



CENTER FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE EDUCATION

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE AGAINST VIOLENCE Evaluation Report, 2011-2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Submitted To:
THE CENTER FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE EDUCATION

*What did I learn? Don't always look for a fight. The
main goal is to get out & make sure everyone is safe.*

19 year old gay male with a history of getting into fights.

Submitted By:
Anita M. Baker, Ed.D.
Jamie Bassell

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Executive Summary

"I do not feel defenseless." "I learned how to get out of a situation." "I learned to take the high way out." "I know now how to calm myself." CAAV Participants

The Center for Anti-violence Education (CAE) is a nonprofit organization committed to violence prevention, self-defense and empowerment. It recognizes violence prevention as a vital public health issue and it strives to help individuals prevent, respond to and heal from violence. All CAE programs are designed to develop participants' anti-violence awareness, knowledge and skills.

In 2011, CAE was awarded a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to develop and deliver the Community Alliance Against Violence (CAAV) project. The project had two key focuses: (1) to develop and provide anti-violence training for staff members at three partner organizations serving LGBTQ youth and young adults (youth/YA) including the Ali Forney Center (AFC), the Metropolitan Community Church of New York (MCCNY), and the Staten Island LGBT Community Center (SI LGBT CC); and (2) to provide violence prevention programming for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) youth/YA.

Community Alliance Against Violence Project Overview

The CAAV project was developed by CAE from prior work with organization staff who served the target population, and its own years of work with young people. The youth/YA component was developed specifically for CAAV and informed by prior work. It included substantial program development. Targeted populations for the project included youth/YA who participate in partner agency programs and the staff who work with them.

In partnership with the three partner organizations, CAAV provides training for service providers and LGBTQ young people to break through shame, fear and isolation to reduce violence in their lives and communities. Using verbal exercises, role plays, discussions and physical activities, participants are expected to achieve the following outcomes: learn de-escalation and anger-management techniques, develop verbal and physical skills and negotiation strategies for self-protection, identify healthy and abusive behaviors in relationships, learn their self-defense rights and responsibilities, learn how to access support, create a safety plan and develop their self-care skills.

Evaluation of CAAV

The CAAV evaluation is a comprehensive, three-year study, now concluding the first year. It is designed to determine whether participants achieve desired outcomes, what challenges and effective strategies are associated with delivery of CAAV training, how youth/YA apply what they learn through CAAV, and how/whether staff achieves desired outcomes. Data are being collected to answer these questions through comprehensive surveys for youth/YA and staff (after every other session) and site visits to each of the agencies to conduct extensive interviews with staff and selected participants (for additional details about the evaluation or the youth/YA and staff surveys please see the Appendix).

CAAV Training

CAE developed specific curricula and workshop strategies to deliver training to both staff of the partner organizations and to their youth/YA participants.

- **Staff Workshops.** Specific topics addressed included assertiveness skills, de-escalation techniques; self-care/stress reduction and addressing trauma.
- **LGBTQ Youth Workshops.** A series of 20 workshops were conducted at each partner organization to help participants learn violence prevention skills and physical and verbal self-defense strategies.

Key Findings

When clients get into arguments, I feel much better equipped to step in and intervene
(Staff from CAE Partner Agency)

Staff Workshops

Targeted staff from AFC, MCCNY and SI LGBT CC assessed the training favorably and developed important skills that they acknowledge they can apply in their regular work.

- Diverse groups, broadly representative of their own agencies, attended each training.
- As a result of the training, most of the 76 staff participants reported learning more about each of the key topic areas (self-defense basics, de-escalation techniques, stress reduction and self-care, techniques for effectively working with clients impacted by violence and trauma).
- A total of 95% of staff participants indicated they were *somewhat* or *very likely* to use the strategies and/or tools they got in the workshop to reduce their own stress, and 96% were *somewhat* or *very likely* to use those strategies with their clients to help reduce stress.
- Most staff participants (80%+) reported that they were *somewhat* or *very likely* to use the self-defense techniques/tools to make themselves and their clients feel safer.

Youth/YA Workshops

CAAV is achieving project goals and having the desired effect on participants, especially those that participate regularly, as reported by youth, instructors and staff.

Implementation

- CAAV served the desired population. Attendance was intermittent but improved.
- CAAV was very well implemented despite varied and sometimes trying circumstances. All three organizations successfully implemented all 20 sessions of the CAAV curriculum and most elements of the training went well at every session at each of the three agencies.
- Each workshop session included the most or all of the five key segments of the CAAV training however, *the verbal self-defense techniques and the closing circle were not done consistently at every agency and session.*
- Implementation happened differently at each agency due to differing physical spaces, age of participants, and background characteristics of participants.
- Despite intermittent attendance, engagement was described as very good by instructors, staff and youth. It varied by agency, but definitely improved over time.
- All partner agencies consistently described communication with CAE staff very positively.
- CAE instructors also described positive relations and support at the agencies (although it was varied). *Instructors also clarified that they needed more and regular support to help keep participants focused and engaged*
- Delivery of the training by the two key instructors was described very positively by Youth/YA participants and by staff from the partner agencies.

Participation

- A total of 234 youth/YA participated in CAAV. This included 86 at AFC, 70 at MCCNY, and 78 at SI LGBT CC. About two-thirds of them reported they had been affected by violence in the three months preceding their involvement in CAAV.
- About half of the participants attended two or more workshops including 25% who attended between 3 and 5, 7% who attended between 6 and 10, and a few at each agency who attended 11 or more.

Feedback, Learning and Applications

- Instructor, staff and participant feedback across all three partner agencies was uniformly very positive.
- Instructors, staff and youth/YA at all three partner agencies reported that the workshops were helpful and useful to youth/YA participants.
- When asked, youth/YA and staff could give detailed examples of application of the trainings both in their daily lives and when at the partner agencies.
- Many participants learned the key topics at each session.
- Many participants, especially those that attended more regularly, accomplished all of the desired outcomes: learned at least one strategy to de-escalate a situation; learned how to defend themselves if attacked; learned at least one negotiation strategy to keep themselves safer; learned their self-defense rights and responsibilities; learned how to identify health and abusive behaviors in relationships , learned how to get help and support when needed, learned to be more aware of their surroundings and at least one strategy to manage their anger.
- At all three agencies, relatively large proportions of participants reported learning how to keep themselves safer in multiple settings. This was corroborated by staff.

Key Challenges

- The overall number of youth/YA reached was much higher than expected, but regular attendance of multiple sessions was intermittent and lower than desired. Very few participants attended the full series of workshops and many attended inconsistently missing all or part of multiple sessions. Incentives were used to boost attendance.
- Though delivered at most sessions, verbal self-defense topics were not addressed consistently at all training workshops.
- The physical space available at two of three partner agencies was not fully conducive to delivery of both the physical training and the confidential, often challenging nature of the training overall.
- Self-defense instructors indicated they need more assistance to supervise the training sessions and help engage participants.

Next Steps

CAE is expanding the CAAV project to include one agency in the Bronx, and a second site for one of the 2011-12 partner agencies. Additional staff will be provided with training and additional training topics will be addressed. After minimal revisions to the curriculum, workshops for youth/YA participants will resume at the original agencies and kick off at the new locations. Comprehensive evaluation will continue.

