



# Youth Empowerment Solutions for Healthy Relationships (YES-HR)

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## OVERVIEW

Middle school curriculum promoting healthy relationships and preventing dating violence.

- Integrates evidence-based, youth-led relationship skills into standard education effortlessly
- Used in schools, community organizations, youth programs, and violence prevention initiatives

## BACKGROUND

Developed by researchers at Wayne State University, Michigan State University, and the University of Michigan, YES-HR is an adaptation of the original evidence-based YES program. As originally rolled out, YES-HR was implemented during middle-school social studies classes and aligned with the social studies curriculum requirements for the State of Michigan Department of Education. The program is designed to help students develop healthy relationship behaviors as they begin to explore dating, with the intent of preventing dating violence. The program is also designed to empower youth to develop leadership skills and engage them in developing and implementing school change projects that focus on collaboration while promoting healthy relationship dynamics and the prevention of aggressive dating behavior. Like the original YES program, YES-HR involves adults in the process of helping youth create solutions to dating violence and increasing healthy relationships.

## INNOVATION

The YES-HR Curriculum focuses on developing leadership skills, community pride, program planning, and resource mobilization. Youth-led community change projects have included painting ceiling tiles and school murals with healthy relationship themes, a reading corner for a safe space for reading and discussing, a resource room for students with physical challenges, and creating an outdoor space for bringing youth together outside for lunch. Published

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evaluation results of the original YES Program based on a pre-post control group design demonstrated positive results 3 months post and 1 year post in promoting healthy development and reducing risks for violence and other problem behaviors. (Thulin et al., 2022; Zimmerman, et al., 2017)

The developers have created a guide to assist organizations and communities in making decisions about selecting, implementing, and adapting the Youth Empowerment Solutions (YES) program. It is designed for individuals who are responsible for choosing, supervising, and carrying out youth programs. This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the Youth Empowerment Solutions Curriculum. It includes sections on YES core components, assessing readiness to implement YES, determining the need for adaptations, designing adaptations, and reflecting on their results. A corresponding Evaluation Guide provides all of the tools necessary to conduct process and outcome evaluations of the YES program.

YES-HR includes all the core components of the original YES curriculum. The original YES curriculum is based on sound theory and has proven results. The YES-HR curriculum includes detailed instructions including needed resources for the lesson for all components of the program. Training by the developers is available.

YES-HR was tested in middle schools and incorporated into the social studies curriculum. By embedding the program in a required core class, entire cohorts of students receive the curriculum in its entirety.