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**Innovation in Practice Feature**

# ***Stepping Up: A Focus on Facilitator Development***

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*This article examines the impact on peer facilitators in Stepping Up, a dating violence prevention program at a Canadian university. A focus group held eight months following the delivery of the program determined the personal impact of involvement in the program. Results indicate that peer facilitators experienced personal growth as leaders on their campus, including a newfound ability to be change agents through bystander intervention.*

A peer facilitated dating violence prevention program, *Stepping Up*, was developed and evaluated on a postsecondary campus in Canada. The effectiveness of the program demonstrates changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to healthy and unhealthy relationships (Warthe, Kostouros, Carter-Snell, & Tutty, 2013). The focus of this article is to describe the experiences of peer facilitators from their involvement in *Stepping Up*. We acknowledge the surge in bystander intervention programs across North America and the content in this article, while not new, confirms the importance of dating violence prevention programs on college and university campuses.

## **Dating Violence on Postsecondary Campuses**

Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, and White (2006) showed that as many as 53% of women and 67.5% of men attending postsecondary institutions report experiencing physical, psychological, or sexual violence in romantic or dating relationships. The consequences of dating violence can be life changing and even fatal (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Campbell, Webster, & Glass, 2009; Glass, Laughon, Rutto, Bevacqua, & Campbell, 2008). Numerous studies specific to dating violence recognize that emotional, physical, and sexual violence contribute to decreasing academic performance or career achievement, substance use, unhealthy weight control behaviors, risky sexual behaviors, mental health disorders, pregnancy, chronic health diseases, posttraumatic stress, suicidal ideation, and the risk of violence in future relationships (Amar, 2007; Danis & Anderson, 2008; Silverman, Raj, Mucci, & Hathway, 2001; Straus, 2004; Walton-Moss et al., 2003; Warthe &

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Tutty, 2009). A systematic review of intimate partner violence and sexual assault studies demonstrated the profound effects on mental health that are linked to either form of interpersonal violence (Carter-Snell & Jakubec, 2013).

In January of 2008, 1,572 randomly selected students participated in the Canadian reference group of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) at this Canadian institution (American College Health Association, 2013). Questions on dating violence were added to the health survey by Warthe and Tutty (2008). Approximately one in three students responding to this survey experienced dating violence, with 9% of women and 4.8% of male students having experienced it within the preceding 12 months. Female students disclosing violence in the previous 12 months were more likely to disclose depression, anxiety disorder, substance abuse problems, and at least one attempted suicide within the same time period. (Warthe & Tutty, 2008). Students on this Canadian campus who disclosed dating violence were also at greater risk of sexual violence, including sexual touching, attempted penetration (vaginal, oral, anal), and sexual penetration against their will. A subsequent administration of the NCHA revealed that in the Canadian reference group, over 30% reported ever having experienced dating violence. Developing and implementing an effective dating violence prevention program in light of these results is important as was constructing a program that would be attractive to postsecondary students, since most provinces in Canada do not mandate violence prevention programs.

### The *Stepping Up* Dating Violence Program

*Stepping Up* was developed with the World Health Organization (2010) social ecological model as a framework. The basic principles of the model include the need for multidisciplinary collaborative interventions aimed at multiple levels: individuals, relationships, community and society. At an individual level, *Stepping Up* is aimed at assisting young adults to prepare for transitions as they meet their developmental needs for intimacy while becoming independent and facing challenges such as living away from parents and engaging in high-risk behaviors such as drugs, alcohol, and sex. These behaviors can adversely affect their future relationships. *Stepping Up* helps students to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to communicate within a relationship. *Stepping Up* is also linked to the long-term outcome of building capacity and awareness in the university community. The larger community is also influenced through the development of a peer-facilitated program that can be implemented at postsecondary institutions across the country.

A program existed that was consistent with the social ecological model and which addressed most of the key areas we wished to include in *Stepping Up*. The *Making Waves* program, although developed for high school students, had evidence of effectiveness (Cameron et al., 2007). The program included modules on healthy relationships, communications and boundaries, and gender and media issues. Adaptations to the program to suit university students included the addition of a module on sexual relationships and changing the communication and boundary module to bystander intervention since the topics of communication and boundaries could be included in the healthy relationships module. Young adults, between 15 and 24 years are high risk for sexual assault (Johnson, 2006) and assaults are generally committed by someone they know (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). The people who “know the victim are often the perpetrators of interpersonal violence such as sexual assault and domestic violence” (p. 68). By including a module about sexual violence, *Stepping Up* broadened the original *Making Waves* mandate to include both the sexual assault that may occur in an intimate partner relationship and the sexual violence that may occur outside of an existing relationship.

*Stepping Up* also has a bystander intervention focus. Bystander factors are vital in sexual violence prevention programs on postsecondary campuses throughout the United States (Gidycz, Orchowski, & Berkowitz, 2011). A bystander approach was found to be effective in creating change up to a year after a dating violence program (Moynihan et al., 2015). Bystanders, in postsecondary education, tend to be peers such as classmates, roommates, teammates, and friends. As noted in the NCHA study, students overwhelmingly indicated they would seek help from a friend or peer rather than professionals (Warthe & Tutty, 2008, 2010). This emphasized the need for a bystander-focused peer-driven program. If peers have an understanding of the dynamics of dating violence and healthy versus unhealthy relationships, then they can make appropriate referrals for their friends. *Stepping Up* aims to target peer-to-peer contact on campus, both as participants and as peer facilitators. After participating in *Stepping Up*, peers can make appropriate referrals to reduce dating violence in people's lives and increase violence prevention on their campuses. Building student capacity has the potential to influence the overall culture of the university environment regarding knowledge and beliefs about dating violence and awareness of community resources to address violence.

## Comparisons

Many postsecondary campuses have existing programs related to sexual violence prevention particularly in the United States, where legislation mandates prevention programming. The vast majority of this prevention and intervention programming, however, targets sexual violence. The National Sexual Violence Resource Centre (n.d.) in the United States highlights several postsecondary campus programs that assist in bystander training but focuses on campaigns that reduce sexual violence. One such program, Step Up! Sexual Assault Bystander Intervention (n.d.), promotes pro-social intervention achieved through training of campus peers. The main difference between Step Up! Sexual Assault Bystander Intervention and *Stepping Up* is the way that *Stepping Up* contextualizes sexual violence.

The Virginia Red Flag campaign (n.d.), an initiative developed by students in collaboration with other campus professionals, may be considered peer driven. This program encourages bystander intervention in dating violence relationships on postsecondary campuses. The campaign, designed to provide resources and awareness about dating and sexual violence, has similarities to *Stepping Up*. Although the Red Flag program provides excellent resources and information, the information provided is not dynamic. *Stepping Up*, because of its peer-driven nature, emphasizes issues as they pertain to the campus community in context at present. Students involved in *Stepping Up* developed a curriculum that included a segment about a confession site, which had not existed on this Canadian campus the year previously. With a focus on student-led curriculum, *Stepping Up* does not rely on static information; rather its design allows for program changes from year to year, keeping student context in the forefront.

The argument we continue to make is that programs should not focus on sexual violence alone (Breitenbecher, 2000). We believe we need to maintain the context within which sexual violence most often occurs, which is in relationships or acquaintances. Recently, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) amended the Clery Act to include dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, which could change postsecondary programming. In Canada, we do not have mandatory programming, which has allowed us to look at programs that could address dating violence in all its forms. Since Warthe & Tutty's (2010) research pointed to the importance of peers as a primary source of support for those who have experienced violence on campus, a peer-driven program seemed fitting along with curricular content to reduce dating violence.

## Peer Facilitator Involvement

Adult learners have a need for information that is relevant to them, helps them cope in life situations, and helps their quality of life or self-esteem (Knowles, Elwood, & Swanson, 2014). Peers would therefore be in the best position to help identify the relevant content to include in each of the four modules. Peers are also best to facilitate the sessions rather than faculty or professionals.

*Stepping Up* includes students as peer facilitators involved in curriculum development and evaluation, as program participants, and as advising partners. The students are involved in two phases: Phase 1 consists of recruitment and training of peer facilitators, and in Phase 2, the peer facilitators deliver the modules over a weekend to participants and assist them in completing subsequent community awareness projects.

In Phase 1, the peer facilitators are recruited from the general university population through online advertisements and information sessions. The majority of peer facilitators came from programs with a focus in disciplines such as social work, counseling, nursing, psychology and sociology. Recruitment was focused on ensuring there are both women and men facilitators, that diverse cultural and ethnic communities are represented, and that there are enough facilitators to allow for attrition. In the months preceding the actual program weekend, the selected facilitators participate in a number of curriculum and activity development sessions. The facilitators work in conjunction with the faculty research team, community partners, and program staff to determine the content of each of the modules to be created in relation to four modules: gender and media, healthy relationships, sexual relationships, and bystander intervention. Peer facilitators work with one or more content experts (faculty and/or community partners) to create activities that will support their learning objectives. These same content experts are present during the weekend to support the facilitators as needed. Time is allocated during Phase 1 of the program to discuss module content with fellow peer facilitators to provide feedback on content and activities.

Phase 2 includes the delivery of the modules over a full weekend with up to 60 student participants and subsequently assisting students in completing community awareness projects. The weekend includes a media presentation and group discussions on dating violence, peer facilitation of the four interactive modules, a discussion of gender roles and expectations, and planning for community prevention programs. Following the weekend, participants complete projects focused on violence prevention that are presented to the university community. The prevention projects are aimed at supporting attitude and behavior change among participants and increasing awareness of resources in the community. The additional expectation of a community project helps students integrate and consolidate learning in addition to benefitting the larger community; participants completing the prevention projects are supported by program staff, peer facilitators, community partners, and the research team. Participants must have the prevention projects approved for content in order to be reimbursed for expenses associated with completion of the prevention project. The small amount of funding ensures the quality of the projects.

Changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior and behavioral intent (KABBI) among student participants were measured before participating in the *Stepping Up* weekend event, immediately after and at approximately eight months following (Warthe et al., 2013). Results indicated a significant and sustained change among those who participated, in some instances even becoming more positive over time. We recognized that information was missing in relation to the impact on the peer facilitators themselves. A focus group took place for the facilitators immediately after the program that focused on what changes they recommended to the training and program format. The purpose of our study was to identify the influence the program had on the peer facilitators.

## Methodology

*Stepping Up* peer facilitators engaged in an eight-month follow-up focus group. Qualitative methods, specifically focus groups, have become increasingly popular as a way to evaluate programs related to campus violence (Foubert & Perry, 2007). Focus groups allow researchers to deepen their understanding of the participant experience. Since we noticed that the peer facilitators were talking more personally about what it meant to have been part of this program, we inquired about personal and or professional changes experienced by the peer facilitators.

### Participants

All peer facilitators were invited to participate in a focus group about their experiences from having been a peer facilitator in *Stepping Up*. Of the 16 peer facilitators, eight were available and willing to participate in a follow up focus group at eight months following the end of the *Stepping Up* weekend event. Of the eight participants, five were females between the ages of 21–30 years and three were males of the same age range. All participants had graduated their programs. All of the participants were from a human service program, either social work, nursing, or counseling. Three of the participants were continuing their bachelor education at another institution and five were employed in their field of study in human services.

### Interview Method

Qualitative interviewing allows a researcher to understand the experiences and the meanings made by the participants who share their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). While participants have their own subjective experiences, focus groups allow participants to freely share their common understandings. Listening to the experiences of others can increase articulation about the phenomenon under investigation.

An interview with a more open process allows the participants to share the most important aspects of the topic, and when adjunct subjects emerge, the interviewer can follow those looking for connections and information that may weave into the original focus. Kvale (1996) suggested that interviewers should give opportunities to follow up on what participants say. Kvale (1996) stated, “the questions most used in an in-depth interview follow from what the participant has said” (p. 76). We chose a more phenomenological and interpretive approach in structuring this focus group (Creswell, 2007; van Manen, 1990). One overarching question to start the focus group was, “How had being a peer facilitator lead to personal or professional changes in your own knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and behavioral intents.”

### Data Management

Two different approaches were chosen for data analysis. We began with van Manen’s approach, as described by Fleming, Gaidys, and Robb (2002) in analyzing the transcript. van Manen’s (1990) approach helps to determine a theme, or as he put it, “what is the meaning, its point” (p. 87). Themes are about seeking meaning. When looking at the transcripts, it is important to draw out how participants are making sense of the phenomenon in question. Beginning with a broad overview, and narrowing to specific sections or sentences provided by the participants, we swayed back and forth in this process until insight into the phenomenon was established (Fleming et al., 2002). A look at the whole transcript was necessary to get a sense of what the participants were describing as their lived experience related to their involvement as peer facilitators in *Stepping Up*. Beginning with the whole of the transcript and narrowing to specific sections or sentences provided by the participants, we identified layers

of experiences that deepened our own understanding of the peer facilitator's experiences (Fleming et al., 2002).

The second approach was to adopt a structure that aligned with a process that calls for marking passages and then collapsing meaning units into identified themes. Cohen, Kahn, and Steeves (2000) set out several steps in order to move from full interview text to thoughtful interpretations, which include reading the data for initial interpretations then reducing data and creating a line-by-line code used for thematic analysis. Following this, we underlined phrases and gave tentative themes by writing in the margins of the transcript; the margin comments focused on textual data that gave meaning. Finally, writing and re-writing captured appropriate interpretation. In particular, Moustakas (as cited in Creswell, 2007), discussed the listing of significant statements, grouping into meaning units and creating themes.

### Themes and Responses

While many directions surfaced from the focus group, what emerged most prominently was that these peer facilitators had become leaders and had strength in their conviction related to bystander intervention. *Stepping Up* led to profound and sustained changes for the peer facilitators. Participant voices are identified with the use of quotations throughout the remainder of this article. Themes that emerged included responsibility to act, confidence, and leadership.

#### Responsibility to Act

The literature investigating violence prevention highlights the recent popularity of bystander intervention programs (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). Banyard and Moynihan (2011) suggested that building confidence, along with heightening one's responsibility to their community, might lead to more bystander intervention or responsibility to act. As trainers within *Stepping Up*, we have seen the impact on these peer facilitators, in particular their desire to inform others and act when necessary: "it's still hard to do something but you know you have to because you have this knowledge now, and it would be awful not to do anything. Like you owe it to them and you owe it to yourself." Confident and well-informed students can and do intervene, regardless of the repercussions sometimes:

I had a friend this summer and there were red flags [in their relationship]. I was like hmmm, you might want to look out for that and stuff. I don't think she liked me at the time, but they ended up breaking up and now she realizes. I think it's hard to know what you know and then not do anything, right. I think the increased knowledge equals like an increased need to do something. Because you realize that like you're the person that knows about it. It's your responsibility.

In relation to this particular study, peer facilitators noted they could not stand back and ignore events as they were occurring, particularly if what they were witnessing related to a potential or actual act of violence. Their newly gained knowledge and skill assisted them in recognizing potential points of intervention. Two of the peer facilitators were out together one night:

We were outside in front of my house talking and this guy and girl were walking down the street and he was swearing like F-ing bitch, blah, blah, blah, but in the end he was only telling a story. But mid-conversation her and I stopped, and we both looked at them and I looked back at the girl, but it turned out he was only telling a story, he was obviously a good storyteller, but we thought he was telling her off. So, I think being involved in the program it's just more of a willingness to do something.

According to Warthe and Tutty (2010) peers can intervene appropriately and make referrals, if necessary, when they have a better understanding of the dynamics of dating violence. Laner,

Benin, and Ventrone (2010) confirm the importance of peers in bystander intervention. This was confirmed by the researchers evaluating the influence of *Stepping Up* (Warthe et al., 2013), having found that the weekend participants sustained change in their belief about their own ability to intervene in a dating violence situation if needed. The peer facilitators also confirmed this dimension. In this eight-month follow-up focus group, peer facilitators shared several experiences in which they intervened and felt obligated to intervene given their newly acquired knowledge and skill from having participated in the *Stepping Up* program as a peer facilitator:

I was at the bar on the dance floor and noticed this guy hitting on a girl. She looked terribly uncomfortable and I was sure she wanted him gone. I danced over to her and asked if she was okay and if she wanted this guy's attention. She said "no," so I began putting my arms around her and said, "Oh my god I cannot believe it is you. I have not seen you in so long. Come on let's catch up."

They walked off the dance floor together, leaving the potential perpetrator behind. Granted this particular young woman was out-going and friendly, however, she directly attributed her intervention to having been involved in *Stepping Up* as a facilitator. She stated she had a better understanding that confronting the potential perpetrator may increase harm for her and others, and a more subtle approach, as in this case, was chosen as appropriate. She also noted she could no longer rationalize this was none of her business or a misinterpretation. She was compelled to check on the situation and was okay with being wrong. In essence, this particular peer facilitator felt confident what she was seeing was someone at risk, and she was doing the right thing by checking on the safety of a potential victim.

### Confidence

Increased confidence was another theme to emerge from our focus group discussions. Students began to discuss the difference between learning something theoretically and putting what they learned into practice, "I think it's really improved my confidence too.... I mean we learn a lot in school, but it really helped in terms of having that experience." The literature investigating violence prevention highlights the recent popularity of bystander interventions programs (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). In particular, Banyard and Moynihan (2011) suggested building confidence along with heightening one's responsibility to their community might lead to more bystander intervention.

We understood building group facilitation skills among peer facilitators would increase their effectiveness with group process and management of the participant experience. As one participant expressed, "I was a new student and felt somewhat apprehensive at the idea of facilitating groups, yet also excited at the chance to help further the endeavor to help others and gain skills that might assist in my work down the road." We did not expect the peer facilitators to take ownership of the program and more responsibility for their own behavior and to their community: "The reality that dating violence is a major concern for our communities was a constant drive for us to be part of a solution." These peer facilitators shared they had expectations of themselves and confidence in what they have to say regardless of the repercussions:

I don't think my friends like going to the bar with me anymore because the guys will be like "oh I'm getting with her tonight," and I will say "well, you know she's drunk, and did she say yes." The guy will say "well, yeah, kind of," and then it's like I give my whole spiel of giving consent.

Initially, Darley and Latane (as cited in Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004) understood the lack of bystander intervention as a diffusion of responsibility. A relationship, however, might also exist between the need to build skill and confidence such that one's willingness to engage others increases. The peer facilitator who felt responsible to educating friends at the bar understood that



their behavior may be due to lack of knowledge, “so you’re increasing their knowledge by telling them, they might get mad at you, but now they know.”

Opportunities to educate friends and colleagues about violence prevention takes place in communities and sometimes opportunities arise outside of organized prevention programs in places like the local pub or house party. Potentially, postsecondary students need to feel equipped to respond in places where violence occurs, which is not typically in the classroom or campus hallway. Koelsch, Brown, and Boisen (2012), rather, noted violence occurs at a house party for example and participants who assumed violence often occurred behind closed doors and clues to potential violence were covert. When informed about signs of violence, peers may be able to interrupt potential harm. Perhaps, as we are concluding, more needs to occur to assist bystanders to watch and listen for the cues that may lead to violence. Since the more appropriate time to intervene may be when initial comments first emerge, learning to listen beyond our socialized vocabulary, postsecondary students could take initiative in violence prevention. As noted by a focus group participant:

I’m a guy right, we laugh at everything; and we’re filthy and sometimes it’s just they’re filthy jokes or something and I’m just thinking to myself I should not be laughing at that. It’s like in the social circumstance when you want to save face with your friends, if you laugh at the joke you’re still in the social circle, if you argue, all your friends are going to look at you. So I usually just go “actually the reason that’s not funny, is because ...”

Certainly, McMahon and Banyard (2012) have suggested that educating bystanders in how to intervene while the risk is low leads to being more proactive in prevention of dating violence.

Confidence and education may be a catalyst for action on postsecondary campuses in relation to dating violence. In a recent study by Katz, Olin, Herman, and DuBois (2013), students living in a campus residence were exposed to posters promoting bystander assistance for those in need of intervention. Their study results suggested that exposure to information increased the willingness to help. Safety in a community is enhanced when doing so is promoted and encouraged.

## Leadership

The literature related to leadership development described key elements as including confidence, good communication, building a sense of citizenship, and having courage (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Already noted is the courage these peer facilitators had expressed in their willingness to respond. The peer facilitators also expressed having a new level of confidence and a heightened awareness that allowed them to act. As noted by Banyard et al. (2004), the role of peers in reducing dating violence is clear. After participating in *Stepping Up*, the peer facilitators had a deeper desire to be leaders in their world, both in and outside of the postsecondary context. One peer facilitator suggested they had become more aware through the gender and media modules, which has led to interventions: “I’m able to be more aware of actually what is out there. I think it’s always good to have a heightened sense of what the negative things are, so that you can try to make a difference.” This peer further described the conversations taking place in a before- and after-school program, where she works, related to song lyrics and clothing advertisements that might degrade females. The desire to make a difference related to the leadership skills that surfaced from being involved in this program.

Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2013) suggested that true leadership begins with the ability to build relationships as a person with character. The peers in *Stepping Up* built solid relationships with one another as they worked together to create the *Stepping Up* modules. Those relationships can lead to further engagement in program development and initiatives as leaders, “so I think that it is really cool,

that we created relationships through this with one another.” When considering their work together the facilitators expressed, “you say I know him, I know what he’s capable of, I know what he can do. We know each other. We know what we can do.” The strength in their conviction came across loud and clear in terms of what they now recognized in each other and themselves. They described a belief that the world was a better place because they knew they could rely on one another to make it safer for others.

It became clear to us as we spoke with the peer facilitators about their experience in the program that they saw themselves as acting agents who are capable of changing their environments: “The reality that dating violence is a major concern for our communities was a constant drive for us to be part of a solution.” As noted by Dugan et al. (2011), training to be a peer leader may foster the capacity for social responsibility. These *Stepping Up* peer facilitators were looking at changes on their campus and in their home communities.

### Lessons Learned

While we focus mostly on the experiences of the peer facilitators of *Stepping Up*, we also took the opportunity to acquire feedback from the peer facilitators about potential program changes. While peer facilitators claimed overall and general satisfaction with *Stepping Up*, there were particular aspects of the program that needed modification for future iterations. In general, these peer facilitators experienced a great deal of personal fulfillment and gratification from having been involved with the project and the general themes for modification related to time, practice, and preparation.

#### Time

Time is relevant when considering the postsecondary population. Students are busy with studies, their main campus activity; many are working part time, but students also have a desire to grow their co-curricular record. Peer facilitators expressed they wanted more time to learn about group facilitation and process, yet they were not prepared to dedicate any more time than they already had to the program development and delivery. Careful consideration about how to satisfy the needs of the peer facilitators for more preparation without adding time, therefore, was needed.

We thought adequate time had been set aside for program creation. Although time was dedicated to content and activity development, it became clear that the peer facilitators needed more time to become comfortable with group facilitation skills. Future implementation of *Stepping Up* will involve more time on teaching and modeling group process. We plan to increase large and small group activities that model facilitation at the first meeting. Thereafter, we refer to the skills used while peers develop their modules and work together through their own group process. This does not add time to their schedules for learning particular skills; instead, we will refer to and reorient peers to the appropriate skills these emerge. Then when they are practicing the facilitation of their particular module, they will have experienced, through modeling and discussion, how to facilitate a group. In addition, materials on group facilitation can be supplied.

#### Practice and Preparation

In the development of the program, we set aside the recommended time for content and module activity development and a final meeting prior to their delivery at which the facilitators shared their ideas for their particular module with the other peer facilitators and the researchers. Sharing ideas was not enough. Facilitators needed time to practice. Rather than simply sharing their activity ideas, future preparation of peer facilitators will dedicate this time to engaging in the activities, which will allow them to gain more confidence in activity delivery prior to the event weekend and make any needed adjustments.

## Debriefing

The issue of debriefing came up during the event, when, during one module, the very first question asked led to a personal disclosure of intimate partner violence. While this program is not aimed at receiving disclosures, we did anticipate that this would occur. Some peers stated feeling as if they had let some of the participants down since they were unsure about how to process with these disclosures. The peers had not expected the number of disclosures that were received, however the participants from the weekend event stated that disclosures were one of the positive aspects of the program. We noted the importance of assisting peers with the skill of receiving disclosures in a group context and will train future peers in a Psychological First Aid model (n.d.). It is important to keep in mind the point of the program is not to encourage disclosures, but we know these will happen and responding well is important.

We have been challenged that the peer facilitators may not have all the right training and development as it relates to receiving disclosures prior to program delivery. In our deliberations about potential program changes, we wondered if disclosing prior history might be typical in a postsecondary population. We suggest that postsecondary students are already having these discussions and that a program such as *Stepping Up* allows those existing discussions to take place in an atmosphere with information about appropriate resources and with community partners in attendance. Participants were highly engaged and verbal throughout the entire *Stepping Up* weekend and in their feedback; one highlight was being able to talk openly about their experiences in a non-judgmental setting.

## Future Directions

Potential directions for the future include focus groups with participants to supplement their KABBI data and administering the KABBI and dating violence scales to peer facilitators. Results showed that there are significant and sustained quantitative changes in the *Stepping Up* participants, but where the peer facilitators land in terms of their knowledge of dating violence prior to their development as facilitators is unknown. Peer facilitators may already have a greater knowledge about dating violence than participants since most facilitators were already in human services programs. Understanding this will help researchers determine the factors underlying the success of the program. Similarly, qualitative changes in peer facilitators emerged as a result of participating in *Stepping Up*, but little is known about the experience for participants. Triangulation of data in both groups will help to expand the understanding of the process and ways in which change is affected.

## Multiple Changes

Although it was not anticipated that the peer facilitators would experience deeper self-reflection, their enthusiasm and disclosures compelled us to hear more about their experiences. Program data showed statistically significant results regarding the sustained changes in KABBI by the participants in the *Stepping Up* weekend event. These data helped us to understand the influence the program had on those who attended and spoke to the importance of violence prevention programs such as *Stepping Up* (Warthe et al., 2013). Although empirical data are helpful, we were aware that on another level, programs such as this can create change on the postsecondary campus, which assists in health and safety for those most at risk. The peer facilitators of *Stepping Up* highlighted change can happen for both those who participate and those who deliver programs. We were encouraged to recognize these young people took responsibility and cared about their public spaces.

Our hope is that readers will consider the programs on their own campuses and question the scope of these programs in relation to dating violence. We have an opportunity, through programs

such as *Stepping Up*, to inform about dating and sexual violence using a grassroots approach that has the potential to change a campus environment. Not only will the campus change but those students who engage in the program will one day graduate and take what they have learned to the communities within which they will work and live. Change is possible.

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