



MTT Winter Newsletter

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FALL WORKSHOPS

This fall has certainly proven to be a busy one here at MaineTeenTalk. We have been engaged in several large projects. Of these many ventures the most exciting was the development of a series of workshops across the state. These workshops established new relationships with teachers and schools beyond the Cumberland and York County areas. We also 'unveiled' our newly updated Teacher's Guide and additional curriculum content.

Much of September and October was dedicated to the research and development of new content, which enhances our current program. The Teacher's Guide was revised to support this new material. Several timely issues such as Cyberbullying, Cultural Differences, and Gender Differences were created, helping to further explore the various facets of relationship education. The section on toxic communication was enhanced with new

strategies which highlight ongoing developments within the field of relationship education. The new Teacher's Guide reflects these additions, as well as being even more user friendly. We were very pleased to include a multimedia CD as an additional resource for those teachers who choose to teach the program in their classrooms.

Our first workshop took place in Portland. It was attended by teachers from five different area high schools and one service program. The day featured the presentation of new materials, support for their implementation, and an opportunity to test some of the interactive portions of the curriculum. There was also a delicious lunch and several door prizes. Three additional workshops occurred over a marathon stretch of three days from the 19th through the 21st of November. On the 19th we met with representatives from schools in and around Belfast. On the 20th we traveled further north to meet with teachers from schools in the Bangor



region. Finally on the 21st we concluded our fall workshops by meeting with teachers in the Augusta region at the Maine Principals Association Building in Augusta.

The feedback from the workshops was both instructive and encouraging. We value the input given to us from teachers and staff implementing our program. We will be conducting another round of second semester workshops starting in January as we continue to work towards the implementation of relationship education in Maine schools. Keep an eye out for our "Save the Date" fliers for a workshop in your area. We look forward to meeting many new teachers! Together we can positively impact teens in Maine!

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Upcoming Winter Workshops

Our goal at MaineTeenTalk (MTT) is to introduce our healthy relationships education into high schools all over Maine. The staff at MTT is aware that we must continue to reach out to teachers to support them in whatever way possible. We give teachers the choice of having our MTT educators present our program, or they can integrate the program into their own curriculum. An effective way to inform teachers about our program and about these options is to conduct MTT workshops throughout the state.

During our teacher workshops we take the time to discuss material content and explain the main objectives of each section, thereby assisting teachers who are implementing the program themselves. In addition to presenting our existing material, we also introduce new curriculum content. During the workshops a scaled-down version of the full program is delivered via the Teacher Guide.

We discuss all questions, comments or concerns that teachers may have about the program. The workshops are interactive, with participants engaging in some of the games and roles plays, to give them the perspective of their students. Our Fall workshops met with such great success that we are conducting 4 more this winter.

Future workshops have been scheduled for the following locations and dates:

- Belfast- Jan. 27th Waldo, Knox and Lincoln Counties
- Augusta-Jan. 29th Kennebec, Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties
- Bangor- Feb.3rd Penobscot and Hancock Counties
- Portland- Feb. 5th Cumberland and York Counties

What's New

After much discussion with various schools and health teachers, MaineTeenTalk has chosen several issues concerning Maine teens that we feel need addressing. Our team of educators is currently working on research to add content regarding these topics that affect teens daily. Topics include: depression and teen suicide; self esteem and refusal skills; and conflict resolution. This new material will be added to the working curriculum in the new year.

CYBERBULLYING

At MTT we understand that the life of a teenager is ever-changing. They seem to face new challenges on a daily basis. To keep our program current with the various issues affecting Maine teens, we continue to create new curriculum content.

Over the last decade, technology such as cell phones, and online communities such as MySpace and internet

blogs have exploded in popularity—especially among teens. This has, sadly, had some negative side effects, such as the relatively new phenomenon of cyberbullying. To generate awareness, MTT has created an interactive lesson on cyberbullying using some of the latest national research. According to the National Crime Prevention Center over 40% of all teenagers with internet access have reported being bullied online during the past year.

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Cyberbullying can be defined as using technology to embarrass, humiliate and/or threaten another person. This lesson contains a discussion comparing and contrasting the traditional style of bullying with cyberbullying.

“Traditional” bullying takes place face-to-face in public areas, like the schoolyard. Cyberbullying is much more pervasive. It can take place wherever there is a computer or a cell phone. With

websites such as Facebook and Instant Messenger systems, the audience for cyberbullying includes anyone who has access to the Internet. In addition, the bully often remains anonymous, rendering the victim powerless to stop the abuse. These factors make cyberbullying a major issue impacting teens everywhere. Our curriculum now includes an optional multimedia piece with a moving video presentation demonstrating the effects that cyberbullying has had on teens. We

have also included two clips from the National Ad Council on the effects of cyberbullying, as often, the bully does not see the true extent of the damage s/he has created.

MTT continues to create new curriculum content for Maine teens. Stay tuned as we continue to unveil new material aimed at improving the life of Maine teens.

