



## **Note for Teachers and Educators bringing ReAct into the Classroom**

Thank you for booking a ReAct workshop for your school! We would like to give you a heads up about what teachers and educators can expect when ReAct comes into your classroom and answer common questions you may have.

**What does a teacher or educator do during a youth workshop or training?** Youth-centered spaces are important to ReAct's success because it is easier for students to discuss issues of violence and ask questions when they are in a group of their peers. When adults are in the room, particularly adults in positions of authority, it can change the dynamic and impacts what participants are comfortable sharing and listening to. As such, we prefer it when a teacher or educator is a "fly on the wall", or where possible, outside of the room.

**What might you see during a youth workshop or training?** ReAct Peer Youth Facilitators might rearrange the classroom (e.g. to create a circle). They will lead activities with student participants that might include spirited discussions, movement, breaking into small groups, videos, art and self-reflection. The subjects we bring up are usually not new to students' experience, but it might be the first time they've actually talked about it in a school setting. They may express initial hesitation to participate or answer questions, but that's normal and okay. ReAct facilitators will often wait through periods of silence and give students time to get comfortable and put thoughts together.

Our facilitators often relate to youth differently than a teacher or educator. Since students are given the chance to talk about personal values and experiences, conversations can become passionate and emotional. We may challenge students to look at violence and discrimination in a new way. They may express disagreement and discomfort in the process, and they usually ask many frank questions.

These are all good things; they're part of the process of deconstructing, challenging and ending violence and discrimination. Through group agreements, ReAct Youth Peer Facilitators will work with students to allow space for this process and at the same time support everyone to be safe and participate.

**What if it seems like things are getting out of hand?** Even if it seems like the youth workshop or training is becoming loud and spirited, it's no cause for alarm. ReAct facilitators are well-trained and experienced in working with young people. In the context of our work, classroom dynamics can look different than usual – there is often higher tolerance for noise, questions, strong opinions, side discussions, jokes, movement and laughter. ReAct facilitators play close attention to group dynamics and if things ever do truly start getting out of hand, they will pull the workshop or training back in.

**What if a student is "triggered"?** A trigger is a reaction to something in the present that is connected to past experiences of violence. They are different for each person and might manifest as

a flashback, disassociation, anger, sadness or confusion. Many young people face triggers on a daily basis if they experience regular discrimination and abuse.

Since our workshops and trainings allow students to deepen their understanding of violence and reflect on their own experiences, it is possible that they might get triggered. ReAct workshops and trainings are uniquely designed to encourage participants to be cognizant of how they are affected in their minds and bodies and to do what they need to feel safe in the course of the workshop. ReAct facilitators spend time validating participants' emotions, breaking down why triggering can happen, connecting peoples' experiences and offering strategies for self-care, healing and accessing support.

**What can teachers and educators do to follow up?** It is important and impactful to continue the conversation with students after ReAct leaves. Depending on how long you book us for, we will work with students for one to three hours at a time, but the work of ending violence and oppression is never over and challenging it can take a lifetime!

Recognizing that school curriculum is packed and classroom time is limited, here are some suggestions of things you can do after we leave that don't take much time.

- Based on evaluation surveys students fill out after a training or workshop, we will send you a list of what they identify wanting to learn more about. This can help you target and guide future discussions with your students.
- Set aside 15 minutes at the beginning of the next class for students to write or talk to a partner about what they thought of the workshop or training. Did they like it? Did they agree or disagree with anything? Was it worthwhile? Did they learn anything? Invite them to share their reactions with the larger classroom.
- Find a short film about the subject and take 10 minutes to talk about it after. The Media that Matters Film Festival ([www.mediathatmattersfest.org](http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org)) publishes many great short films on social justice issues on its website.
- Start the next class with a quote about the subject from an author, thinker or celebrity youth know. Allow students to write down their thoughts about the quote and share with the group.
- Start the next class with a go-around so each student can say one thing they took away from or thought more about after the workshop or training.
- Post resources in your classroom so students will be aware of other places to go for support, such as:
  - Kids Help Phone: anonymous and confidential, 1-800-668-6868
  - LGBT Youthline: anonymous and confidential, 1-800-268-9688
  - Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape: anonymous and confidential support for survivors of sexual assault and their friends and family, 416-597-8808 (crisis line)
  - Justice for Children and Youth: legal information and support, 1-866-999-5329
  - Central Toronto Youth Services: counselling and programs for youth with mental health illnesses, 416-924-2100

And we encourage you to bring us back in to do more work with students and support you as you challenge and raise awareness about violence and discrimination against women and youth.