

Don't Make Me Repeat Myself!

A Peer Educator's Advocacy Training Manual for Youth on Gender-Based Violence

The Youth Alliance Project is an initiative of METRAC, funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation. METRAC is a community based not-for-profit organization which works to prevent violence against women, youth, and children.

Some of the information and activities in this manual are based on METRAC's Respect In Action (ReAct) youth violence prevention program workshops and materials. For more information about ReAct, visit www.metrac.org.



About this Manual

This training manual was created by the Youth Alliance Project (YAP). It is designed for youth peer educators who want to facilitate youth training on gender-based violence from an anti-oppression framework, and on how a young person can advocate for change. Although it is geared towards youth in the City of Toronto, it can be adapted to youth who live in other locations. The training is most appropriate for youth over 15 years of age, who may already have some level of leadership, anti-violence, and/or anti-oppression skills and training, whether formal or informal. Please note that facilitators have to have existing knowledge of issues related to oppression, gender-based violence, and advocacy, for the training to be successfully implemented.

This training has been designed as an introduction to the issues – any one subject area can be explored in greater detail. Some of the information and activities are based on METRAC's Respect In Action (ReAct) youth violence prevention program workshops and materials. For more information about ReAct, please visit www.metrac.org.

Note: The ReAct Program also provides facilitation for this training. Please visit www.metrac.org or contact ReAct at 416-392-4760 or react@metrac.org for details.

Funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation, the YAP seeks to make schools and communities safer for young women. The YAP is a youth-driven collective focused on issues of violence against women and girls. It works to strengthen the capacities of youth to advocate for improvements to our city's current responses to this form of violence. YAP is a project of the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC), a not-for-profit, community-based organization that works to prevent and end violence against diverse women, youth, and children.

A. Introduction and Background

Who are we? Why are we here? Briefly describe how and why this session came about. Talk about the importance of group input and experience. Explain that the workshop will not be done in a lecture style where one person talks and everyone else listens. Instead, it will be an interactive discussion that will allow us all to share our knowledge. "Everyone is an expert on their experience!"

Sample introduction

"Hello everybody. My name is _____ and co-facilitating with me is _____. We're here today because..."

Icebreaker: Two Truths and a Lie

Ask participants to come up with two truths about themselves and one lie. Go around the room and ask participants to share. The others have to guess what the lie is. This is a great game to get to know the group and build up an environment of openness and comfort. A comfortable and welcoming environment is absolutely necessary to set the tone for the upcoming discussions, which can be intense and difficult.

Creating Safe Space: Group Agreement

A group agreement is a set of guidelines participants and the workshop facilitator(s) create to help ensure participants feel safer to share insights and personal experiences.

Ask the group, “What are some guidelines we can come up with as a group that would make this space a more comfortable or a safer place to share our thoughts and feelings?” Emphasize that we can revisit and add to the agreement throughout the workshop. Facilitators might include the following:

- Confidentiality. Please don’t repeat what is said in the workshop without getting permission from your peers first.
- Put-ups, not put-downs. No blaming. Don’t attack or make fun of other people in the group. If you disagree, attack the idea and not the person—be constructive!
- There are no stupid questions. If there is anything you’re not sure about (i.e. a word, phrase, or an idea), just ask.
- Right to pass. You don’t have to say anything if you don’t want to.
- Respect/listening. Try to have one person speak at a time
- Express yourself. It’s okay to show emotions, like if you feel hurt, sad, bored, angry, etc.
- Use “I” statements. Speak for yourself and your own experiences.
- Relax and have fun! We’re here to learn together and share together.

Getting Started: Community Sketch

Materials:

- Chart paper and markers

This activity’s purpose is to allow the facilitators to learn about participants’ community dynamics, to make the participants more aware of the community they are a part of and how certain dynamics contribute to violence. Hand out chart paper and markers and explain that they are going to work together to draw a picture of their community or communities.

Ask the group, “What is the main place, or main places, where you all come together?”

Examine the locations and ask questions: e.g., school, community centre, place of worship, housing complex, park, basketball court, shopping mall, parking lot. For each location they come up with, ask participants to draw the building and label it.

Ask the group, “Who are the main players in the community? Are there certain community leaders? Do some people have connections that others do not? Are there any cliques?”

Examine what they say and ask questions (e.g. a group of guys that always dominate the b-ball court, half the kids who are part of an after school community centre, the members of the student council who are well respected). When facilitating this section, please be careful to encourage non-

oppressive thinking, while acknowledging community dynamics. For each set of main players the group acknowledges, draw an accompanying symbol on the map close to where the main players spend a lot of time.

Ask the group, “What are some of the things that you all have in common?”

Examine what they say and ask questions (e.g. same age, linguistic community, similar recreation or hobbies, most come from single parent homes, most own cars, most are going to university, most have immigrant parents). For each similarity, draw a floating circle and write the similarity in it.

Ask the group, “What are some of the differences?”

Examine what they say and ask questions (e.g. religious communities, music tastes). For each difference, draw a jagged edge square and write the difference in it.

After the discussion is finished, write “community rules” on the top of a posted piece of chart paper. Ask participants to tell you what they think their informal community rules are, related to issues such as:

- Where people can go
- What people can do
- Who people can associate with
- What is fun and what is boring

Ask questions about what they come up with. Is there a lot of disagreement about the rules? Is it fair to say that community rules are not clear and that they can change a lot? Ask the group, “What are the consequences of breaking one of these rules? Are the rules fair? Who decides them? Are some people’s voices listened to more carefully when it comes to these rules?”

Sum up the activity using the picture the group drew. For example:

“So let me see if I understand your community. You know each other at school, but you also spend a lot of time at the community centre and most of you live in this housing complex. You have a number of things in common: age, sports, strict parents ... But there are a lot of differences in your community too: some people in the community use drugs, some speak languages like Spanish or Urdu at home ... You said that people on the sports teams are respected in your school and that they are considered to be leaders. In terms of your informal community rules, I also noticed that the discussion was very lively and that you guys disagreed on a lot of things. Some people said that people don’t go to the park at night as a rule, but others said that the park is the funnest place to be and you have to go there every day at some point. Maybe we can say that, although you all live in this community, you all see it a little differently and use its spaces differently.”

Journal Reflection Activity

Note: this activity is called a **Free Verse**, in which participants are given an unfinished sentence and have to write a quick journal reflection that completes, expands upon, or challenges that sentence. It

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has no fixed structure or pattern they have to follow, which gives participants an opportunity to express themselves in their own way through writing. Journal reflections explore their thoughts and ideas about their communities, identities, gender constructions, and opinions.

“On my block ...”

B. Introduction to Anti-Oppression

Purpose: to engage youth in a meaningful discussion of the basic principles and practices of anti-oppression.

Materials:

- Stereotypical images from magazines, representing various forms of oppression
- Cue cards with stereotypes written on them (enough for 2 per person)

Goals:

- To create a dialogue about various systems of oppression (including sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, looksism)
- To connect personal experiences of oppression with group oppression on a systemic level

Activity 1: Who are you, really? Constructing identity

This activity makes connections between historical and popular representations of oppressed communities and how they work to construct their identities.

Show the *A Girl Like Me* documentary from the Sixth Annual Media that Matters Film Festival (available online: www.mediathatmattersfest.org/6/a_girl_like_me/). Explain how this documentary illustrates the impact of racist stereotypes on young Black women. Explain that numerous stereotypes of many groups exist in society, whether we are aware of them or not, and that the media are among the transmitters of stereotypes.

Place magazine pictures in a way that everyone can see them and give everyone stereotype cards that match one or more of the images. Examples of stereotypes that can be written on the cards:

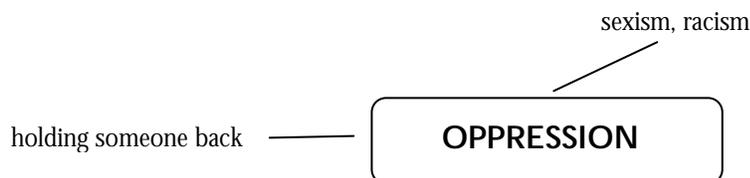
- “Young Asian women are submissive.”
- “Everybody is heterosexual.”
- “People with disabilities need our pity and help.”

Ask participants to match their stereotype cards with the pictures. Encourage them to interact with one another so that they can make the best matches possible. After the pictures have been matched up, ask the group, “How do these pictures and stereotypes make you feel about yourself? And about people you care about, such as your friends and family?”

Make sure that the discussion is shared and that no one person dominates. Everyone should get a chance to express how he or she feels and thinks.

Activity 2: What is Oppression?

Ask the group, “When you think about the word ‘oppression’, what other words or phrases come to mind?” Record answers on a piece of chart paper in the following manner:



Make sure that people explain the terms they suggest, and be prepared to offer easy-to-understand explanations yourself. Explain to the group that everyone can face different kinds of oppression and everyone has the ability to oppress someone else. It plays out differently for people, depending on their identities and status in society, and it’s important to be aware of the differences as well as similarities.

Hand out two blank cue cards to everyone. Ask them to think about a time when they were discriminated against or mistreated and write out the incident on one of the cue cards. On the other cue card, tell them to write about a time when they discriminated against or mistreated someone else. Explain to the group that no one will be forced to read their cards out loud. They are for reflection. Tell them that if they feel like sharing either experience with the group, they can choose to do so.

Being an Ally

Tell the group that sometimes we can oppress people because we have been oppressed. It’s not fair, but it makes sense – we often treat others the way we have been treated, and we can take things out on people who may have a little less power and respect than we do. But we have the power and choice to stop being oppressive to others by taking care of ourselves, recognizing when we feel pushed to treat others badly if we have been treated badly, and supporting other people. That’s what being a friend, homie, brethren, a down ass chick, or an ally is all about. Explain that being an ally means that, even though you may not personally experience a particular type of oppression or discrimination, you care about it and you don’t stand by when someone else experiences it.

Next, ask whether anyone would like to share about a time or event when they have experienced oppression. Ask the group to pay close attention. Ask the group, “How could you help if you were there with them in that situation? How could you be an ally?” Ask, “What makes someone a good ally in general?”

Journal Reflection Activity

“I am who I am, not because of what anyone says about me, but because ...”

C. Gender, Violence and Healthy Relationships

Purpose: to engage youth in a meaningful discussion about gender roles, violence and healthy peer relationships.

Materials:

- Chart paper and markers
- Popular magazine images
- Agree/disagree value statements
- 3 gender-based violence scenarios

Goals:

- To talk about the construction of gender roles that are imposed on youth
- To identify gender violence in its different forms
- To examine our personal ideas and values about gendered violence
- To examine what healthy/unhealthy relationships are

Journal Reflection Activity

For those who identify as young women: “A real man is ...”

For those who identify as young men: “A real woman is ...”

Activity 1: Womanbox/Manbox

Hand out popular magazine images related to gender, which depict diverse women and men. Give participants a few minutes to look over each one.

On a piece of chart paper, write “womanbox” at the top and a large box beneath, leaving enough space for words to be written around it. Ask the group to name characteristics of what an ideal woman must have in relation to the magazine images. Participants might name words such as sexy, slim, blonde hair, blue eyes, big breasts, firm butt, young, housewife. Write the words inside the box.

Explain to participants that women who step out of this box get called names to make them go back into the box, to make them act the way society says “good women” or nice women should act. Ask the group, “What are some of the names women get called if they step out of the box?” Write answers around the woman-box: e.g., slut, hoe, ugly, dirty, dyke, lesbian, fat, bitch, butch, etc.

Ask, “What emotional and physical things happen to women who step out of the box?”

Those consequences could be: bad reputation, catcalls/whistles, pinching, job discrimination, insecurity/low self-esteem, eating disorders, depression, physical and/or mental strain, scared to be yourself, lack of trust.

Do the same for the manbox – record words for an ideal man (e.g. tough, rich, strong, and athletic) and words about men who are outside the box (e.g. wimp, fag, nerd, weak, pussy). Ask the group, “When boys hear these names, what are they being taught about being close to other guys? What are they being told about gay men? How does the fear of being labelled like that keep men in the box?”

Ask the group, “What happens to guys physically and emotionally? How do guys get treated physically to make sure they act like men?” Make note of the physical and emotional consequences of not fitting into this box. Write answers around the man-box:

These consequences could be fights, beat up, bullying, ignored/exclusion, shunned, ostracized, forced to play sports, sexual abuse, harassed.

Ask the group, “Who and what do you think influences women and men to be this way?” Write answers underneath both boxes: parents, friends, lovers, media, coaches, teachers, grandparents.

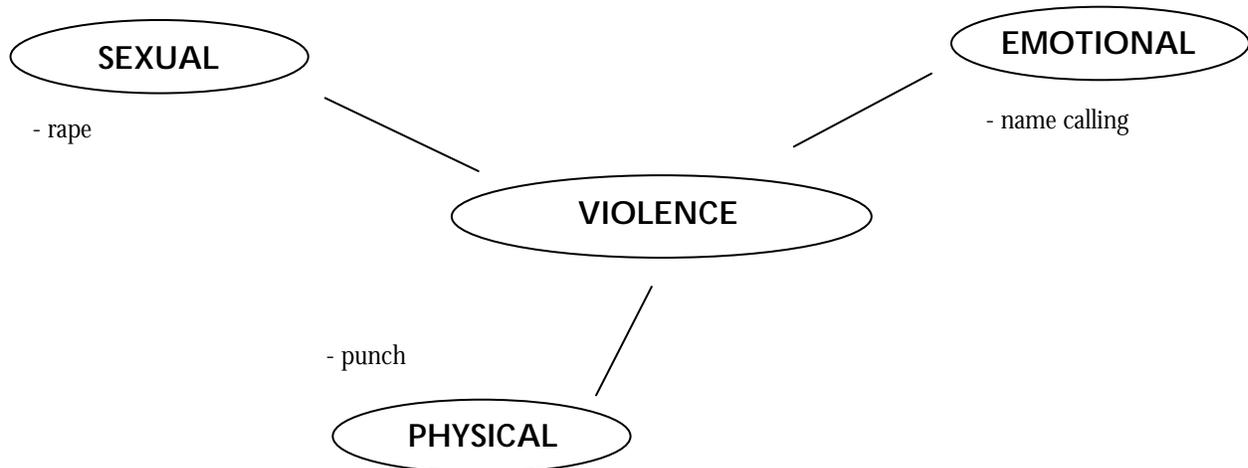
Notice that a lot of the names about women have to do with them being or not being sexual, and the names given to men who step out of the box relate to them being “too womanly.” Notice that a lot of the names applied to both women and men are homophobic, and homophobia is closely related to sexism and woman-hating. Explain that those ideas create an imbalance that says men are more powerful and deserving than women and that women are weaker and not worthy of certain powers in our world.

Journal Reflection Activity

“A real person is ...”

Activity 2: What is violence?

Explain that there are 3 main categories violence can fall into. Ask participants to list examples that would fall under each category. Have categories ready on chart paper:



Have participants give at least five examples for each category. Provide missing examples. Ensure that lesser known forms of violence are included, such as stalking, harassment, and financial abuse. Stress that these are not the only forms of violence, but they are the more general categories.

Activity 3: Agree/Disagree

Ask the group to stand up and go to the middle of the room. Hand out 5 to 10 value statements related to gender roles and gender-based violence to different participants. Value statements can include:

- If you're dating someone, you should have sex with them
- Rumours always have some truth to them
- If a girl dresses revealingly, she shouldn't be surprised if guys stare at, talk to, or harass, her

Explain to the group that one side of the room is the agree side and the other side is the disagree side. When a statement is read, the participants must decide if they agree or disagree and move to the side of the room they believe represents the right answer for them. Encourage people to share what they really think, and not just to go where their friends are or where everyone else is going. Encourage them to take risks.

If the group does not want to move around the room, allow them to raise their hands instead. After everyone moves to their chosen side of the room (or raises a hand to indicate their opinion), ask why people chose the agree or disagree side. Facilitate a small discussion about the statement. Ask a lot of questions, rather than tell people what you think, but where stereotypes and myths about violence and gender are being supported, use your questions to challenge them.

Activity 4: Scenarios

Split the group up into 3 smaller groups. Give each group a scenario that covers a different type of violence: physical, sexual, and emotional. Make sure some people play bystanders to the situation. Below is an example of a scenario about physical violence:

“Jas is going out with Mike. One day, they are arguing in the school parking lot because Mike's dad doesn't really like Jas and doesn't like it when Mike brings her home to do homework and watch TV. Jas thinks Mike should stand up to his dad and tell him what he wants. The discussion gets heated and Mike pushes Jas against his car and walks away. Some of Jas's friends aren't far away and see everything that happens, but don't really know what to say or do.”

Give groups only 10 minutes to assign character roles and create a very short theatre piece on how they will present their scenario. Walk around and assist groups. Have groups present their scenes to each other.

After each presentation, ask the whole group questions about each scenario, such as:

- What kinds of violence happened in this scenario?
- What did the people watching what was happening do? What could they have done?

- How is power related to this scenario? What are the power dynamics that contribute to the scenario?

If groups do not want to act, have them read the scenarios and answer the questions together. Have the groups present their scenarios and answers to the larger group.

D. Your City and What You Might Not Know About it: City Politics and Youth Rights

Purpose: to engage youth in a meaningful discussion about local, provincial and federal politics and the rights they have at all three levels.

Materials:

- “Your Rights in Jeopardy” game materials
- Chart paper and markers

Goals:

- To know youth rights in Toronto
- To understand all three levels of government and their functions
- To examine the importance of youth voting and civic engagement
- To practice team building, leadership and communication skills

Activity 1: Your Rights in Jeopardy

Put up the “Your Rights in Jeopardy” game materials and divide the group into two teams. Spread the answer cards out where everyone can see them. Flip a coin to decide which group will go first. Let the winning team choose a category and point level. Read the question behind the point card and give the group 20 seconds to choose the correct answer card. If they guess wrong, the other group can try to answer for the points. Remember to keep score.

Game materials

“Your Rights in Jeopardy” is designed to be played like the game show Jeopardy, with categories, point levels, answers read out by facilitators, and questions offered by participants.

Sex and relationships category:

Point level	Question (“What is ...”)	Answer
100	Sexual activity	You can always choose to stop this kind of activity, even if you have all your clothes off.
200	Consent	Without this, any sexual act is illegal and violates the <i>Criminal Code of Canada</i> .
300	Safety plan	You have the right to leave any kind of relationship, even if you’ve been in it for a long time. It is a good idea to prepare for the break up by creating this special

		plan.
400	Online sexual exploitation	Examples of this problem include taking pictures of someone under 18 and posting it on the internet or using the internet to lure a young person into sexual activity.

Police and the legal system category:

Point level	Question (“What is ...”)	Answer
100	Lawyer	You have a right to call this person and a parent or adult you trust if you are arrested by the police.
200	Domestic violence courts	These are special courts that are meant to make the criminal justice system more sensitive to violence that happens in homes or relationships.
300	A warrant	The police cannot enter your home without permission, without reasonable grounds to believe that a crime has occurred or is about to take place, without you or someone else calling 911, or unless they have this document.
400	Peace bond	If you’re afraid that your ex may hurt you, your family, or your property, and there have been no charges laid, you can ask for this court order.

Human rights category:

Point level	Question (“What is ...”)	Answer
100	Harassment in the workplace	Every person who is an employee has a right to freedom from this type of abuse by their employer or co-worker.
200	Freedom of thought	It is the freedom of an individual to hold or consider a fact or viewpoint, independent of others’ viewpoints.
300	Freedom of peaceful assembly	It is the individual right to come together with other individuals and collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests.
400	<i>Ontario Human Rights Code</i>	A provincial law that gives all citizens equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in specific areas such as jobs, housing, and services. Its goal is to prevent discrimination and harassment on the basis of 14 grounds, including race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, ability, and age.

Activity 2: City Politics

Discussion Circle:

Go around and ask each participant, “What is one issue in the city you are concerned about?” After each person answers, go around again and ask, “How does the issue you mentioned affect you and who are the people/groups responsible for fixing that problem?”

Brainstorm:

Get the group to answer these questions and write answers on chart paper:

- What are the three levels of Government? (municipal, provincial, federal)
- What is each leader called in each level of Government? (mayor, premier, prime minister)
- What is the name of each leader? (David Miller, Dalton McGuinty, Stephen Harper)

Activity: (40 min)

Divide the group into three teams. Each team represents a level of government: municipal government (city), provincial government, and federal government.

Name an issue (e.g. changing the curriculum in school to address issues of violence and oppression) and ask each team to decide which level of government they believe is supposed to deal with that issue (e.g. education is dealt with on a provincial level). Have each team share their answer with the group and reveal the right answer. Below are examples of issues:

- **Issue (federal):** There are too many youth dying at the hands of guns. Gun violence is growing rapidly; something has to happen immediately to fix this problem!
- **Issue (provincial):** Students are getting out of control and rallying all over university and college campuses about tuition fees. They are complaining that the cost of learning is way too high!
- **Issue (municipal):** The government is in debt and cut back funding for the TTC. The TTC needs more money to operate and it needs the money fast!

Ask teams to talk amongst themselves and come up with solutions on how they think two of the issues can be addressed. Once each team has had enough time to discuss their ideas, they will present their solutions and explanations behind them to the whole group. Summarize their ideas on chart paper.

At the end, the group must vote on which solutions they think best suit the chosen problems. This activity teaches and illustrates democratic policy, government levels and their functions, and the importance of youth voting and civic engagement, because youth do have ideas that can make a positive difference.

Journal Reflection Activity

“My thoughts, my words have the power to ...”

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“I think I can get my voice and ideas heard by ...”

E. My Community, My Cause. Making It Happen.

Purpose: to support youth to develop community-based advocacy projects and brainstorm about the resources needed to get it done.

Materials:

- Chart paper and markers

Goals:

- To examine real examples of youth advocacy
- To create an action plan for our own advocacy projects

Activity 1: What Can Advocacy Look Like?

Play Kanye West’s “George Bush doesn’t care about Black people” clip (www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIUzLpO1kxI) and the International Women’s Day activities in Toronto (www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8TBK0J7ndM).

Based on the above examples, lead a brainstorming session on what advocacy means. Ask participants to think about a time when they spoke out about something. Go around the room and ask people to share.

Activity 2: My advocacy project

Split the group into 3 smaller groups. Have each group choose a space in the room for them to work. Each group must include 1 to 2 facilitators who will work to assist them in creating their own advocacy projects. Below is a list of questions that need to be answered and discussed.

Step 1:

- Choose an issue or topic that is important to your group.
- Ask yourself why this issue exists.
- How will you organize awareness and/or prevention of this issue? Come up with a strategy.

For example, the group could do a community fundraiser, a rally, a letter or petition to the government, or an arts show/talent showcase.

Step 2:

- What is the goal and mission of your project?
- What specific issue are you bringing awareness to? Why is this issue important?

Step 3:

- What roles and responsibilities are included? Who will do what?

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- How will you do outreach or promote your project?
- Is there anyone outside your group you need to contact? (For example: venue owners, a catering company, sponsors, teachers).
- How much time is needed for preparation?
- Do you need money for this project? How much?
Come up with a basic budget outline that displays how much money you need for each task.

Step 4:

- Look over all project details. Is anything missing?
- Does everyone know what their roles and responsibilities are?
- Is there enough money in the budget to carry out the project?
- What are some challenges you can foresee?
- Are you confident that this project will be successful?

Give each group 15 minutes to present their project plan to the rest of the group. Ask questions and provide feedback. Have the group vote on which idea they find the most exciting.

If the group is particularly excited and motivated, ask them if they would be interested in meeting again to figure out how they can work on the chosen advocacy project and actually get it done.

Journal Reflection Activity

“My actions have the power to ...”

“I will learn more about ...”

“I want to make my community better by ...”

F. Closing Activity: Reflecting on our Journals

Ask everyone to pick one journal entry they’d like to share with the group. Go around and share.

G. Evaluation

Thank everyone for their participation. Hand out a feedback form or ask the group questions such as:

- What is one new thing you learned today?
- What was your favourite activity?
- What was your least favourite activity?

Quick Peer Facilitation Resources

Dos and Don'ts of Facilitation

- Be organized. Have your workshop outline and workshop materials together and ready to go. Arrive about 15-30 minutes early at the workshop location to set up.
- Don't give the answers. Try to get participants thinking about it for themselves. Ask open-ended questions that are not leading and try to get participants to examine their own thinking and motivations (e.g. "Do you think some people deserved to be assaulted? Why?")
- Don't pass over oppressive comments. Try to address them. It's important to listen to what people say and give them suggestions of other ways to speak and deal with each other. But it's also important not to make people feel bad about sharing their opinions. Invite the person back into the discussion and encourage others to share too. (i.e. "Why do you feel that way? What does someone else think?")
- Be energetic and involved. It's important to be attentive and interested in the topic while moderating the session to make sure everyone gets a chance and has a voice.
- Ask teachers and authority figures to leave, if possible. Sometimes it's helpful to have those in charge not be in the room during a workshop to make participants feel more comfortable to share their opinions. Before the workshop think to yourself: What could you say to a teacher before a workshop to tell them you'd like to them to leave? What could you say to a teacher/youth worker who keeps cutting into the discussion?
- Practice active listening. It's good to repeat what people say to make sure you got it right and to practice open body language (e.g. open arms, leaning forward, relaxed posture).

Conflict De-escalation Tips

- Refer back to the ground rules.
- Avoid being defensive. Respond calmly to defuse rather than increase conflict.
- Confront and do not ignore disruptive dynamics. Share what you're observing and ask why something is happening in a certain way, instead of blaming or telling someone they're wrong.
- Try not to put people on the spot by addressing individual behaviour, but try to bring the issue up as a group issue (e.g. "Do people find it hard to speak when other people are speaking at the same time?")
- If someone seems to be triggered or reacting in an overtly disruptive way, remind the group that it is okay for people to take a break and step out for a few moments if they need to. It's okay to express ourselves. If there are two facilitators, have one leave the room to check on people who've stepped out and see if they need support.
- Draw in participants engaged in side conversations and participants not engaged in the discussion at all, by asking them direct questions related to workshop content and goals (e.g. "How does it make you feel when someone harasses you?").