages behind both were among the epiphany moments identified by most participants. The focus group discussion on media messages and deconstruction of the media were varied and literally filled pages. Many of the male students were impacted by the training’s focus on the content of rap music and its depiction of women. For example, these two quotes reflect the impact many experienced: *“...listening to music. I couldn’t listen to half the music I used to,”* and *“I won’t listen to rap music anymore. I only listen to heavy metal now, and I won’t spend a dime downloading rap anymore.”*

A sampling of the other comments around the impact of the training that addressed media messaging and media deconstruction include the following.

From the females:

- *“I think the media thing affected me the most. I notice a lot more about what people say, the words they use. Like the word “gay”. Now I tell them it’s not okay, but not in an overbearing way.”*
- *“No one gives you a list of rules about how to be a woman but all the subliminal messages tell you how to be a woman.”*
- *“I wasn’t able to take media apart, like I’d look at ads in magazines and just see an image. Now I show it to my parents and ask “you know what that’s asking?”*

From the males:

- *“I notice the way things are sold and it makes no sense.”*
- *Before this meeting I thought what rappers and hip hop artists did made them the “MAN” or the one I should strive to be. My eyes opened up and I saw how the media was conditioning young people to think what the media wanted. And act like the media wants you to so when younger kids see how you act, they act like you, making an everlasting chain of sexism and violence.”*

- *“My uncle came to my room and heard the music I listen to and he asked “how can you understand even one word they say?” I think a lot of it is a language barrier, where you come from and the time you grew up in. You grew up with music by the Beatles and some of that is about drugs. I tend to listen to the music my younger siblings listen to more now, too. It’s a lot easier to block out what you don’t like.”*
- *“I confronted one of my friends for [song title]. I didn’t appreciate hearing that song. I used to like it until I actually listened to it.”*

➤ **Student attitudes regarding intervention and active bystander behavior**

Students expressed that they did not feel safe or supported as active bystanders in the school environment. *“Unless it is really bad, like some guy wailing on his girlfriend, and then I’d step in because the bottom line is that you don’t hit a girl.”* They felt some of their classrooms provide a safe environment to use their active bystander skills, but overall the place they are using those skills is at home, and with their peers.

A great example of influencing parents came from a male student who, while riding in the truck with his dad, *“called out”* his father for making a sexist remark about a young woman they were passing on the sidewalk. *“I said, Dad, that’s not a good thing to do, to sexualize girls like that, it isn’t very good...”* The young man then used the moment to do some education with his Dad about what he was learning in the RSVP course. The young man was very pleased when at the end of telling the story, he shared that his father was receptive to the conversation, and even apologized to this young man for his remarks about the young woman.

Many of the students felt empowered to intervene with younger siblings. In the next section of the report, this empowerment will be discussed in more detail. What was particularly interesting in these conversations was the students’ belief that *“we have already been tainted,”* but they do believe they can redirect messages that the next generation is getting. As one young man shared:

“My twelve year old nephew is the spitting image of everything I was into it and I notice everything he does... Where he lives, he gets exposed to a lot and I’m trying to tell him what he’s exposed to isn’t who he is. He gets it. He’s already picked up the phone and called the cops before on arguing neighbors. He called the cops once, got his sister and told his mother “we’re leaving”. Twelve years old. That’s from me sitting down a few times, talking to him. I think he’s going to be a perfect kid for a group like this.”

➤ **Change in student behavior**

In the focus group discussions the students wrestled with how taking RSVP has changed their behavior in a number of contexts, such as school, home, personal relationships, etc. The students’ words speak for themselves in the following group of remarks.

From the females:

- *"I don't think they take it seriously. I think as a school we need to do this together. I'm a totally different person after this. I thought I'd go and it'd be everything I already knew and that wasn't true. I learned a lot more about media, about myself. A lot more conscientious about what I say."*
- *"I think I'm more cautious of what I do and what I say. I pay more attention to what's around me and what people are saying."*
- *"I wish there was something we could do that would change the way everyone felt in a big way."*
- *"All the guys that went were really appreciated everything; they are like wow, we didn't know that you had to do that."*
- *"When they see our point of view, it really shows them a different thing"* (referencing the exercises).

From the males:

- *"I was walking down the street with a friend and what he was saying, I wasn't offended but I was more aware of it because of the program. He could tell it was aggravating me. I didn't want to go too much at him, because he's my friend, but I wanted him to know I didn't appreciate what he was saying..."*
- *I definitely think about media. I notice now that when commercials come on, I got up and do something else during that time. Music videos – I don't watch them as much anymore. I stay away from it, because of everything I see now."*

➤ **What changed the most for them after RSVP:**

One of the focus group questions asked the participants to identify one thing that has changed the most for them as a result of being part of RSVP. The following are just a few of the responses provided by the RSVP focus group participants.

From the females:

- *"I really just think that like my whole like my views on so much, like names being called and like harassment and like I just see so much more in the hallways now, and in movies and on TV like I see so much more that it just like changes everything and it just makes such a big difference, like, I just look at myself and think 'how could I not see that before?'"*
- *"The way I look at life now. My whole outlook on everything is very different. I'm willing to stand up now."*
- *"I agree, the biggest thing that changed was me, you know, like my views and my senses have been sharpened to the media and what my friends are saying and I've gotten better at communicating my views..."*
- *"My whole life. I see everything different."*
- *"Noticing what is going around in the school like name calling."*
- *"Just looking through the world with another lens."*

From the males:

- *“Going through this course, I notice I have about five times more respect for women and what they have to go through on a daily basis to keep themselves safe and what they go through to feel safe...”*
- *“I changed from my knowledge of things going on. I’m more perceptive now. I have more information to help stop that [personal violence].”*
- *“The media piece – TV and music.”*
- *“I have a different view on our culture, like how we view women is just not right. Like how we advertise things, with using half-naked women. We shouldn’t have to do that just to sell things. There’s got to be a better way. It made me want everyone to learn about it.”*
- *“The abuse and neglect between people and trying to do my best to prevent it happening, like prevent a fight or argument.”*

LIMITATIONS

For the process outcome component of the evaluation, there are a couple of limitations that should be taken into consideration. The first limitation is the attrition rate of participants who completed all scheduled program activities, which includes the retreat educational component and the follow-up train-the-trainer training sessions. For example, as noted earlier, it is impossible to ascertain the impact of attrition on the focus group data, both in terms of the voluntary attendance at the groups and the numbers of focus group attendees who completed both program components.

The second limitation was logistics, such as scheduling in the schools. The variety of implementation formats caused confusion and decreased a sense of flow. This variety of formats made the comparative analysis of some dynamics impossible, and also had an impact on the composition and collection of focus group data and satisfaction surveys. However, the evaluation team was able to collect a broad range and plethora of data to utilize in the overall evaluation.

IV. OUTCOME EVALUATION

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A pre- and post-test survey design with intervention and control groups was utilized to evaluate the impact of the school-based RSVP on student knowledge and attitudes. The survey instrument was adapted from the tool designed for the Mentors in Violence Prevention program at Northeastern University. Survey sections covered the following topics: demographic data (10 questions), knowledge (5 questions), gender violence (22 questions), violence prevention (12 questions), personal attitudes (9 questions), and perception of attitudes among peers of the same gender (9 questions). There were separate surveys for female and male students, with differences in questions for three out of the five sections (see Appendices 6 & 7).

Sampling sites were two high schools in Maine. At Site 1, the Intervention-1 Group was administered a pre-test in October 2008, and a post-test in January 2009; the Intervention-3 Group was administered a pre-test in February 2009, and a post-test in March 2009. At Site 2, the Intervention-2 Group was administered a pre-test in April 2009, and a post-test in May 2009; the Control Group was administered a pre-test in October 2008, and a post-test in January 2009. Pre- and post-test surveys were administered on-site in a group setting. Please refer to Table 3 for a breakdown by site-group and test. Survey data were entered, managed, and analyzed using SPSS software program v14.0. Please note that aggregate, not case-matched data, were reported for all sections. *reason for not recording missing pre or post*

Table 3: RSVP Participation Information, by Site-Group and Test

	Site 1		Site 2	
	Intervention-1 (n)	Intervention-3 (n)	Control (n)	Intervention-2 (n)
Pre-test	30	34	31	32
Post-test	29	23	28	16
Attrition rate	3.3%	32.4%	9.7%	50.0%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section summarizes demographic and program data for the four groups in the evaluation design.

A. BACKGROUND DATA ON STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This section summarizes sex, age, grade, race/ethnicity, extracurricular activities, previous participation, and survivor status related to gender violence, for student respondents in the four groups. At the time of survey administration, the evaluators informed the students that the demographic data section of the survey would be utilized to obtain a snapshot of RSVP participant composition, and was optional. While it was suggested that all students fill out the demographic section, some chose not to answer certain questions at pre-test and/or post-test, and others chose not to answer all of the questions at post-test since their responses had not changed from pre-test.

SEX AND AGE

Sex and age distributions for student respondents in the RSVP Intervention and Control groups at pre-test are summarized in Table 4 and Figures 3-4.

Table 4: Sex and Age Distributions for Respondents in RSVP Intervention and Control Groups

Groups	Sex		Age
	Female (n)	Male (n)	Mean (years)
Control	16	15	16.1
Intervention-1	17	13	15.2
Intervention-2	17	15	16.3
Intervention-3	20	14	15.0

Note: For denominator data, please refer to Table 1.

Figure 3: Sex Distribution for RSVP Intervention and Control Groups

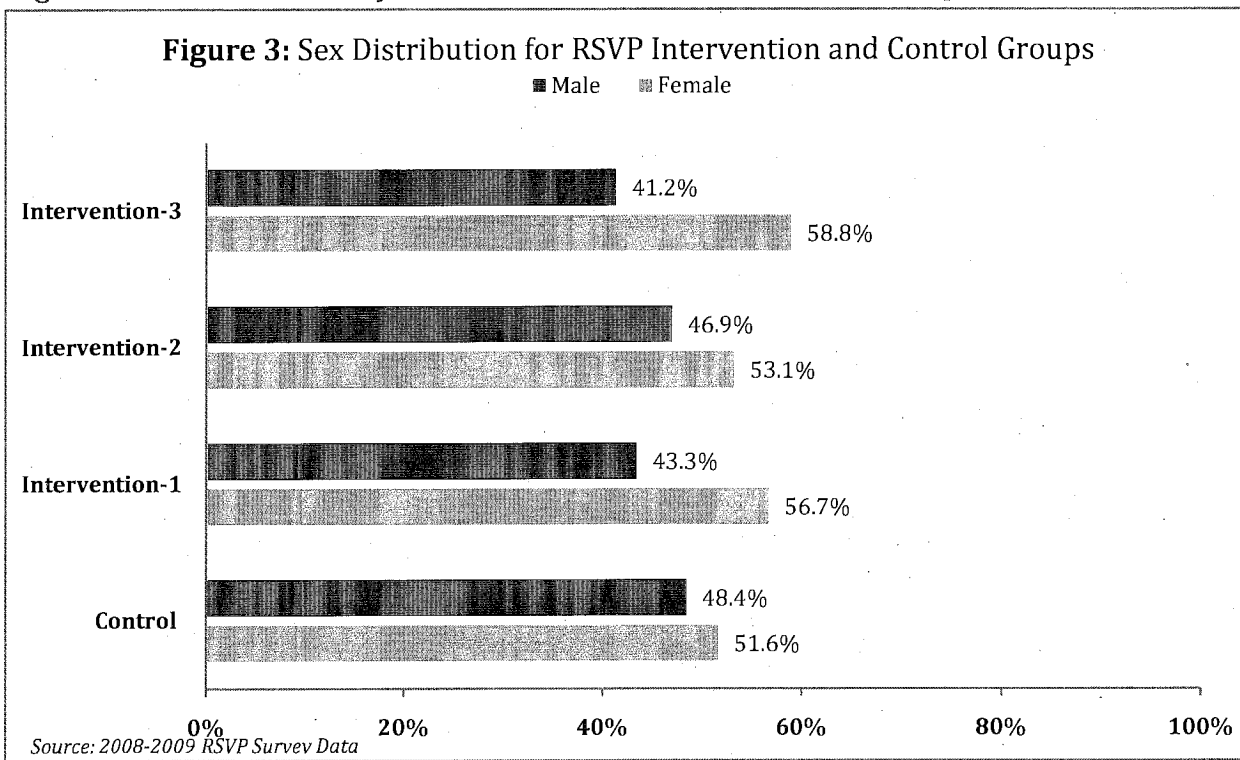
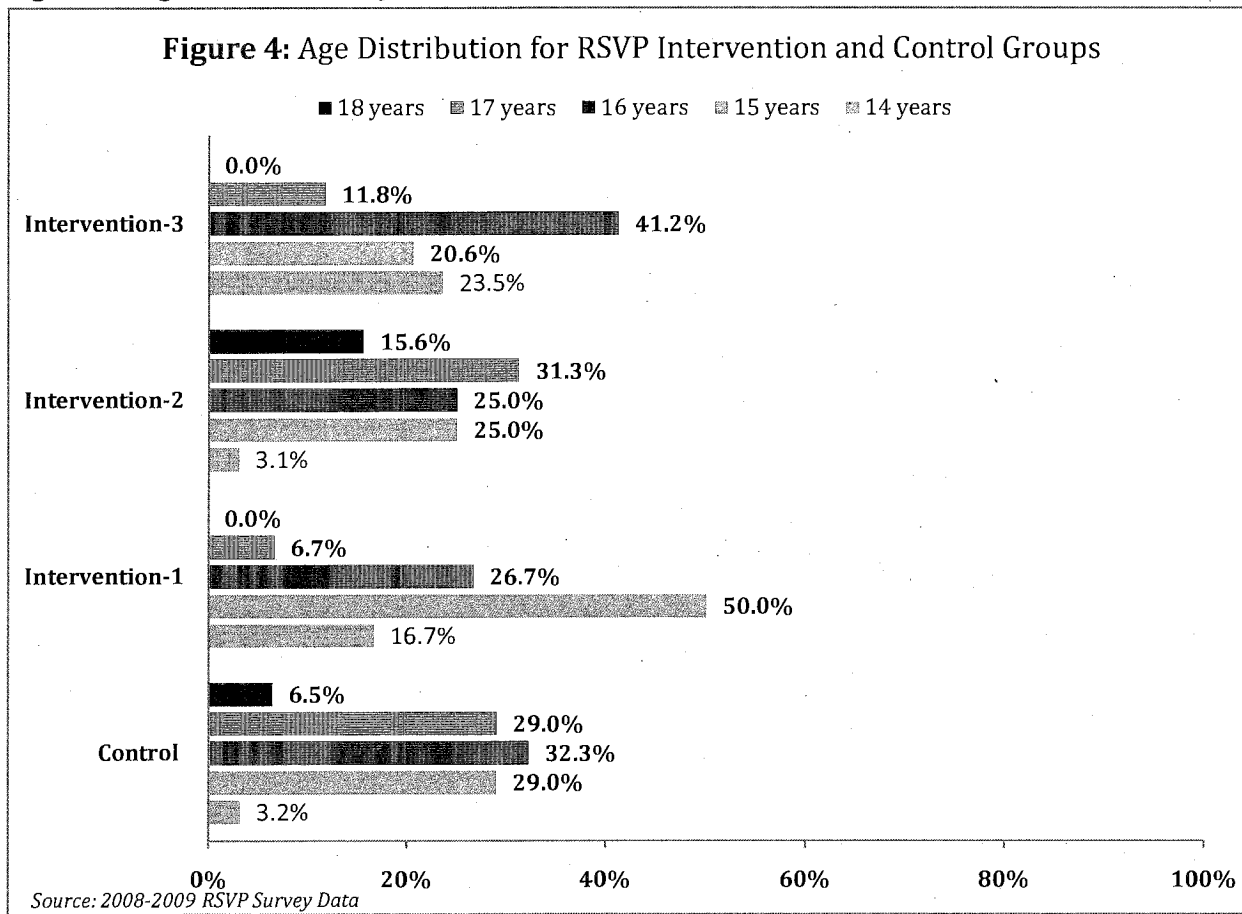


Figure 4: Age Distribution for RSVP Intervention and Control Groups



GRADE

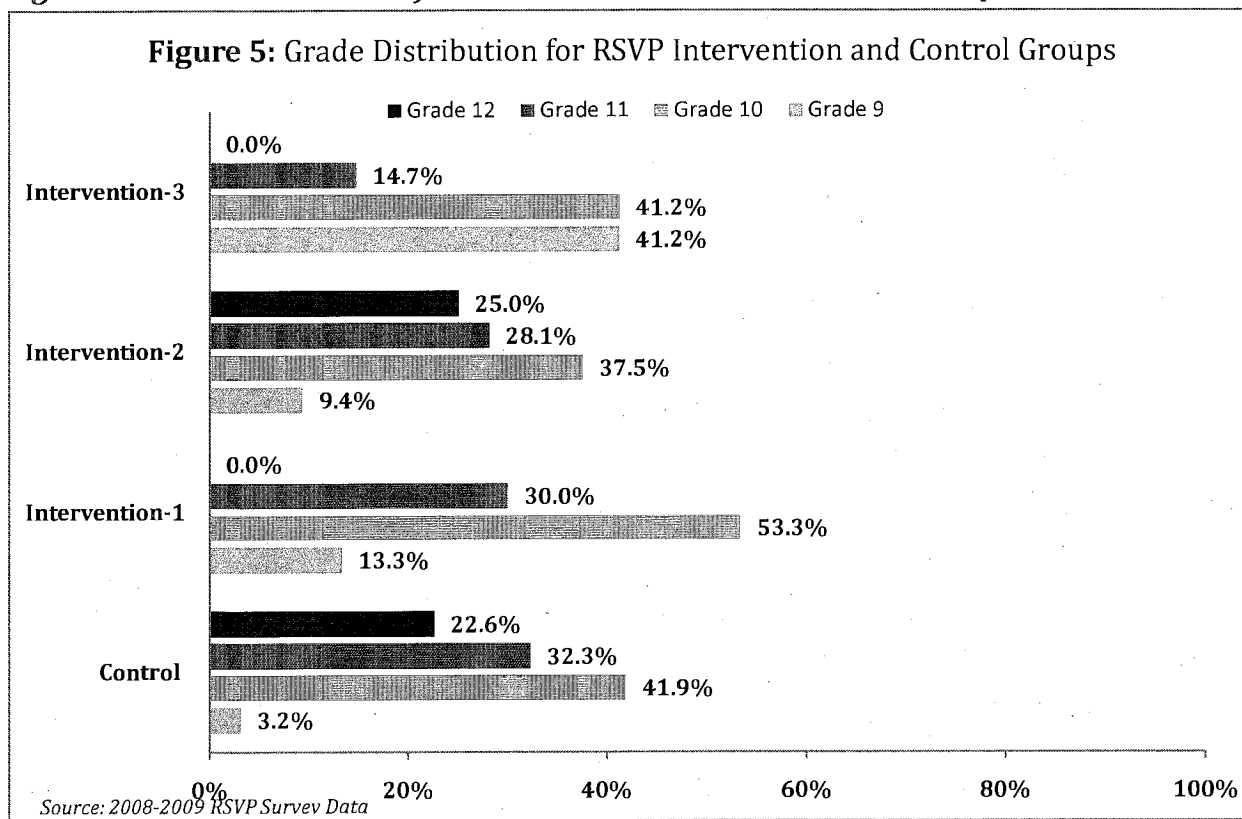
Grade distribution for student respondents in the RSVP Intervention and Control groups at pre-test is summarized in Table 5 and Figure 5.

Table 5: Grade Distribution for Respondents in RSVP Intervention and Control Groups

Groups	Grade			
	Grade 9 (n)	Grade 10 (n)	Grade 11 (n)	Grade 12 (n)
Control	1	13	10	7
Intervention-1	4	16	9	0
Intervention-2	3	12	9	8
Intervention-3	14	14	5	0

Note: For denominator data, please refer to Table 1.

Figure 5: Grade Distribution for RSVP Intervention and Control Groups



RACE/ETHNICITY

Racial/ethnic distribution for student respondents in the RSVP Intervention and Control groups at pre-test is summarized in Table 6. The “other” category included respondents from mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Table 6: Racial/Ethnic Distribution for Respondents in RSVP Intervention and Control Groups

Groups	Ethnic/Racial Background					
	African American (%)	Asian American (%)	European American (%)	Hispanic American (%)	Native American (%)	Other (%)
Control	3.2	3.2	74.2	0.0	3.2	12.9
Intervention-1	0.0	6.7	76.7	6.7	0.0	6.7
Intervention-2	6.3	3.1	75.0	0.0	6.3	9.4
Intervention-3	0.0	5.9	76.5	5.9	0.0	5.9

Note: For denominator data, please refer to Table 1.

OTHER BACKGROUND DATA

Student respondents in RSVP Intervention and Control groups also answered questions providing other background data at pre-test, which are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Other Background Data for Respondents in RSVP Intervention and Control Groups

	Site-1		Site-2	
	Intervention -1 (%)	Intervention-3 (%)	Control (%)	Intervention-2 (%)
Students reporting at least one extracurricular and/or leadership activity	86.7	85.3	80.6	78.1
Students who previously attended a sexual assault/rape program	10.0	2.9	16.1	12.5
Students who previously attended a sexual harassment program	16.7	2.9	22.6	12.5
Students who previously attended a dating violence/battery program	16.7	2.9	22.6	9.4
Students reported status as a gender violence survivor	23.3	8.8	19.4	31.3

Note: For denominator data, please refer to Table 1.

Examples of programs included Caring Unlimited, Challenge Day, and Camp Counselor Training for the Control Group; YAADA, Caring Unlimited, and Employee Training for the Intervention-1 Group; Be the Change, USM and Employee Training for the Intervention-2 Group; and Caring Unlimited for the Intervention-3 Group.

B. RSVP DATA ABOUT INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE, BELIEFS, SKILLS, & ATTITUDES

The following pre- and post-test data comparisons are presented in bulleted format in subsequent sections (I – IV):

- Control (Site 2) versus Intervention-1 (Site 1)
- Control (Site 2) versus Intervention-2 (Site 2)
- Intervention-1 (Site 1) versus Intervention-3 (Site 1)

Quantitative data analyses and results in subsequent sections were guided by analytical plans from the evaluation of the Mentors in Violence Prevention program.

SECTION I: STUDENT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This section assessed the impact of RSVP on student knowledge about violence against women. Pre-test and post-test results, for the five questions in this section, were compared by running three-way cross-tabulations, by group-test and sex.

1: According to ME law, it may be considered rape if a man has sex with a woman who is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. (The correct response is True.)

- For the Control, 68.8% of female students and 86.7% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. There was no difference for female students at post-test (68.8%); however, 100.0% of male students answered correctly at post-test. In comparison, 64.7% of female students and 61.5% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-1; these increased to 94.1% and 91.7% at post-test for female and male students, respectively.
- For the Control, 68.8% of female students and 86.7% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. There was no difference for female students at post-test (68.8%); however, 100.0% of male students answered correctly at post-test. In comparison, 82.4% of female students and 66.7% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-2; this dropped to 70.0% for female students, and rose to 86.7% for male students at post-test.
- For Intervention-1, 64.7% of female students and 61.5% of male students answered correctly at pre-test; these increased to 94.1% and 91.7% at post-test for female and male students, respectively. Intervention-3 fared better, with 65.0% of female students and 78.6% of male students answering correctly at pre-test, and 100.0% of female and male students at post-test.

Discussion: Based on these descriptive findings, there was a marked increase in knowledge among male students for both control and intervention groups. The increase in the control group may suggest that just asking the question might lead to some knowledge gain or at least awareness about the Maine law. Additionally, three of the four groups of female students maintained or increased their knowledge, which may speak to an increase of empowerment and self-efficacy after understanding the law.

In the focus groups, a number of young women mentioned that they continued to struggle with feeling “responsible” to stop unwanted sex. Comments such as: *“It’s a women’s fault if she is drunk,”* and *“It’s a fine line between consensual sex and rape,”* represent that struggle. For male focus group participants, even with the increased knowledge, there was still confusion, as reflected in the following quotes from two young men:

- *“From all of the RSVP stuff I learned, doing anything like that with alcohol is a stupid thing. It’s just not smart to do anything with alcohol.”*
- *“There’s still a lot of confusion from a lot of the people, even though they’ve gone through this, there’s still a lot of confusion because things happen when you’re drunk and you can never tell what’s going to happen.”*

2: As long as you are just joking around, what you say or do to someone cannot be considered sexual harassment. (The correct response is False.)

- For the Control, 100.0% of female and male students answered correctly at pre-test. At post-test, 100.0% of male students answered correctly, and 93.8% of female students; the decrease for female students (n=1) was an incorrect response of “I don’t know” at post-test. In comparison, 100% of female and male students answered correctly at pre-test and post-test for Intervention-1.

- For the Control, 100.0% of female and male students answered correctly at pre-test. At post-test, 100.0% of male students answered correctly, and 93.8% of female students. In comparison, 94.1% of female students and 86.7% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-2; this dropped to 90.0% for female students, and rose to 100.0% for male students at post-test.
- For Intervention-1, 100.0% of female and male students answered correctly at pre-test and post-test. In comparison, 90.0% of female students and 92.9% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-3, and this rose to 100.0% for both female and male students at post-test.

Discussion: Based on the above descriptive findings across all groups, the pre-test level of knowledge was high, with a range of 86.7-100.0%. All groups at post-test scored between 90.0-100.0%. This was a topic that students wrestled with before and after RSVP exposure on a regular basis, and talked about frequently in the focus groups. The focus group facilitators asked students to identify a “line in the sand” for when words/actions move from jokes to harassment or being offensive. The following quotes capture some views from female and male students on what is okay (and with whom) versus what is not okay.

Female students:

- *“A lot of it is control stuff not actual physical violence.”*
- *“I think it’s along the lines of if you’re uncomfortable. If they say ‘you look nice today.’ That’s a compliment, but if they say ‘your butt looks good in those jeans,’ then it depends on the person.”*

Male students:

- *“A lot of the verbal is joking around, 60% of it. But there is some actual violence.”*
- *“Sometimes I hear people say what they may do to someone if they don’t act right, but I think they’re just showing off most of the time. I hear a lot on the bus but I’m sure none of it’s really true.”*

3: *People on TV and in the movies influence the way we act as men and women. (The correct response is True.)*

- For the Control, 86.7% of female students and 100.0% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. At post-test, there was decrease in correct responses among female (81.3%) and male (91.7%) students. In comparison, 82.4% of female students and 84.6% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-1; these increased to 100.0% at post-test for both female and male students.
- For the Control, 86.7% of female students and 100.0% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. At post-test, there was decrease in correct responses among female (81.3%) and male (91.7%) students. In comparison, 76.5% of female students and 93.0% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-2; these increased to 100.0% for both female and male students at post-test.
- For Intervention-1, 82.4% of female students and 84.6% of male students answered correctly at pre-test; these increased to 100.0% at post-test for both female and male students. In comparison, 90.0% of female students and 92.9% of male students from Intervention-3 answered correctly at pre-test, and this increased to 100.0% for both female and male students at post-test.

Discussion: As noted earlier (pg. 34), awareness of media messages and representation of personal and gender violence in the media were areas of the training where students felt some of the strongest impact, and probably experienced the greatest change in perspectives and attitudes. The increase to 100.0% at post-test for all three intervention groups identified in the descriptive findings was a reflection of how solidly the media deconstruction sections of the training changed attitudes and behaviors around media messaging.

By way of example, focus group facilitators asked students whether RSVP has caused them to think about the influence of media on their younger siblings. Many youth told stories about returning home from the retreat, and actually “noticing” what their younger siblings were watching on TV and/or what video games they were playing. One young woman relayed a story of approaching her mother to say she did not think her brother should be listening to rap music, and when her mother shrugged her off, she shared the following: *“I wasn’t about to just leave it at that, so I asked my mom ‘have you listened to the words to that song?’”* When her mother said no, she stated, *“I brought it up on my iPod and had her listen to the words. She was like, oh my word...”* In another group, a girl had this to say:

“Just the advertisements and such, like Axe shampoo. My brother is eight and he told my mom ‘I put Axe on today so I can go downtown and get some babes.’ We know he’s joking, because it’s on the back of the box. Even on little things like shampoo we’re getting those messages.”

Lastly, one young man relayed a story about convincing his parents not to let his 12 year old brother play the Grand Theft Auto video game: *“...you can’t let him watch that or play that, it’s really really bad...they said ‘it’s just a video game’ so I made them watch it...”* His parents then chose to take the video game away from his brother.

4: Men perpetrate (commit) over 90% of violent crime in the U.S. (The correct response is True.)

- For the Control, 56.3% of female students and 50.0% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. This decreased to 25.0% for female students at post-test, with “I don’t know” responses increasing from 12.5% to 43.8%. 66.7% of male students answered correctly at post-test. In comparison, 52.9% of female students and 53.8% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-1; these increased to 76.5% and 83.3% at post-test for female and male students, respectively. In addition, the percentage of female students who answered, “I don’t know” decreased from 35.3% at pre-test to 5.9% at post-test; also, there was a decrease from 30.8% to 8.3% for the incorrect response “I don’t know” among male students.
- For the Control, 56.3% of female students and 50.0% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. This decreased to 25.0% for female students, and increased to 66.7% for male students at post-test. In comparison, 29.4% of female students and 40.0% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-2; these increased to 90.0% for female students and 100.0% for male students at post-test.

- For Intervention-1, 52.9% of female students and 53.8% of male students answered correctly at pre-test; these increased to 76.5% and 83.3% at post-test for female and male students, respectively. In comparison, 30.0% of female students and 50.0% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-3, and 76.9% of female students and 90.0% of male students answered correctly at post-test.

Discussion: Based on the above descriptive findings, there was an increase in the knowledge of female and male students across all intervention groups. The control group changes from pre- to post-test raised questions; however, this was the school site (Site 2) where the administrator identified a substantial increase of “girl on girl” violence, which may have been reflected in findings for the control group. For intervention group participants who attended focus groups, male students began to identify the connection between anger and violence, and the fact that one did not have to result in the other. One young man was especially articulate about the fact that he was angry and violent before he participated in RSVP. One of the major things he learned from RSVP was that he did not have to be violent, and could still be angry, without being violent: “... *anger is an emotion, and violence is a behavior. I learned how to separate those now.*”

5: *In the U.S., a man physically abuses a woman every 9-18 seconds. (The correct response is True.)*

- For the Control, 56.3% of female students and 46.7% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. This decreased to 50.0% for female students at post-test, and increased to 58.3% of male students at post-test. In comparison, 64.7% of female students and 61.5% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-1; these increased to 82.4% and 91.7% at post-test for female and male students, respectively.
- For the Control, 56.3% of female students and 46.7% of male students answered correctly at pre-test. This decreased to 50.0% for female students at post-test, and increased to 58.3% of male students at post-test. In comparison, 52.9% of female students and 73.3% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-2; these increased to 70.0% for female students and 100.0% for male students at post-test.
- For Intervention-1, 64.7% of female students and 61.5% of male students answered correctly at pre-test; these increased to 82.4% and 91.7% at post-test for female and male students, respectively. In comparison, 50.0% of female students and 42.9% of male students answered correctly at pre-test for Intervention-3; these rose to 84.6% and 90.0% at post-test for female and male students, respectively.

Discussion: As the descriptive findings above reflect, there was an increase in the knowledge of female and male students across all intervention groups, with the most noticeable gains among male students. Male students in the intervention groups who attended focus groups had the following to say about their knowledge of the amount of gender violence:

- *“The statistics, NOOOO!”*
- *“They’re ridiculous. I thought ‘no way.’ I just never even thought about it.”*
- *“Those statistics should be put out there a little bit more. On the computers and TV and commercials...these statistics are a lot.”*

- *“It’s not common knowledge, but the way you treat people and women, that’s the way I kind of knew about it. A lot of domestic violence goes on there. I’ve always been kind of aware of that aspect. When I was little, my dad was pretty violent but not with us. I remember he’d throw things.”*

SECTION II: STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING GENDER VIOLENCE

In order to understand student attitudes regarding gender violence, pre-test and post-test results were compared by running three-way cross-tabulations, by group-test and sex, for 19 statements with five-point, Likert-type response scales (Strong Disagree-Disagree-Unsure-Agree-Strongly Agree). On this scale, higher scores indicated ignorant or sexist attitudes about gender violence. Response scales for statements 2, 8, 10, 12, 18, 19, and 20 were re-coded to match the overall scale trend, and statements 1, 13, and 21 were excluded from the analysis because of confusing wording. Due to small sample size within each group, descriptive results (mean score measure) stratified by group-test and sex are summarized below in Tables 8-10.

Table 8: Mean Scores for Attitudes Regarding Gender Violence for Control versus Intervention-1

	Control		Intervention-1	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Pre-Test	1.63	1.89	1.89	2.23
Post-Test	1.66	1.88	1.54	1.86
Change from Pre-Test to Post-Test	+0.03	-0.01	-0.35	-0.37

- Mean scores for female students decreased favorably from pre-test to post-test for Intervention-1, compared to the Control, which suggested less ignorant or sexist attitudes about gender violence. For male students, mean scores decreased favorably from pre-test to post-test for both groups, but with a larger difference for Intervention-1. However, for both groups, mean scores for female students tended to be lower or less ignorant/sexist, compared to male students at both pre-test and post-test.

Table 9: Mean Scores for Attitudes Regarding Gender Violence for Control versus Intervention-2

	Control		Intervention-2	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Pre-Test	1.63	1.89	1.64	1.88
Post-Test	1.66	1.88	1.52	1.30
Change from Pre-Test to Post-Test	+0.03	-0.01	-0.12	-0.58

- Mean scores for female students decreased favorably from pre-test to post-test for Intervention-2, compared to the Control, which suggested less ignorant or sexist attitudes about gender violence. For male students, mean scores decreased favorably from pre-test to post-test for both groups, but with a larger difference for Intervention-2. In addition, mean scores for male students in Intervention-2 tended to be lower or less ignorant/sexist, compared to female students at post-test.

Table 10: Mean Scores for Attitudes Regarding Gender Violence for Intervention-1 versus Intervention-3

	Intervention-1		Intervention-3	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Pre-Test	1.89	2.23	1.84	1.97
Post-Test	1.54	1.86	1.61	1.75
Change from Pre-Test to Post-Test	-0.35	-0.37	-0.23	-0.22

- Mean scores for female students decreased favorably from pre-test to post-test for both intervention groups, but more so for Intervention-1. This trend also held true for male students. However, for both groups, mean scores for female students tended to be lower or less ignorant/sexist, compared to male students at both pre-test and post-test.

Discussion: The descriptive findings in Tables 8-10 reflect that students in the intervention groups identified a favorable change in their attitudes around interpersonal and gender violence. There was one particular exercise at the retreat that was especially powerful for male students in all intervention groups. The exercise involved asking the group to generate a list of all the things they did during the day to stay safe or to protect themselves from potential assault or violence. Male students went first, and had a hard time coming up with more than three items on their list; however, female students were able to easily fill an easel pad sheet with things they did to protect themselves on any given day. As the male students listened and watched the female students fill a sheet with their list, they were “*totally blown away*” by the lists generated by their female peers. For focus group participants, the powerfulness of this exercise was an important discussion point that got a lot of air time in all the groups. Examples of male student reactions to the exercise included:

- *“The list difference – I was shocked. I knew there was a lot that girls had to go through, but there was not one space where they could have added another thing to that list. Ours...there wasn’t anything on ours. Two or three things, maybe. You looked at theirs and it was like WOW.”*
- *“They had stuff overlapping and we had nothing, totally blank!”*
- *“They have a lot more to do than we do. Just the mental processes they have to go through before they do anything.”*
- *“They have a lot more on their minds, just walking down the street. Check the back seat of their car, make sure no one’s behind them, make sure they’re safe all around. Guys don’t pay any attention.”*

SECTION III: STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In order to understand student attitudes about their personal ability to prevent and/or intervene in situations involving gender violence, pre-test and post-test results were compared by running three-way cross-tabulations, by group-test and sex, for 11 statements with five-point, Likert-type response scales (Strong Disagree-Disagree-Unsure-Agree-Strongly Agree). On this scale, higher scores suggested a greater level of self-efficacy or more active role in preventing and/or reducing gender violence. Response scales for statements 5, 6, and 10 were re-coded to match the overall scale trend, and statement 2 was excluded from the analysis because of confusing language. Again, due to small sample size within each sub-group, descriptive results (mean score measure) stratified by group-test and sex are summarized below in Tables 11-13.

Table 11: Mean Scores for Attitudes Regarding Violence Prevention for Control versus Intervention-1

	Control		Intervention-1	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Pre-Test	4.11	4.23	3.90	3.65
Post-Test	3.91	4.20	4.36	3.99
Change from Pre-Test to Post-Test	-0.20	-0.03	+0.46	+0.34

- Mean scores for female and male students increased favorably from pre-test to post-test for Intervention-1, compared to the Control. For the intervention group, female student mean scores suggested a higher level of self-efficacy in preventing and/or reducing gender violence, compared to male students at both pre-test and post-test. The opposite trend was true for the Control group.

Table 12: Mean Scores for Attitudes Regarding Violence Prevention for Control versus Intervention-2

	Control		Intervention-2	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Pre-Test	4.11	4.23	3.85	4.02
Post-Test	3.91	4.20	4.41	4.71
Change from Pre-Test to Post-Test	-0.20	-0.03	+0.56	+0.69

- Mean scores for female and male students increased favorably from pre-test to post-test for Intervention-2, compared to the Control. For the intervention group, male mean scores suggested a higher level of self-efficacy in preventing and/or reducing gender violence, compared to female mean scores at both pre-test and post-test. This trend was also true for the Control group.

Table 13: Mean Scores for Attitudes Regarding Violence Prevention for Intervention-1 versus Intervention-3

	Intervention-1		Intervention-3	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Pre-Test	3.90	3.65	3.90	3.72
Post-Test	4.36	3.99	4.35	4.18
Change from Pre-Test to Post-Test	+0.46	+0.34	+0.45	+0.46

- Mean scores for female and male students in both intervention groups increased favorably from pre-test to post-test. The change was comparable for female students in both intervention groups, and larger or favorable for male students in Intervention-2. For both intervention groups, female mean scores suggested a higher level of self-efficacy in preventing and/or reducing gender violence, compared to male students at both pre-test and post-test.

Discussion: The effects of the intervention on personal efficacy are reflected in this section, where differences between control group efficacy and intervention group efficacy are clear. Descriptive findings in Tables 11-13 reflect that RSVP students experienced a change in their attitudes and level of intervention skills around preventing violence against women. For the participants in the focus groups, that attitudinal change was mixed with some reported uncertainty about their role as leaders in their peer groups.

While RSVP reinforced leadership roles for some of the respondents, for others, it raised some questions about how they understood their leadership roles and how comfortable they were with using their roles to get the RSVP messages across. From all the focus group data, it was clear that the experience of RSVP

changed and strengthened leadership self-identities; however, that did not directly translate into stronger feelings about self-efficacy.

In the focus groups, it was expressed that they wanted to train others and intervene, but did not feel totally confident in doing so. This may reflect the late period in the school year when two of the interventions took place, i.e. those two groups were especially tentative because they did not see that they would have much opportunity to “lead” among their peers before the school year ended. Given that fact, the following quotes represent often-repeated perspectives from the focus groups:

Female students:

- *“Since the training I’m able to pick it out more, like ‘you’re being kind of sexist right there.’ I have a lot more confidence now to stand up for either me or anyone else who is being verbally harassed.”*
- *“I really learned a lot about what to do in different scenarios, whether it’s talking to a friend or presenting him or her with resources...I learned when to speak and how to lead people in the right direction...you have opened my eyes to the real world.”*

Male students:

- *“I feel a little pressure, since we do know what to do, so we should do something.”*
- *“I feel that I have a bigger responsibility than people who don’t have the knowledge or haven’t taken this [RSVP].”*
- *“If there are enough leaders like us we could reverse the damage done by the media to our generation and maybe make a better future, a future with decreased violence toward women and men alike.”*

SECTION IVA-B: PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF ATTITUDES AMONG PEERS

In order to understand students’ personal attitudes about gender violence and their perceptions of attitudes among peers of the same gender, pre-test and post-test mean scores were compared, by group-test and sex, for nine statements with a five-point, Likert-type response scale (Strong Disagree-Disagree-Unsure-Agree-Strongly Agree). On this scale, higher scores corresponded with ignorant or sexist attitudes, which were undesirable from a programmatic standpoint. For sections IVA and IVB, response scales for statements 3, 7, and 8 in the female survey, and statements 2, 3, 7 in the male survey were re-coded. Please note the different versions of this section for female and male students. Again, due to small sample size within each group and sub-group, descriptive results (mean score measure) stratified by group-test and sex are summarized below in Tables 14-19.

Table 14: Personal Attitudes and Perceptions of Attitudes among Peers for Control versus Intervention-1 (Female ONLY)

#	Control Group Mean Score				Intervention-1 Group Mean Score			
	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post
1	2.94	2.69	3.69	3.63	3.12	2.38	3.53	3.59
2	2.56	2.50	3.06	3.06	2.76	2.12	3.06	3.00
3	1.44	1.63	2.38	2.31	1.71	1.29	2.65	2.35
4	1.25	1.63	2.63	2.69	1.53	1.35	3.12	2.65
5	1.38	1.81	2.69	2.56	1.65	1.59	2.71	2.65
6	1.88	2.25	2.69	2.88	2.47	1.59	3.18	2.59
7	1.81	1.94	2.94	2.88	2.06	1.65	2.71	3.06
8	1.88	2.31	2.63	2.63	2.29	1.82	2.65	2.56
9	1.31	1.50	2.56	2.31	1.47	1.29	3.00	2.88

- For female students in both Intervention-1 and the Control, mean scores were lower (less ignorant or sexist attitudes) at pre-test for their own attitudes, compared to their perceptions of other females' attitudes. At post-test, this dynamic remained, with female students assessing their personal attitudes as less sexist or more favorable than those of their female peers. However, students in Intervention-1 had a more positive perception of attitudes of female peers, as noted by the decrease in mean scores from peer pre-test to peer post-test for eight out of nine statements, compared to the Control.

Table 15: Personal Attitudes and Perceptions of Attitudes among Peers for Control versus Intervention-2 (Female ONLY)

#	Control Group Mean Score				Intervention-2 Group Mean Score			
	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post
1	2.94	2.69	3.69	3.63	3.24	1.60	3.88	3.40
2	2.56	2.50	3.06	3.06	2.71	2.40	2.94	3.00
3	1.44	1.63	2.38	2.31	1.53	1.20	2.41	2.20
4	1.25	1.63	2.63	2.69	1.47	1.20	2.65	2.50
5	1.38	1.81	2.69	2.56	1.65	1.50	3.12	2.90
6	1.88	2.25	2.69	2.88	1.94	1.40	2.88	3.00
7	1.81	1.94	2.94	2.88	1.94	1.40	3.12	3.30
8	1.88	2.31	2.63	2.63	2.18	2.20	2.47	3.00
9	1.31	1.50	2.56	2.31	1.35	1.20	2.76	2.80

- For female students in both Intervention-2 and the Control, mean scores were lower (less ignorant or sexist attitudes) at pre-test for their own attitudes, compared to their perceptions of other females' attitudes. At post-test, this dynamic remained, with female students assessing their personal attitudes as less sexist or more favorable than those of their female peers. However, students in the Control had a more positive perception of attitudes of female peers, as noted by the decrease in mean scores from peer pre-test to peer post-test for the majority of statements, compared to students in Intervention-2.

Table 16: Personal Attitudes and Perceptions of Attitudes among Peers for Intervention-1 versus Intervention-3 (Female ONLY)

#	Intervention-1 Group Mean Score				Intervention-3 Group Mean Score			
	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post
1	3.12	2.38	3.53	3.59	3.65	2.38	3.70	3.54
2	2.76	2.12	3.06	3.00	2.55	2.08	2.90	2.46
3	1.71	1.29	2.65	2.35	1.55	1.46	2.75	2.38
4	1.53	1.35	3.12	2.65	1.40	1.38	2.75	3.00
5	1.65	1.59	2.71	2.65	1.60	1.38	2.65	2.62
6	2.47	1.59	3.18	2.59	2.20	1.83	3.05	3.08
7	2.06	1.65	2.71	3.06	1.70	1.69	3.40	2.46
8	2.29	1.82	2.65	2.56	2.40	2.38	3.00	3.23
9	1.47	1.29	3.00	2.88	1.70	1.46	2.60	2.92

- For female students in Intervention-1 and Intervention-3, mean scores were lower (less ignorant or sexist attitudes) at pre-test for their own attitudes, compared to their perceptions of other females' attitudes. At post-test, this dynamic remained, with female students assessing their personal attitudes as less sexist or more favorable than those of their female peers. However, students in both groups had a more positive perception of attitudes of female peers, as noted by the decrease in mean scores from peer pre-test to peer post-test for the majority of statements.

Discussion: For the female focus group participants, understanding peer beliefs and attitudes was a vibrant discussion, both in terms of how RSVP has changed their previous relationship with their peers, and how open their peers are to the messages of RSVP. A couple of examples capture the range of experiences these young women had:

- *“Everyone on RSVP is a leader of their own group, and by bringing these leaders together to one common cause, so much can be accomplished. We are making changes within ourselves. We are making changes within our groups. We are making changes within our school. We are making changes within our world.”*
- *“Hard to talk to friends and be serious about how the language affects you ‘cause they think it doesn’t affect you, but it does.”*
- *“I’ve lost friends because of, well, people in my social circle because of the things I’ve learned in RSVP. I’ve confronted them about certain behaviors they were displaying, that it is not joking all the time.”*

Table 17: Personal Attitudes and Perceptions of Attitudes among Peers for Control versus Intervention-1 (Male ONLY)

#	Control Group Mean Score				Intervention-1 Group Mean Score			
	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post
1	1.27	1.33	3.14	2.67	2.00	1.42	2.85	2.33
2	1.53	1.67	3.29	2.83	2.54	2.25	3.00	2.83
3	2.27	2.25	3.07	3.17	2.54	2.17	2.92	2.67
4	1.87	2.08	3.43	3.42	2.62	2.08	3.46	3.08
5	1.60	1.75	3.29	3.00	2.00	1.67	2.92	2.83
6	2.93	2.67	3.71	3.83	3.46	2.25	3.77	3.17
7	1.93	1.58	2.57	2.67	2.15	1.83	3.08	2.50
8	3.20	3.08	4.07	3.83	3.08	2.42	3.54	3.25
9	1.93	1.67	3.29	2.75	2.00	1.75	3.00	2.42

- For male students in Intervention-1 and the Control, mean scores were lower (less ignorant or sexist attitudes) at pre-test for their own attitudes, compared to their perceptions of other males' attitudes. At post-test, this dynamic remained, with students assessing their personal attitudes as less sexist or more favorable than those of their male peers. However, students in Intervention-1 had a more positive perception of attitudes of male peers, as noted by the decrease in mean scores from peer pre-test to peer post-test for the majority of statements, compared to students in the Control.

Table 18: Personal Attitudes and Perceptions of Attitudes among Peers for Control versus Intervention-2 (Male ONLY)

#	Control Group Mean Score				Intervention-2 Group Mean Score			
	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post
1	1.27	1.33	3.14	2.67	1.33	1.00	2.87	4.33
2	1.53	1.67	3.29	2.83	1.57	1.00	3.07	4.33
3	2.27	2.25	3.07	3.17	1.73	3.00	3.20	4.00
4	1.87	2.08	3.43	3.42	2.13	1.00	3.21	4.17
5	1.60	1.75	3.29	3.00	1.93	1.00	2.93	4.17
6	2.93	2.67	3.71	3.83	2.73	1.17	3.80	4.17
7	1.93	1.58	2.57	2.67	1.40	1.67	2.33	3.50
8	3.20	3.08	4.07	3.83	3.20	2.00	3.80	4.33
9	1.93	1.67	3.29	2.75	1.47	1.00	2.93	4.50

- For male students in Intervention-2 and the Control, mean scores were lower (less ignorant or sexist attitudes) at pre-test for their own attitudes, compared to their perceptions of other males' attitudes. At post-test, this dynamic remained, with students assessing their personal attitudes as less sexist or more favorable than those of their male peers. However, students in the Control had a more positive perception of attitudes of male peers, as noted by the decrease in mean scores from peer pre-test to peer post-test for the majority of statements, compared to students in Intervention-2, where mean scores for all nine statements were more ignorant/sexist at post-test.

Table 19: Personal Attitudes and Perceptions of Attitudes among Peers for Intervention-1 versus Intervention-3 (Male ONLY)

#	Intervention-1 Group Mean Score				Intervention-3 Group Mean Score			
	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post	Personal Pre	Personal Post	Peers Pre	Peers Post
1	2.00	1.42	2.85	2.33	1.71	1.50	2.93	2.50
2	2.54	2.25	3.00	2.83	2.71	2.80	3.36	3.10
3	2.54	2.17	2.92	2.67	2.08	2.60	3.29	3.30
4	2.62	2.08	3.46	3.08	2.21	1.70	3.00	3.30
5	2.00	1.67	2.92	2.83	2.07	1.90	3.21	3.30
6	3.46	2.25	3.77	3.17	3.07	1.80	3.93	3.70
7	2.15	1.83	3.08	2.50	1.71	1.80	2.79	3.00
8	3.08	2.42	3.54	3.25	2.79	2.40	3.43	3.90
9	2.00	1.75	3.00	2.42	2.07	1.50	3.21	3.10

- For male students in Intervention-1 and Intervention-3, mean scores were lower (less ignorant or sexist attitudes) at pre-test for their own attitudes, compared to their perceptions of other males' attitudes. At post-test, this dynamic remained, with students assessing their personal attitudes as less sexist or more favorable than those of their male peers. However, students in Intervention-1 had a more positive perception of attitudes of male peers as noted by the decrease in mean scores from peer pre-test to peer post-test for all nine statements, compared to students in Intervention-3.

Discussion: In focus group discussions, male students also spoke frequently about how their relationships with their peers had changed upon returning from the retreat. A particularly poignant story came from a young man chosen for the training because he was the leader of one of the "tough" groups at the school. He had not previously identified himself as a "leader," but clearly as someone others wanted around, and what he referred to as *"the protector, the big guy, you know, the one who covers your back... whenever anyone is going to get into a fight with someone bigger they come and get me..."* Through RSVP, he came to see himself as a leader, and identified a role for himself beyond just covering people's backs, a role he no longer wanted to play after participating in RSVP. The struggle for this young man was that while he did not want to get in fights and be the person who helps other people fight, he also did not want to abandon his friends or his group. As he said:

"I still go and I still cover their backs but they know I'm not happy about it. They know I don't want to be doing that...that's the first step... the next step that will change is, I'm not going to cover their backs. I don't want to be doing this."

LIMITATIONS

In this outcome evaluation, there were differences in attrition rates between groups from pre-test to post-test (Table 1), with the highest rates for Intervention-2 (-32.4%) and Intervention-3 (-50.0%). Loss to follow-up would most likely bias results and the ability to reach definitive conclusions, given the

differences in attrition rates among groups and if loss to follow-up occurred non-randomly, with different characteristics for those who participated at post-test, compared to those who did not. As a caveat, conclusions drawn, based on descriptive findings, are limited. Future evaluation designs involving comparison of baseline and follow-up data should attempt to minimize loss to follow-up as much as possible.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRE- AND POST-TEST SURVEY

Given the limitations on conducting statistical analyses and interpretation of descriptive results, this section only highlights results for the remaining groups, namely Intervention-1 and the Control, both of which had attrition rates below 10.0% at post-test.

- Based on descriptive results, female and male students in Intervention-1 tended to have larger increases in their knowledge on violence against women upon RSVP completion, compared to female and male students in the Control.
- Based on descriptive differences in mean scores, female and male students in Intervention-1 had favorable decreases in their attitudes on gender violence upon RSVP completion, compared to female and male students in the Control (Table 8). In addition, scores for female students suggested that they had less ignorant/sexist attitudes on gender violence, compared to male students at both pre-test and post-test.
- Based on descriptive differences in mean scores, female and male students in Intervention-1 had favorable increases in their attitudes to personally prevent and/or intervene in situations involving gender violence upon RSVP completion, compared to female and male students in the Control (Table 11). In addition, scores for female students suggested that they had a higher level of self-efficacy in preventing and/or reducing gender violence, compared to male students at both pre-test and post-test.
- Based on descriptive differences in mean scores, it appeared that female and male students in Intervention-1 had a more positive perception of the attitudes of their female and male peers regarding gender violence upon RSVP completion, compared to female and male students in the Control (Tables 14 and 17). This may affect the level of (1) support available from peer members to address issues concerning gender violence, and (2) pressure to conform to gender-based stereotypes and sexist or ignorant behaviors.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This evaluation soundly reflects that RSVP has a strong impact on participants and is valued by the schools that implement it as well as the participants who experience it. Both the process and outcome components provide clear indications that the program content is powerful and on target and that the program is well executed by the Boys to Men trainers. Curriculum content is clearly well developed and very relevant, and the exercises work well for the participants. Program objectives were successfully met (and then some in many cases) in all the areas, such as behavioral change, fidelity to the curriculum, participant satisfaction, etc. If one "listens" to the RSVP participants, one hears resounding praise for the program and a strong commitment to integrate its effects at both the personal and institutional levels.

The concerns raised about the program lay mostly in: (1) implementation logistics (format and timing); (2) adequate support for RSVP implementation, including support for (and from) faculty and administration; (3) school environment; and (4) on-going support for the students once they have taken RSVP. It is these issues that arose from the data collection and analysis, and are reflected in the preceding sections of this report, which the recommendations below attempt to address.

Recommendations:

- ***Implementation of the program should happen no later than early spring.***

In this evaluation, the fall implementation was more successful than either of the spring ones. The fall semester appears to provide the optimum logistical support for RSVP implementation. Additionally, fall implementation allows ample opportunities for students to utilize their training skills, for example "training" the school board for the need to do a second round of RSVP at the school. If implementing in the spring semester, the evaluation data suggest it might be more successful if implementation happens very early in the semester in order to avoid interfering with the annual end of school "crunch," and over-scheduling of student and faculty time. Early spring would also allow the time needed by the participants to practice their behavior changes and training skills and thus, reinforce and sustain their growth over time.

- ***Develop alternative formats that alleviate the stress of conflict with other school responsibilities, classes, and commitments.***

For all participants, the scheduling of the follow-up sessions was a stressful process. Because the students chosen to be in RSVP are often chosen because of their involvement and leadership in other school activities/groups, it was particularly stressful for them to balance all the demands with their class requirements. As noted, while necessary, use of class time was problematic for everyone. However, the format that used non-class time also had high attrition because they used vacation days. Also, school field trips and other scheduled events were among the elements contributing to the attrition rates in both spring sites. In addition to the scheduling and timing issues, both schools have a number of other socially responsible groups integrated into the school calendar. Some vehicle for coordinating or intersecting all of those initiatives for both the faculty advisors and the students bears review or development and how that will happen should be part of the planning process conversations.

- ***Secure strong school administration and faculty support and buy-in before implementation.***

As reflected throughout this report, one of the critical components for successful implementation is the commitment and support, particularly for removing barriers, from both the administration and faculty mentors. As stated above, schools have a great deal of demands on them, and because RSVP is valued, with strong support it can be a priority for the school rather than just another demand on busy school staff. While the two sites had differing degrees of administrative and faculty support, all principals and faculty mentors were extremely supportive of RSVP even if they were unable to make it operational in the ways they may have envisioned.

- ***Provide more preparation and on-going support for faculty mentors of RSVP.***

Engaged and committed faculty mentors/advisors were shown to be significant to the success of RSVP implementation at the two sites evaluated. Solid mentors were shown to be good advocates for the students, in addition to being excellent promoters of the program with both their peers and the school administration. In schools where RSVP can be implemented each year, committed faculty must be a central tenant. As one faculty mentor so eloquently put it:

“What I thought might take energy I didn’t have has actually fueled my spirit. I have been completely blessed to be a part of this. I have been renewed with positive energy from the RSVP training.”

- ***Engage in some type of environmental scan at the school before implementing RSVP.***

Again, throughout the report, school environment and vehicles for changing it are crucial pieces to both the success of any single implementation of RSVP, and to the on-going provision of the program and the institutionalization of the program’s tenants and messages. Having an open conversation about school environment, its strengths and barriers, is a good way to get everyone thinking about their school environment and what changes might better support the RSVP students (and ultimately all students in the school) to use their skills to effect change. It would be advantageous to establish before RSVP implementation that there is administrative, faculty, parent, and community support for listening to youth, and their unique perspectives, as well as for supporting their roles as leaders both within the school environment and in the community in which it is located.

- ***Provide follow-up support to the student participants beyond implementation of program curriculum.***

This evaluation found a desire on the part of students for follow-up after they had completed both components of the program. They expressed a desire to practice their skills and then have an opportunity to meet again to get feedback on what they had done, and guidance on next steps. Because all data collection with the student participants happened before any scheduled follow-up support took place, it may be that at six months after the program the evaluators would not have gotten these same messages. However, RSVP participants are embarking on big changes instigated by being in RSVP, and like all behavior change, it needs to be reinforced until it takes solid hold if it is to result in integrated change in how people act and/or treat each other.

- ***Be prudent in the administrative screening process for RSVP participants.***

Two significant issues were raised in terms of screening of student participants. First, for two intervention groups, students were chosen who probably should not have been in the program due to previous histories of violence and harassment – RSVP is not a treatment program but rather a prevention program. Second, substantially different proportions of males and females in a group appear to make a difference in the experience of the whole group. While it is a challenge to put together a diverse group of students who represent leaders of many types of peer groups, the program may want to revisit whether there are the safeguards in place in the screening process to assure any RSVP group is gender-balanced and safe for all its participants.

- ***Provide clear messages to students about the time commitment required to complete RSVP.***

It is an appropriate role for RSVP staff, and not this evaluation, to determine if the attrition rates for this year's program are acceptable or not. What the data reflects is that the program is stronger if participants complete both components of the program, retreat, and training sessions. Students need support for being able to prioritize attendance at the trainings in the same fashion they need support to implement the new behaviors and skills the program gives them. Additionally, if the program is to continue to evaluate behavior changes through the pre- and post-test design developed for this evaluation, attrition rates could be problematic. As noted in the previous section, differences in attrition rates between groups precluded having the numbers needed to complete statistical analyses and thus, the interpretation of descriptive results was as far as this evaluation could go. It may be that quantitative data collection needs to be limited to before and after the retreat, instead of at the beginning and end of RSVP, or if administration of the pre- and post-tests are to stay the same it would be beneficial to work with schools, formats, and or technology to ensure higher post-test response rates.

- ***Utilize the RSVP participants to promote the program.***

For both administrators and faculty, the most convincing voices for RSVP were those of the student participants. One of the administrators said that had he not heard the graduates of RSVP from another school talk about the impact and importance of the program, he would probably not have put the effort into having the program in his school. Now, having heard participants from his own school who had completed the program, he is a huge supporter of the program. Creating a video or presentation by RSVP students would allow the program's strongest advocates and selling point (the students themselves) to take responsibility and credit for promoting it and getting other schools to implement RSVP.

Conclusion:

The findings of this evaluation should be viewed as an opportunity both to celebrate the success of RSVP and to plan for strengthening that success as the program moves forward. As of the writing of this report, several quality improvements have already been integrated into RSVP for the upcoming school year. Among these program improvements are: (1) development of Memorandums of Understanding with each school to strengthen accountability and support; (2) online student surveys to increase response rates; (3) stronger school faculty coaching to increase connectivity; and (4) changes to the student selection

process. As stated at the start of this report, a key function of this evaluation is to provide data and information to RSVP for continuous program improvement. It speaks volumes about the design and integrity of RSVP that program staff have so quickly incorporated key quality improvements.

VI. APPENDICES

- 1. Student Participant Satisfaction Survey**
- 2. Faculty Participant Satisfaction Survey**
- 3. Focus Group Questions**
- 4. Faculty Key Informant Interview Questions**
- 5. Administrator Key Informant Interview Questions**
- 6. Student Participant Survey – Pre- and Post-Tests (FEMALE)**
- 7. Student Participant Survey – Pre- and Post-Tests (MALE)**