

Breaking the Barrier: Youth Access to Support and Services (YASS)

PRESENTERS:

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Pathways for Change

Activity:

When you were a teen...



- What was your favorite music?
 - Did you have one adult you could talk to if you had a crisis?
 - What was it about that adult (their qualities or behavior) that made you feel able to talk to them?
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- If you did not have an adult to talk to, what kind of support would you have wanted?



Problem:

High rates of sexual violence against adolescents

- Nearly **1 in 4** girls who have been in a relationship reported going further sexually than they wanted to as a result of pressure (Liz Claiborne Foundation, 2008).
- **44%** of sexual assaults against middle and high school-aged youth were committed by a peer (Young and Gray, 2009).
- **81%** of girls in foster care report experiencing sexual abuse while in care (American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing, 2009).
- LGBTQ youth are at increased risk of experiencing sexual violence and harassment (GLSEN, 2009).
- Youth with disabilities experience 3 times the amount of sexual violence compared to youth without disabilities (Skarbek, 2009).

Problem: Barriers to Support



- Concerns about mandated reporting
- Parental control & lack of teen autonomy
- RCC outreach and services not reaching teens (e.g., hotline) & policies are adult-focused
- Adulthood, judgment, & stigma
- Transportation

Response:

- Themes
 - Access
 - Empowerment
- Parts
 - Trainings for adults who work with youth
 - YLC: Youth Leadership Corps
 - Capacity-Building in our rape crisis centers



Youth Worker Trainings:



“Youth workers” - Adults who work with youth

- Why youth workers?
- Trusted, familiar, convenient for adolescents

Goals:

Adults who work with youth will be able to

- Recognize
- Respond
- Refer

Youth who have experienced sexual violence.

Recognize: Common Reactions



Fear



Loss of Control



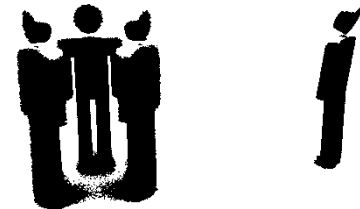
Depression



Anger



Guilt



Social Effects

Respond:

S.E.E.K

- **S**afety
- **E**mpowerment
- **E**mpathy
- **K**nowledge



Safety



- **Physical Safety:**

- Assess for immediate needs such as injury, risk for STI's or pregnancy
- Think about safety at home, at school, in community, at your program, etc.

- **Emotional Safety:**

- Do they have healthy ways to cope with their experience?
- Common mechanisms with harmful side effects can include substance use, eating disorders, self-harming, and suicidal ideation.

- **Privacy and Confidentiality:**

- What are your confidentiality policies?
- When do you tell teens about the limits to their confidentiality?

Empowerment



Activity – Practicing Empowerment

- Disempowering statements:
“You should go to the hospital.”
- How is the statement disempowering?
- How would you reframe it to empower the youth?
For example,
“Would you like to know about your medical options?”

Empowerment

Discuss one of the following statements.



- 1. “What did your mother say when you told her?”
- 2. “Obviously, you’ll want STI prophylaxis.”
- 3. “When are you going to report it?”

Discuss:

- A. What is wrong with the statement or question?
- B. How would you rephrase it to use an empowerment approach?

Empowerment



- Key points for youth workers:
 - Connection between trauma and importance of survivor making decisions
 - Offering options rather than advice
 - Respecting youth decisions

Empathy Exercise – Pair up

em·pa·thy - *noun*: the action of understanding, being aware of being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another of

Instructions:

Each person will have 2 minutes to talk, and 2 minutes to listen.

We will tell you when to switch. What you will be talking about is....

Empathy

- Key points for youth workers:
 - Empathy vs. sympathy
 - Believing
 - Validating reactions
 - Letting youth know it was not their fault



Knowledge Refer

- Responder's Role
- “Warm” Referrals
 - RCC services
 - Common access barriers
- Community resources
 - What are their youth policies?



Organizational Change

- Policies
- Creating Safer Spaces
- Handout:

Organizational self-assessment



Strategies:

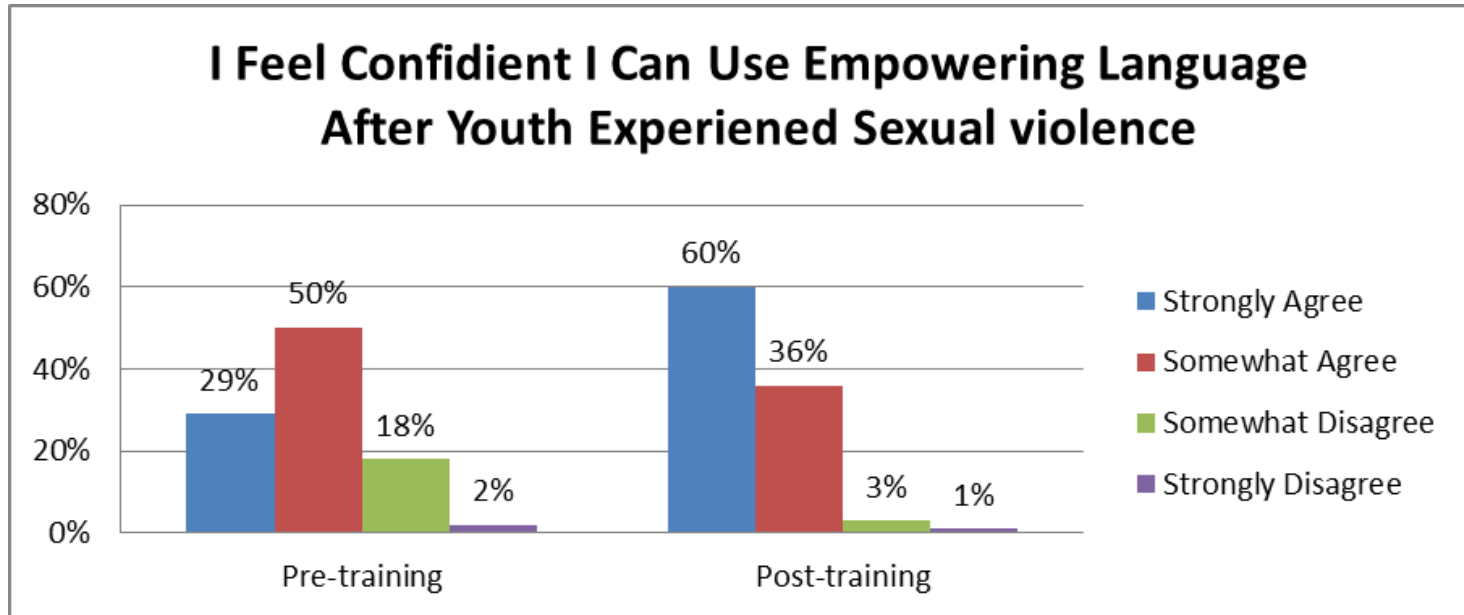
Training, Outreach, & Youth Programs



- Building relationships
- Condensing training to meet time constraints
- Open, positive communication to address program resistance
- Linking to RCC youth workshops as staff preparation
- Managing vicarious and primary trauma of youth worker participants
- Adapting to be relevant to each program.

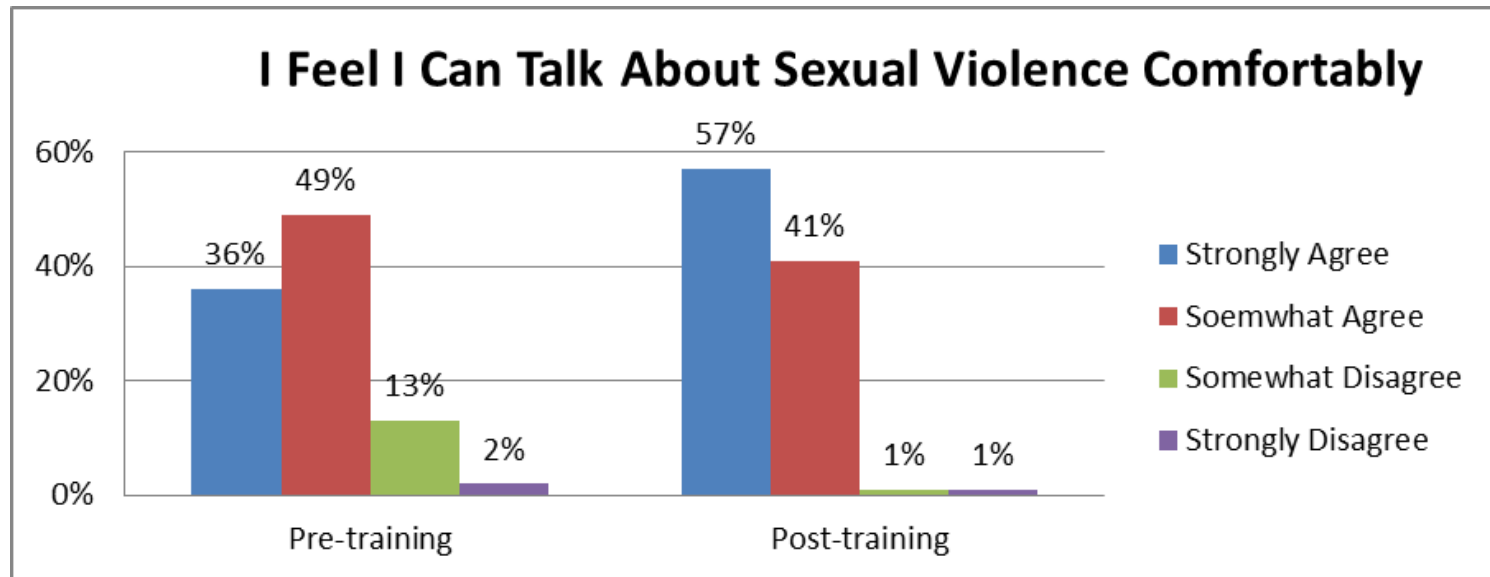
What we achieved...

Increase use of Empowering Language



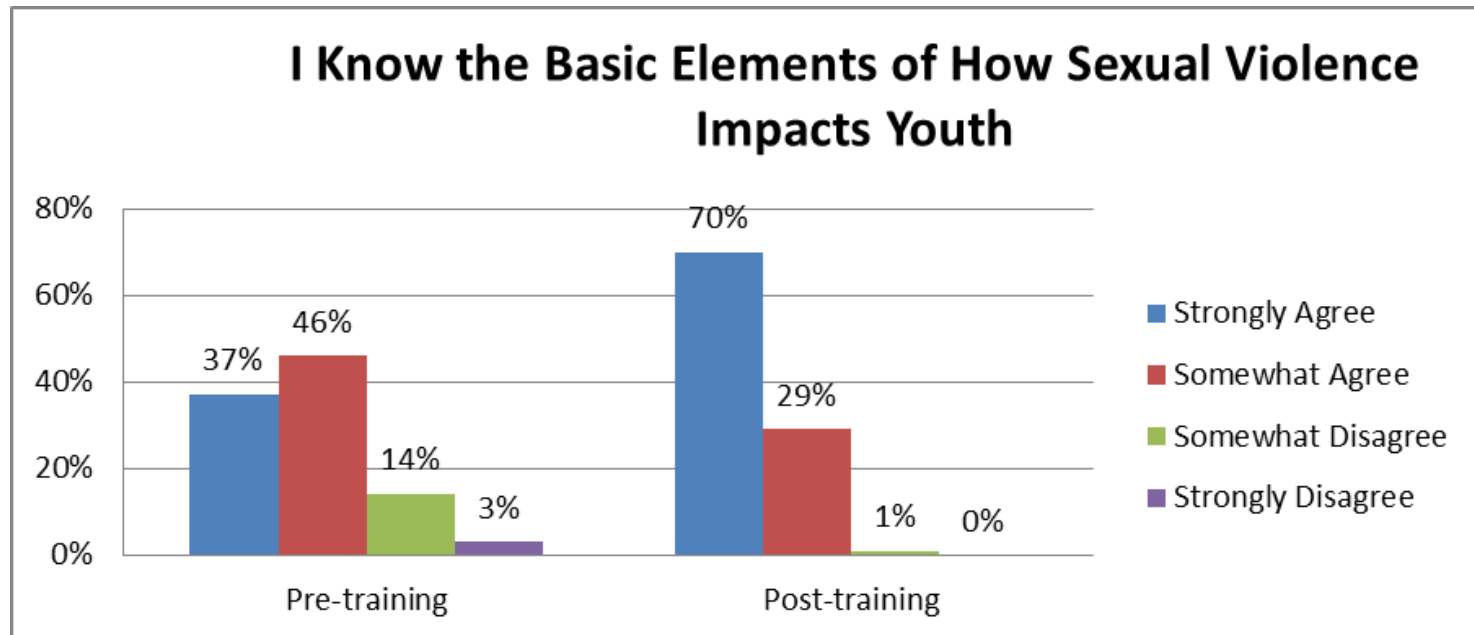
What we achieved...

Confidence in Talking About Sexual Violence



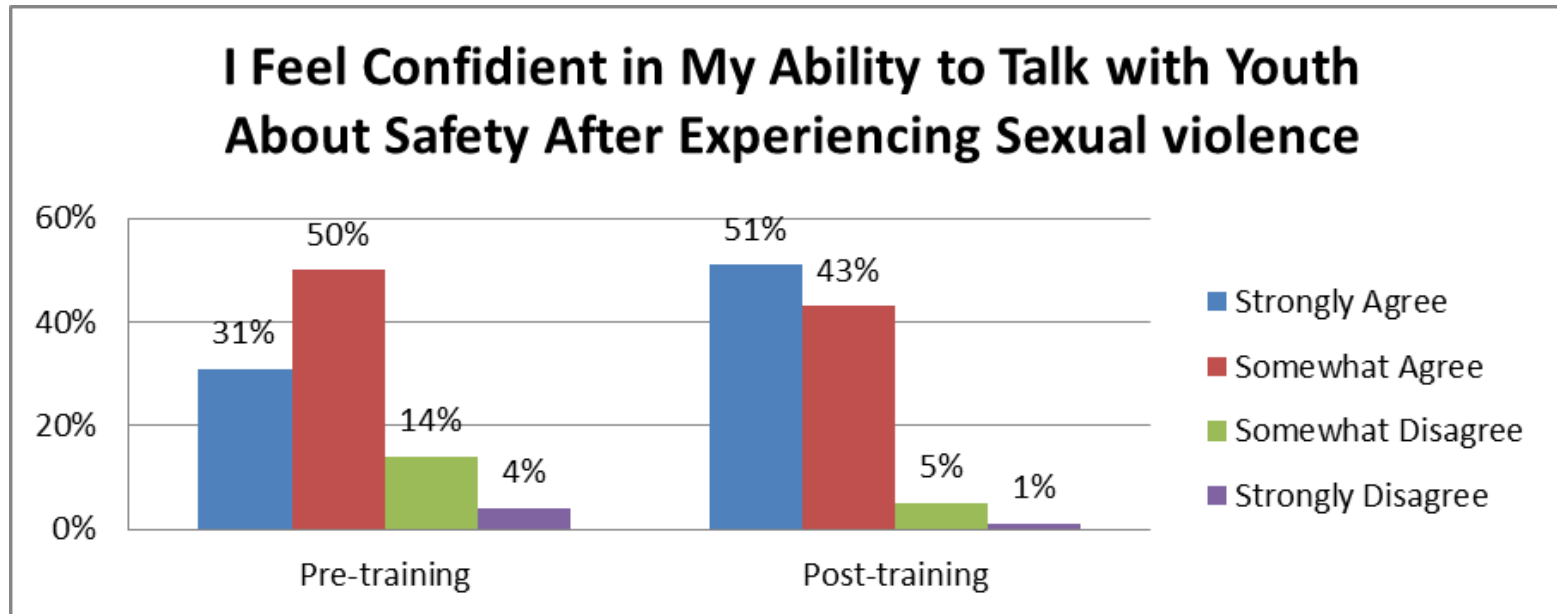
What we achieved...

Understanding of the Impact of Sexual Violence



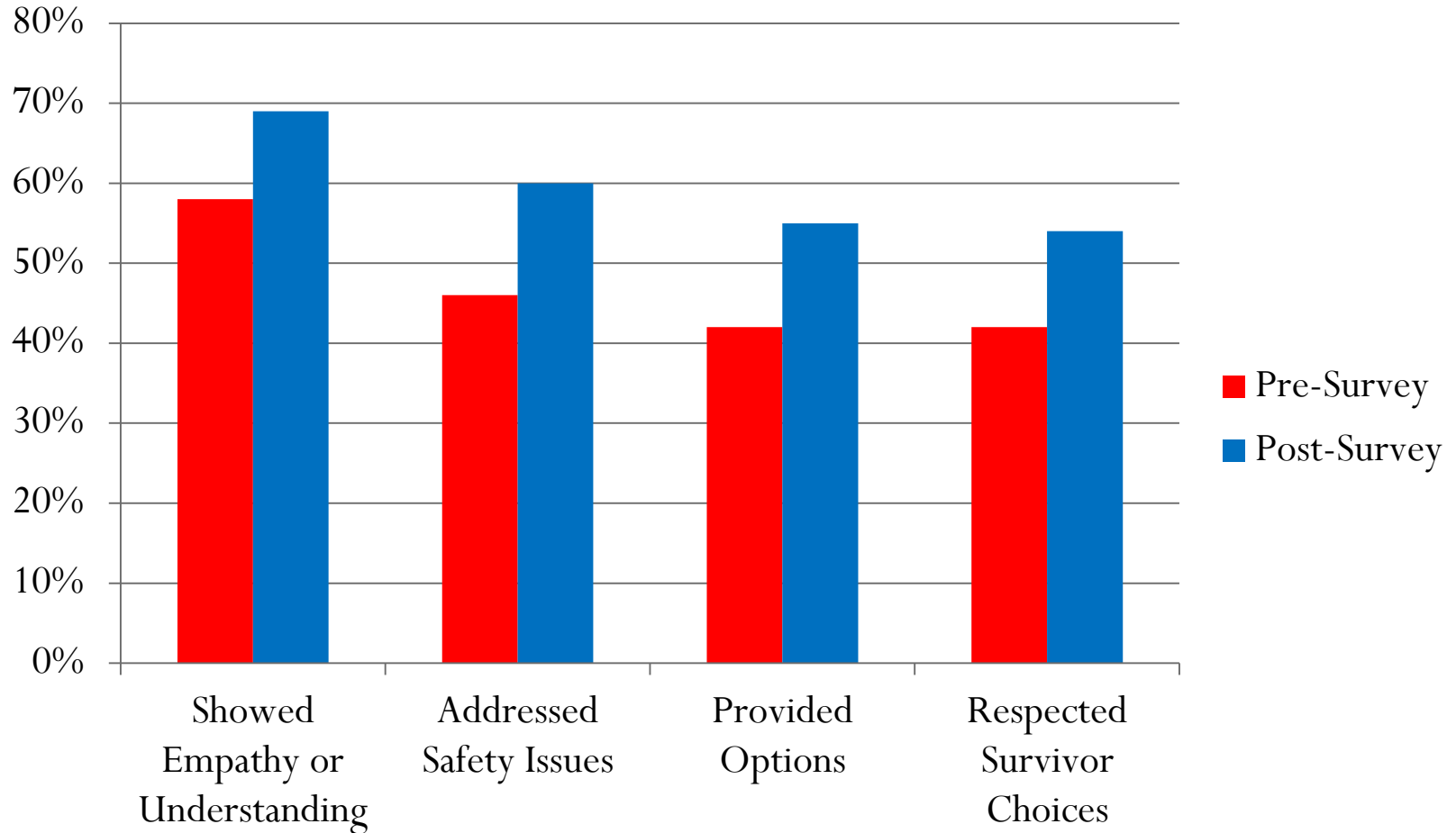
What we achieved...

Confidence in Talking to Youth About Safety



What we achieved...

Skills for Responding to Sexual Violence



Youth Leadership Corps (YLC)



- Agents of Change
- Youth Voice
 - Giving advice to our RCCs to work better with young people
- Empowerment

Strategies: YLC Facilitation

- The Balance: Empowerment vs. Guidance

“We are developing our own ideas of how we want to get the message out...and the YASS coordinator is letting us take the ideas in the direction we want to take them.” – Youth Leader

- Community challenges and opportunities
- YLC & survivor services



What we achieved with the YLC...

- Peer Outreach
 - To friends, social media, schools & families
- Benefits to RCCs
 - Outreach materials
 - Volunteer and staff skills
- Benefits to Youth Leaders
 - Their voices matter.
 - They impact their communities.



Strategies:

Capacity-Building in our Centers

- Becoming accessible
- How do we work with youth?
 - Staff – surveys, training, projects
 - Space – welcoming?
 - Listening to Youth/YLC Feedback
 - Policy in our RCC
 - Outreach & audience
 - Accessibility –YASS Line, Off-site services



Conclusion

What we achieved



- Youth workers
- YLC
- RCC Capacity-Building

- Increase in youth accessing the RCC for services
- Can offer model to adapt to other marginalized populations

Thank You!

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