EVALUATION *1999/2000*

MVP

MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes findings from the 1999-2000 (Year 1) evaluation of the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program, located at Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society. The MVP Program is a gender violence prevention and education program that works with high school and college young men and women across the nation. This evaluation focuses specifically on MVP's Massachusetts high school initiative, which is funded primarily by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Utilizing a unique bystander approach to prevention, the MVP Program views student-athletes and student leaders not as potential perpetrators or victims, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers. While MVP continues to grow and gain recognition and popularity throughout the country, it has never been formally evaluated. The following pages provide some background on the problem of adolescent gender violence and the prevention programs that have been designed to address it. In addition, this report describes the MVP Program and its goals, outlines the evaluation goals and methods of this first year of program assessment activities, and presents the findings from Year 1 of the evaluation[1].

II   *BACKGROUND*
Gender Violence Among Adolescents

Serious problems of physical abuse and sexual assault are not confined to the adult female population in this country. In fact, research suggests that "although adolescents account for less than ten percent of the population, they are the targets of an estimated 20 to 50 percent of all reported rapes" (Roden, 1991, p. 267). Sixty-one percent of rapes take place before the victim is 18 years old (Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, 1992). These statistics become more understandable, though no less frightening, when one considers the fact that 47 percent of female and 65 percent of male adolescents surveyed believe that a boy is justified in raping a girl if they have been dating for over six months (White & Humphrey, 1991).

The problem of gender violence in adolescent interpersonal relationships is pandemic. Studies show that dating violence affects up to one in eight teenage couples (NOW, Boston Chapter). In a recent study of Massachusetts youth, 18 percent of girls surveyed said they had been hurt physically or sexually by a date (the figure ranged from 15% of girls in 9th grade to 21% of girls in grade 12) (MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1999). Yet research may underestimate the problem, as teens are neither inclined to recognize violence in their relationships (many view as normal what researchers define as "abuse") nor report it to adult authorities in those instances when it is identified as a problem in their lives (Gamache, 1991; Jones, 1991). Only 23 percent of respondents in one study reported discussing the issue of relationship violence with their parents (Liz Claiborne Inc., 2000). Instead, young victims rely heavily on their peers both to define what is acceptable in intimate relationships and for support when intimate relationships turn violent.

Indeed, peers play an important role in how youth define gender roles in dating relationships. These roles "are often extreme and stereotyped, and young men and women – afraid of being labeled 'different' – may not yet have the flexibility to be themselves" (Levy, 1991, p. 4). Certainly young men and women in our culture also take cues from media images notorious for promoting stereotypes of women as sexual objects and men as sexual predators.

Furthermore, youth are not often taught through positive example from adult role models what constitute acceptable female/male interactions. Many adolescents are exposed to or have grown up in homes where violence between adult partners is the rule rather than the exception (Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, & Sandin, 1997; Carlson, 1990). Moreover, research has shown that some school personnel minimize the potential dangers of gender violence in teen relationships. Given the "lack of clear messages in the environments in which youths function," it is no wonder adolescents exhibit "normative confusion" about violence in their dating relationships (Levy, 1991, p. 11). Although teens report wanting to talk and learn more about violence in interpersonal relationships (Liz Claiborne Inc., 2000), it seems there is little opportunity for them to do so in a constructive environment.

III Prevention Programs to Address Adolescent Gender Violence

The Conventional Approach

As awareness of the prevalence of violence in adolescent dating and interpersonal relationships has grown, educators and researchers have begun to focus on prevention programs for this population. Such programs are seen as necessary tools for eradicating violence against women in our society (CDC, 1998; Chalk & King, 1998). In fact, despite "only the most preliminary understanding" (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1991, p. 115) of adolescent gender violence, a considerable number of teen dating violence prevention programs are implemented to varying degrees in middle and high schools across the country each year (Lavoie, Vezina, Piche, & Bovin, 1995).

Conventional approaches to teen dating violence prevention and education have largely concentrated on the potentiality of males as violent perpetrators and females as helpless victims. The standard curricula of these programs incorporate a mix of elements, including: developing relationship skills (e.g., communication and conflict resolution skills); learning means of coping with anger and jealousy; learning to leave abusive or violent relationships;

and identifying resources for help (Foshee, Bauman, Arriaga, & Russell, 1998; Krajewski, Rybarik, Dosch, & Gilmore, 1996; Lavoie, Vezina, Piche, & Bovin, 1995; Levy, 1991). While these programs continue to be replicated across the country, the effectiveness of such conventional approaches has not been established either by rigorous quantitative or qualitative evaluations. Most studies document at least a short-term positive change in knowledge and attitude of students related to gender violence but have been criticized for lack of rigor (CDC, 1998; Chalk & King, 1998).

It has been hypothesized that these approaches may contribute to students' ideas and confusion regarding appropriate gender roles. Furthermore, although it has been documented that adolescents facing abuse by an intimate rarely tell adults and almost solely confide in friends (Gamache, 1991; Jones, 1991), only a very few prevention programs concentrate on peer leadership and peer education strategies in their preventive efforts.

Mentors in Violence Prevention(MVP): Unique Approach and Program Context

MVP's Unique Approach to Gender Violence Education and Prevention

MVP addresses the problem of violence against women in a unique and innovative way: it highlights the role of the bystander. The MVP Program seeks to empower student leaders to "interrupt and confront sexist behaviors and attitudes and to use their status and position [as leaders] to mentor [their peers]" (Katz, 1995, p. 165). In this manner, the MVP strategy addresses and attempts to hurdle such documented obstacles to prevention as teens' reluctance to report abuse to adults and their normative acceptance of female victimization. Rather than labeling students as potential perpetrators or victims, the issues are re-framed by MVP trainers, and students are given a more positive role to play as "empowered bystanders" who can confront sexist and abusive peers. The idea is that instead of learning (solely from adults in the context of a prevention program curriculum) merely to protect themselves from harm or prevent themselves from being abusive to others, students will learn (and then show through example and mentoring) that sexism and gender violence are not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the school culture.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The MVP Program goals, as stated in the MVP *Playbook*, are:

FOR GIRLS:

1   *To inspire young women to actively speak out against sexism
     and men's violence against women.*

2   *To encourage young women to be supportive of, and a resource for,
     women who have been raped, battered, or harassed.*

3   *To empower female high school leaders to mentor and educate
     younger females on these issues.*

FOR BOYS:

1   *To raise awareness among young men of issues that traditionally
     have been considered "women's issues."*

2   *To encourage men not merely to be bystanders, but to play an
     active role in reducing sexual violence, harassment, and abuse.*

3   *To empower high school male student-athletes and other student
     leaders to mentor and educate younger males on these issues.*

Created in 1993 by Jackson Katz, the MVP Program originally trained male
college student-athletes to mentor male high school student-athletes on issues
that have traditionally been considered "women's issues": rape, battery, and
sexual harassment. MVP is unique in that few prevention programs focus on
the relationship between masculinity and violence or recognize the potential
of males as role models and agents of positive change in the war against
gender violence (Katz, 1995). By involving male athletes, MVP utilizes
the unique leadership status of athletes in society to "authorize" other men
to speak out against sexism and violence. Initially, the Program was geared
specifically toward men for the express purposes of minimizing male
defensiveness when confronted with the topic of men's violence against
women, increasing his understanding of and empathy for the issue, and
training me to "interrupt and confront" such violence and abuse.

In 1995, MVP added a female component to the Program in order to
empower young women to act as proactive bystanders in the face of abuse
and violence. MVP sessions are now facilitated by mixed gender, multi-racial

teams. Gradually, the Program also expanded to work not only with student-athletes but with other students who have demonstrated leadership ability as well. Yet the philosophy and curriculum remain virtually unchanged. MVP still uses the MVP *Playbook* as its key teaching tool. The *Playbook* is written in language geared toward athletes (e.g., scenarios are entitled such things as "Slapshot" and "Talkin' Trash"), and continues to treat all students as bystanders, as opposed to potential victims or actual survivors. This is despite the fact that it is a statistical likelihood that as many as one in four female participants will experience male violence in their lifetime.

Program Context

During the initial awareness-raising phase of the Program, a multiple-session training regimen (12-14 hours of training – usually six or seven 2-hour sessions conducted over the span of 2-3 months), male and female MVP participants explore (with MVP trainers) different types of abuse and the ways in which these abuses may touch their daily lives. They discuss the respective ways they have been socialized to play certain gender roles and examine media portrayals, myths, and stereotypes of gender. Students learn to recognize and be critical of society's tacit acceptance of violence against women, and they practice, through role-playing, how to confront sexist and violent behavior and attitudes.

Usually, MVP trainers work in pairs (one female and one male) with student groups. Student groups typically include both males and females selected by their administrators and teachers as leaders in their schools. Sessions incorporate a mix of time when males and females interact with one another, as well as time when they are split by gender into two separate groups. Exceptions, of course, occur when MVP trainers are working with athletic teams or on the rare occasion when they work at an all-female or all-male school.

As mentioned, in keeping with the original theme of working with athletes, MVP trainers hand out *Playbooks* to students and use them as tools to conduct their sessions. The MVP *Playbook* includes several scenarios involving such things as verbal and physical abuse, actual and potential sexual assaults, and sexual harassment. Most scenarios depict common and familiar situations faced by students ranging from sexual harassment or verbal abuse in the school hallways to rape at a party. The *Playbook* is used as a conversation

starter, and the "options" at the end of each scenario allow the students to think through what their best response as bystanders under certain circumstances would be. It is acknowledged that situations are context-specific, and MVP trainers never tell students what the "best" solution is; but it is always stressed that an unacceptable option is to "do nothing." Physical intervention is discouraged and discussed as a last resort only. Clips from movies and music videos are also frequently used materials meant to underscore the frequency with which society is bombarded with sexual imagery (often degrading and violent toward women) and to facilitate discussion around these issues.

After basic training is completed, most MVP participants are invited to continue their involvement with MVP through additional "Train-the-Trainer" (TTT) programming. During the TTT phase of the MVP Program (usually two additional 2-hour sessions), students learn and practice group facilitation and public-speaking skills in preparation for conducting their own awareness-raising workshops with younger students in their schools. These student-led workshops generally emulate the content and structure of the MVP-led sessions. MVP student mentors are not expected to be experts on gender violence but rather role models and mentors to younger students. Such workshops are an important part of the peer mentoring component of the Program, giving students a formal outlet to voice what they have learned in MVP and to set an example for others.

IV   *EVALUATION OVERVIEW*
Goals of Current Evaluative Research

This first year of evaluation activity at MVP was tasked by multiple needs and audiences. Internally, the MVP staff was interested in finding out if they were meeting their goals and making a difference in students' lives. They wanted to hear directly from students, in the students' own voices, about their response to and satisfaction with the Program. The MVP staff was also interested in an evaluation rich with description and context, so that stakeholders less familiar

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

with the MVP Program (e.g., school officials, parents, outside funders) might better understand the need for and meaning of the services they provide. Externally, MVP's primary funder, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, was interested in standardized and quantitative outcome data. Finally, given the evolution of the MVP Program from its sole focus on male athletes to its incorporation of females (without a synchronous change in program approach or materials), an additional focus of evaluation activity was to look purposefully and carefully at any gender differences that might emerge from program evaluation data. This was seen as a first step toward understanding how the Program might be more responsive to female needs. Given these different evaluation needs and audiences, the specific objectives of the Year 1 evaluation were:

1   *To evaluate MVP Program outcomes (paying special attention to gender differences), including:*

   a) Changes in levels of student knowledge and awareness

   b) Changes in student attitudes
       • Attitudes regarding gender violence
       • Attitudes regarding self-efficacy and prevention

   c) Changes in student behavior

2   *To document and understand the experiences of students who are exposed to the MVP curriculum (paying special attention to gender differences), including:*

   a) Students' every-day experiences with gender violence
       (documenting and contextualizing the need for
       the MVP Program)

   b) Students' reactions to the MVP sessions and curriculum
       (including change in knowledge, awareness,
       attitudes, and behavior)

   c) Students' satisfaction with the MVP Program

V   *EVALUATION METHODOLOGY*

A pro-feminist, mixed-methods design was constructed to address the multiple stakeholder demands and to achieve the aforementioned evaluation objectives. It was agreed that a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection would best serve the purposes of the Year 1 MVP evaluation, as they would allow both standardized assessment across multiple program sites as well as site- and participant-specific context and insight. Moreover, mixing methods is a strategy known for strengthening the quality of data obtained in any evaluation.

Qualitative data were obtained from two case study sites purposively selected to represent the two different contexts in which MVP typically conducts programs (i.e., urban vs. suburban settings, white students vs. students of color, athletic teams vs. student leadership groups, and single- vs. mixed-gender groups). Sources of qualitative data included three focus group sessions with program participants, 23 observations of MVP awareness-raising and train-the-trainer (TTT) sessions, 21 pre- and post-program student interviews, and six key informant interviews **(see Table 1)**.

Quantitative data were gathered through a pre-post survey design. In order to assess the Program's impact on student knowledge, attitude, and behavior change, a survey instrument was developed. This instrument is five pages long and includes a section with five questions relating to student knowledge gain. Two additional sections, each with one five-point Likert-type scale, were developed for the survey. The first scale (the "AV scale" with 16 questions) assesses student attitudes toward gender violence broadly defined; the second scale (the "SEV scale" with 10 questions) measures self-efficacy in terms of students' feelings regarding their own ability to prevent or intervene in situations involving gender violence. The survey also includes a section to gather demographic information. The post-test version of the survey includes a sixth page of open-ended questions (referred to throughout the report as "page 6" data) asking students to respond in their own words regarding their experiences and satisfaction with the MVP Program **(a copy of the survey instrument is found in Appendix A)**.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES	SAMPLE	TABLE 1
QUALITATIVE METHODS		
3 Focus Groups	1998-99 MVP student participants at 3 sites	
11 Individual, pre-program interviews	1999-00 MVP students at 2 case study sites	
10 Individual, post-program interviews	1999-00 MVP students at 2 case study sites	
6 Key informant interviews	1999-00 School teachers and administrators (4), Former MVP students (2)	
23 Observations of program sessions	1999-00 MVP student groups at 2 case study sites	
QUANTITATIVE METHODS		
Survey pilot testing	1998-99 52 MVP students at 4 schools	
Survey pre-testing	1999-00 262 MVP students in 12 groups at 10 schools	
Survey post-testing	1999-00 209 MVP students in 12 groups at 10 schools	

Survey development was informed by data from student focus groups, a review of the MVP curriculum, MVP staff input, a review of the literature on teen dating and gender violence prevention, and a review of previously used measurement instruments in the field. The survey was pilot tested with former MVP students prior to pre-test administration in the Year 1 evaluation. Students participating in the MVP Program during the 1999-2000 school year were pre-tested prior to any exposure to the MVP Program, and post-testing was conducted at all sites approximately two weeks after the completion of MVP's awareness-raising training.

The quality of the data and interpretations in this report have been enhanced by such activities as statistical validity and reliability testing of the survey instrument scales using the SPSS statistical software package. Additionally,

the trustworthiness of qualitative data was garnered by member checks, peer debriefing, and multiple iterations of data analysis that utilized program staff participation and feedback. Methods and sources triangulation also support the soundness of the data and analysis in this study.

Few program evaluations are equipped with limitless time and resources; thus, all come with certain shortcomings. The following limitations apply to the Year 1 evaluation of the MVP Program: First, the evaluation design did not incorporate control groups for survey testing and analysis. Thus, no comparisons can be made between students who received MVP training during the 1999-00 academic year and students who did not. Second, the Year 1 surveys were completely anonymous and did not include unique identifiers. The inability to match specific pre- and post-test surveys limits the power of statistical analyses that can be conducted on the survey data. Third, there was some difficulty gaining complete access to students for pre- and post-testing, and this may have contributed to lower numbers of students being able to participate in the Year 1 evaluation. As well, post-testing students at consistent intervals after program completion was often difficult due to problems of access and scheduling, causing potential threats to validity. Finally, the MVP staff did not take attendance nor keep track of dropouts at any of their program sites. Important information may be missed by not being able to follow up with the students who missed a number of training sessions or decided not to continue their MVP training. To the extent possible, given time and resource constraints, these issues have been addressed in Year 2 of the MVP evaluation.

VI   *FINDINGS*

Several important findings emerged from the data collected during this first year of evaluation activity at MVP. This lengthy section details those findings and is broken up into sub-sections. The first sub-section is meant to orient the reader by providing a broad overview. It details all of the Program activities that took place during the 1999-2000 academic year and continues with student demographic data from the survey. Next, descriptions of the two case study sites provide important context for the reviewer. Much of the qualitative data presented throughout the findings section come from these

two case study sites, and it will be helpful for the reader to know more about them. Finally, data related to the need for the Program are presented. These pages illustrate just how relevant the MVP Program is to students' lived experiences, something that the reader may wish to keep in mind when making her or his own judgments regarding the worth of the MVP Program.

The second sub-section relates evaluation outcome data in terms of changes in students' knowledge and awareness levels, attitudes, and behaviors relevant to the prevalence and acceptability of sexist behaviors and gender violence. Here, quantitative survey data and qualitative case study data are presented side by side in an effort to provide the richest and most accurate understanding of student responses to the MVP Program. In the third and final sub-section, data are presented pertaining to student satisfaction with the MVP Program.

Throughout this section, the reader will notice a shift in "voice" in terms of how data are presented. Specifically, I will write in the first person as I begin presenting qualitative data from the study. In qualitative inquiry, it is customary for the researcher/writer to "own" her presence in the research setting and in the representation of data from that setting. What follows is a story of the MVP Program told in the language of MVP participants and key informants at the school settings – but my own voice and perspective are ever present.

Overview: MVP Activity Log, Student Demographics, Case Study Site Descriptions, and Need for Program

MVP Activity Log: What Took Place and Where?

Ten schools participated in the Year 1 evaluation. The findings discussed in this report reflect data from those 10 participating schools only. Additionally, although MVP continued to work with "veteran groups" at different sites, pre- and post-test surveys were administered to new groups only at each site. Consequently, with few exceptions, most of what is discussed in this report (and certainly all of the survey results) reflects data from groups that began training for the first time during the 1999-2000 academic year (hereafter referred to as "new groups").

MVP worked with 12 new groups in the 10 participating school sites during Year 1 of the evaluation. Ten out of the 12 groups were mixed-gender leadership groups comprised of student leaders selected by officials in their schools to participate in MVP. The remaining two groups were a girls' varsity basketball team and a boys' junior varsity basketball team. Each of the 12 groups completed the required 12-14 hours of basic awareness-raising training. In six of the 12 new groups, interested students went on to complete the TTT program; three of these ultimately went on to give student mentor presentations to younger students. MVP continued their work with returning, or veteran, groups at four of the 10 evaluation sites. Of these four groups, three went on to give presentations to younger students.

Because attendance during MVP sessions was not recorded by MVP staff at any of the program sites, there are no data concerning the exact number of students who participated in, completed, or dropped out of MVP training during the 1999-2000 academic year. Thus, the demographic information presented below is based solely on data retrieved from the pre- and post-test surveys. The site work completed by MVP during Year 1 of the evaluation is summarized in **Table 2**.

Student Demographics: Who participated in MVP during 1999-2000?

The following information, organized by survey categories, summarizes the demographic data obtained from pre- and post-testing:

SCHOOL SITES, GROUPS, and STUDENTS: Ten school sites were included in this evaluation of MVP. A total of 12 groups were represented. During pre-testing, 262 students were surveyed; 209 students (80%) took the post-test.

STUDENT GENDER: Females and males were represented nearly equally in the MVP Program. At pre-test, 139 females (53.1%) and 122 males (46.6%) were surveyed. During post-testing, 104 females (49.8%) and 105 males (50.2%) participated.

1999-2000 MVP Site Work and Program Activities

TABLE 2

SITE	NEW GROUP BASIC	NEW GROUP TTT	NEW GROUP MENTOR PRESENTATIONS	OLD GROUP TTT	OLD GROUP MENTOR PRESENTATIONS
1	Students received basic awareness-raising training	3 students started but did not complete due to lack of interest	No	N/A	N/A
2	Students received basic awareness-raising training	12 students participated in TTT activities	TTT students conducted three days of presentations to freshmen	N/A (MVP only works with seniors at this site)	N/A
3	Students received basic awareness-raising training	No TTT activities took place with new group due to lack of time and interest	No	30 students from a previous group received TTT education	Old Group students conducted workshops with 10 freshmen health classes
4	Students received basic awareness-raising training	No TTT activities took place with new group due to lack of time and poor coordination	No	Students from a previous group received advanced scenario training	No
5	Students received basic awareness-raising training	Students participated in TTT activities	No workshops were conducted due to lack of time and poor coordination	Students from a previous group received TTT education	No workshops were conducted due to lack of time and poor coordination
6	Students in 3 separate groups received basic awareness-raising training at this site	3 students in one group completed TTT; the other groups did not receive TTT due to lack of readiness	Workshops were initially scheduled in partnership with a local non-profit but were cancelled due to lack of coordination.	10 students received TTT review	Gave mentor presentations to 350 9th graders
7	Students received basic awareness-raising training	Students participated in TTT activities	30 mentors (from both old and new groups) made 12 presentations to 9th graders	Students from a previous group received TTT education	30 mentors (from both old and new groups) made 12 presentations to 9th graders
8	Students received basic awareness-raising training	16-20 students participated in TTT activities	Mentors presented to three 8th grade classes	N/A	No
9	Students received basic awareness-raising training	These students participated in TTT activities	Plans were in place to conduct workshops, but there was a lack of funds for busing students.	N/A	N/A
10	Students received basic awareness-raising training	No TTT activities took place due to lack of time	No	N/A	N/A

1999-2000 MVP Site Work and Program Activities

STUDENT ETHNICITY: European Americans (Whites) accounted for a majority of those served by MVP. Two-thirds (66%) of post-test respondents were White. Ethnic/racial categories had small numbers at pre-test and saw significant drops at post-test administration. At the time of post-testing, 75 percent of Native Americans, 33 percent of African Americans, and nearly one-third of the Latinos who were pre-tested were not present. Additionally, nearly one-third of those who identified as "Other" (predominantly students of mixed ethnic backgrounds) were not present to take the post-test survey. Comparatively, the number of White students who took the post-test decreased by less than 11 percent.

STUDENT GRADE: Students were evenly distributed among grades 10, 11, and 12 (nearly 30% of MVP students were in each grade level). Students in grade 9 accounted for less than eight percent of the sample. Notably, nearly 40 percent of 9th graders who were pre-tested were absent during post-testing.

SURVIVOR STATUS: During pre-testing, 69 students (26.3% of survey respondents) identified as survivors[2] of gender violence. The figure rose to 70 students (33.5% of respondents) at post-test administration. Forty percent of all female respondents identified as survivors on the pre-test survey, and this percentage jumped to 54.4 on the post-test. The percentage of males who identified as survivors did not change from pre- to post-test administration.

Case Study Descriptions

The goal of the case study approach used in this evaluation was to be able to provide a substantial amount of context-specific data for the purposes of understanding student experiences and describing the MVP Program to various stakeholders who do not have access to MVP training sessions. In addition, case study data are useful in triangulating data from the quantitative survey and are instrumental in helping us understand what a standardized survey alone cannot capture. As this report progresses, the utility of the qualitative data gathered during the case study portion of this evaluation will become evident as it is used to create vivid pictures of the program context, help clarify ambiguities, and add texture to the numbers and percentages from the survey data. What is desired in case study site selection are interesting and information-rich cases. The two selected sites for the 1999-2000 MVP

evaluation are described below. City High School and Suburban High School[3] represent both the diversity and, in many ways, the typicality of the schools that MVP services, both in terms of student demographics and program approach. Both provide a unique context for learning about the MVP Program.

City High School

City High is located in a predominantly Latino community in northeastern Massachusetts. The community suffers high rates of violence and unemployment. Almost 2000 students in grades 9-12 attend City High[4], which, at the time of this study, was working toward school accreditation. Ninety-three percent of students at this high school are minorities, and 57 percent of the student body is classified as "economically disadvantaged."   Key informants reported that there is a high drop-out rate at City High. During pre-program interviews, students consistently cited gangs (including gang violence) and teen pregnancy as the most important issues facing students in their school and community.

My first trip to City High was to observe a 9th grade assembly meant to stir up interest in the MVP Program in the hopes of starting a freshman MVP leadership group at the school. I had been "advised" about the environment at City High and its surrounding community prior to this visit. Much to my relief, I was accompanied during this initial visit by the two male MVP staff members, Nathan and Jon[5]. Knowing I would eventually be going to City High on my own, I paid careful attention to my surroundings as we drove through the city and made note of how to get a parking spot close to the school building. As we pulled into a spot and started to get out of the car, I was also cognizant of Jon's efforts to find his "Club" in order to lock his steering wheel. I had accompanied Jon to other MVP schools on previous occasions and was never made aware that he had such a device in his car. "Car-theft capital of Massachusetts!" he said, and we proceeded to the school building.

City High School is located right in the city, across from a park, a church, and just a couple blocks up from the local YWCA, which had become somewhat of a partner with MVP in their violence prevention efforts at the school. Upon entering the building, my first impressions were of a uniformed security guard behind a desk and of the bilingual signs that were posted everywhere. Although the hallway was not particularly busy at the time, I noticed that the conversations that were going on were in Spanish. I later learned that most

students at City High (89 percent) have a first language other than English. In fact, fully one quarter of the students here cannot perform ordinary class work in English.

My second visit to City High was also accompanied by Jon, but this time we arrived amidst chaos. The police presence in the city was overwhelming. We heard sirens in the distance and then drove by parked police cars and officers standing outside of a bank. Next, an army of fire trucks and police cars, with sirens blaring, made their way through the streets. As we neared the school, an unmarked police car blocked the intersection directly in front of the school building, and policemen stood among a throng of bustling students. Jon and I wondered to each other "What is going on?" He speculated that there might be a bomb threat; I offered that maybe the blockade is routine during the time school lets out. Admittedly, we couldn't help but laugh a bit at the sheer drama of it all; it was as if we had accidentally driven onto a movie set filming the stereotypical scene of the 'hood.

Having arrived a bit late, we checked in at the security desk but had missed our contact person. This time, I checked for a metal detector at the building entrance but did not see one. Because Jon was unsure which room we'd be meeting in, we wandered the halls. During our search, we saw at least two additional security guards reporting to the front desk with walkie-talkies. Classes had ended for the day, so the halls were not crowded; still, there was plenty of activity. On the fourth floor, we encountered about a dozen Jr. ROTC students in formation in the hallway. They carried rifles (presumably unloaded) while doing marching drills – "right shoulder arms!" As we walked by, the students maintained serious looks and posture. Around the corner, girls gathered in preparation for cheerleading tryouts. The sound of sirens from outside hit us from time to time.

We finally met up with the school contact person and representatives from the YWCA. No students had arrived for the MVP session (which was going to be an introduction to the Program) that I had come to observe. Because the person who acts as the liaison between City High and MVP does not work in the high school building during the day, it was difficult to coordinate meeting times and to make sure students got timely and appropriate information regarding sessions. We discussed possible solutions to this difficulty while leaving the building. In addition, Jon mentioned the activity that greeted us

as we entered the city earlier that afternoon. They all laughed as we described the scene, and it prompted someone in the group to tell us of a drive-by shooting that had taken place just a few days prior. Although we didn't get an explanation regarding the fire trucks or activity in front of the bank, we were told that the police blockade in front of the school is an every day occurrence when school lets out. We also learned that the police presence was extra heavy that afternoon. The day before, one female student had slashed another's face with a switchblade – the injury required 100 stitches.

MVP had worked at City High on previous occasions. MVP staff remarked to me that, despite the chaos and confusion that was often part of the environment there, the thing that they were most impressed by was how much the City High liaison and the YWCA members cared about the kids and the MVP Program – and how much work they were willing to do to make MVP a possibility at the site.

Three separate groups were selected to receive MVP training at City High during the 1999-2000 academic year: the girls' varsity basketball team; the boys' junior varsity basketball team; and a 9th grade leadership group.

Suburban High School

Suburban High School is located in a predominantly White community also in northeastern Massachusetts. Almost 1400 students attend Suburban High; only eight percent are minorities[6]. Only two percent of the student population has a first language other than English, and classes are taught in English only at Suburban High. In terms of socio-economic status, the community is considered middle to upper-middle class. Students here cited smoking and lack of adequate student parking as the most important issues facing their peers. One Asian student cited racism from community members against her family as her main concern.

I made my first trip to Suburban High in order to meet with the principal and vice principal and to explain the purposes of the 1999-2000 MVP evaluation. I was again accompanied by Jon, who explained that the principal of this school was particularly interested in and supportive of the MVP Program. We passed through several residential areas and past the occasional strip mall before driving up the relatively quiet, tree-lined street that led to the school building. We were able to park in the lot just outside the main doors. Jon did not bother with the "Club" this time.

We walked through the main doors and to the front office. The secretaries there asked us whom we were there to see, and one told us to sign in as she called the vice principal to advise him of our arrival. As we waited, I took in my surroundings. There were calendars announcing the schedules of various sports teams and news clippings advertising the successful seasons many of them were having. Everything was written in English. Glass cases lined the hallways, full of team pictures and trophies. There was no activity in the hall, as classes were in session. We were soon ushered into the principal's office to have our conversation.

My second trip to Suburban High was to conduct pre-program interviews, and I was on my own. I had overestimated the time needed to drive through Boston's morning rush hour and had arrived at the site before classes had started for the day. I sat in my car going over notes and interview questions without any thought whatsoever regarding my safety. The only uniformed authority figures I ever saw during my time in that community were of school crossing guards and an officer directing traffic as buses and parents dropped kids off at school for the day. I finally went inside and made my way to the vice principal's office. I asked him if I could use the restroom before I started interviewing students. He accompanied me there, saying that he'd have to use his key to unlock it. I figured it was a staff restroom he was taking me to, but we arrived to hear voices. The five-stall bathroom was occupied by teenage girls and smelled like smoke. In a hushed voice, my escort asked me to see if they were smoking in there and to report back to him if they were.

It happened to be the week of homecoming at Suburban High, and this particular day was "Dress Up, Dress Down" day for "spirit week." Freshmen and sophomores had to wear their best clothes in order to show spirit and receive points for their respective classes in this week-long competition. Juniors and seniors got to wear their grubbiest clothes. Student participation was counted during homeroom, a 10-15 minute segment between the second and third class periods of the day. During homeroom, I had my own break between interviews, so I decided to walk around the halls and explore a bit. In so doing, I was chastised by more than one student for not dressing down "like student faculty is supposed to do." Later that day, again between interviews, I went to the cafeteria to buy something to drink. I was stopped by the lunchroom monitor and asked to show my student pass. Suffice to say my presence at Suburban High was less conspicuous than at City High.

During the 1999-2000 academic year, MVP agreed to work with two groups at Suburban High School: a new leadership group comprised of approximately 25 students and a group of about 20 leaders who had been trained the previous year.

The paragraphs above detail many of the contrasts between the two schools chosen as case study sites for the 1999-2000 MVP evaluation. But in fact, a closer look underneath the very different exteriors of these sites reveals a prevalent social problem bubbling near the surface of both. The following section emphasizes the common need for gender violence prevention and education programs like MVP in settings as seemingly different as City High and Suburban High.

The Need for Gender Violence Prevention and Education

As has been mentioned in previous sections of this paper, one of the advantages to (and certainly a main purpose of) spending time in a program setting is to be able to observe (and hear about) even just a small portion of the participants' lives and experiences – and to begin to understand how those participants endeavor to process and make sense of those experiences. One of the first things that struck me as I began interviewing students before the MVP training began was how almost none of them recognized gender violence as a factor in their lives (or the lives of their peers), let alone pinpointed it as a priority or a matter for any concern. Yet one by one, each interview participant gave me example after example of incidents (either observed or experienced) related to gender abuse or male violence against women. Later, once training sessions had begun, the interview data were validated in various ways: by key informants within the school settings; by my own observations of the school environment; and from student discussions during MVP training sessions regarding the prevalence of sexist behavior and gender violence in their schools, homes, and relationships. How little the students knew about how to confront or deal with this reality also became apparent.

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with a picture, if not an understanding, both of the reality of gender violence in the lives of high school students and the challenges that confront students as they attempt to deal with that reality.

A story often related by students both during interviews and training sessions revolved around party settings where students were drinking and engaging in sexual activity. As became all too clear upon example after example, the theme was commonplace enough so that students came to accept it without really thinking critically about what was going on. The following example comes from an observation of a mixed-gender training session at Suburban High School. As mentioned, it is just one of many examples, and while it represents the prevalence of the problem, this common scenario also exemplifies the different ways that students process the situation and emphasizes their confusions and uncertainties about what is the right or wrong way to react to it. In so doing, it points directly to the need for gender violence prevention and education, as well as to the important potential of the peer mentoring model adopted by MVP.

The following is actual dialogue that I observed during an MVP training session. A young woman is upset about something that had occurred at a party over the weekend, and she talks about it in front of the class:

Training Observation: *Suburban High School: 2/28/00 9:45am*

Female 1: *A friend of mine was at a party over the weekend and got really drunk. She went to a bedroom to sleep it off. I guess she was kind of passed out or blacked out or something, but she sort of woke up knowing that someone was near her. But she didn't really know what was going on. I guess maybe she thinks there was some "mutual" behavior once she recognized who he was, but then she blacked out again. She woke up the next morning and had different clothes on — his shorts and t-shirt. She is pretty sure that he had sex with her, but she doesn't remember, and she knows she wouldn't have wanted him to do that. She's really upset and doesn't know what to do.*

Male 1: *I know the guy and, like, he would never do that! I mean, I know he had sex with her, but he wouldn't rape her.[7] But I don't know… if she was that bad [drunk], then it was wrong.*

Female 2: *Why wasn't one of her friends helping her?*

Female 1: *I don't know. I wasn't even at the party. She just called me that next morning and told me about it. She was really upset. She still is. She was a virgin, and she really protected her virginity.*

Male 2: *She was all over a different guy before she went upstairs. I mean, all night she was being really provocative with him. Everyone saw it. But then, he's not even the guy she had sex with!*

Male 1: *It's just a really sticky situation. But I mean, really, when you think about it, this kind of thing happens all the time – practically every weekend. It's just that we think about it and see it more now that we've had MVP. And plus, these are our close friends. I wasn't at the party, either. I just don't know what to do, but I know we should do something. I plan to talk to him about things, you know, but it's hard.*

Female 1: *Yeah. They're both friends of mine. I know she would never lie to me, but then again, he wouldn't do that. But I only know what the [rape] law is because I went through MVP – but most people don't know! It needs to be made more clear to everyone. I have talked to her and told her about options and places to go and that maybe she should go to a doctor or clinic, but I think we need more advice.*

Trainer: *Okay. Why don't we move on with the lesson now, and you guys can talk to us about this after class.*

Several important things can be learned from this scenario, all of which point to the need for educating students about gender violence and how to deal with it. First, the scene the students are describing is a common one to which practically everyone in the session could relate. It is something that students say happens at practically every weekend party. Second, "blame" for the incident is placed almost everywhere except for with the young man who had sex with a young woman who had passed or blacked out from too much alcohol. Blame was placed on the young woman for being too "provocative" (and drunk) as well as on her friends for not "watching out for her."

The next example contains dialogue from an observation of a training session at City High. It needs little explanation, as it clearly demonstrates the prevalence of gender violence (and therefore, the need for prevention and education programs such as MVP) in these young women's lives.

Training Observation: **Girls' Basketball Team: City High School: 1/12/00 4:30pm**

Trainer 1:	*Do you know why we focus on and use the term "men's violence against women" in MVP?*
Team:	*[No response. Blank looks.]*
Trainer 2:	*Do you remember the statistic that we shared with you last time about how often a woman is beaten by a man?*
Female 1:	*Isn't it something like once every 15 seconds or something like that?*
Trainer 2:	*Yeah, the statistic is between 9 and 18 seconds. Do you remember the four types of abuse that we talked about last time?*
Team:	*Physical…emotional…verbal… [The females take some time thinking about it.] Is it mental abuse?*
Trainer 2:	*Well, mental is the same as emotional abuse. There's one more. Can anyone think of it?*
Team:	*[No response.]*
Trainer 2:	*It's sexual abuse.*
Team:	*[Heads nod in recognition] Oh yeah…*
Trainer 1:	*Can you give us examples of each type of abuse?*
Female 2:	*Verbal abuse can be like when they say, "Girl, you just trouble; I don't know why I got with you in the first place."*
Female 3:	*Sounds like you've heard that before!*
Team:	*[Laughter.]*
Female 3:	*I'm just messing with you. Couldn't it also be like if they call you fat or say you're a bitch or a whore or whatever?*
Trainer 1:	*Those are all good examples of verbal abuse. How about some examples of other the other types?*
Female 1:	*I've heard of guys that give their girlfriends curfews. I don't know what that is. That's like control abuse or something! Maybe mental abuse?*

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Female 4:	*Oh yeah! That happens all the time. It's like, the guy tells them that they have to go straight home after school and can't hang out with anyone. My friend's boyfriend has done that.*
Female 2:	*And then they check up on her by calling her at home to make sure she's there.*
Female 5:	*Okay, what I'm about to say stays in here, right? Well, my sister's boyfriend was very controlling like that, you know, and did worse stuff. Like, he threatened to kill her if she messed around or if she left or whatever. I mean, she got a restraining order even. And I think he beat her, you know? Now he's in jail, but they still communicate. That's physical abuse, and it's mental abuse with the threats and stuff. But she says she still loves him.*
Female 3:	*Sometimes I think all that "But I still love him" stuff is just out of fear.*
Team:	*[Heads nod in agreement. The girls give each other "knowing" looks.]*

Interviews with key informants[8] at both sites were also helpful in pointing to the need for gender violence prevention and education at their schools. One key informant, a coach at City High, expressed the need for MVP this way:

Key Informant:	*I think no matter where MVP is, there is going to be a need for it in any community. Every community has needs for this type of work. The City High community, in particular, we have a very high domestic violence problem among all age groups and socioeconomic settings. Especially teen dating violence, I think, is a huge factor here at the high school.*
Researcher:	*Really? Why do you think that?*
Key Informant:	*Because I've talked to people, talked to students, and talked to some of the females. I see the ways students interact with each other in the hallways, the names that they call each other. They're not afraid to use derogatory language for women and thinking that it's a joke. And the young women tolerate it, thinking that it is acceptable and normal behavior… I've talked to females who have been victimized and don't even think that it's wrong. So there's definitely a need, you know? I think we've only begun to actually tap into the problem. I think we need to do it more system-wide, but MVP is a start.*

At Suburban High, a school social worker related her thoughts about the need for MVP based on her many years of listening to students and helping them through their experiences. As well, she echoed a frequently cited concern in the field regarding teens' inability or unwillingness to approach or trust adults with their relationship problems.

Social Worker:

> *I'm all too familiar with the dating relationships that aren't healthy, and the fact that the students, being young, don't always know what to do about it. I have been concerned about this generation. Many of them don't think of looking to an adult for help. These are latch-key kids; these aren't kids who are necessarily used to having a tie with parents to have this kind of discussion. So kids don't know where to go with this, and if they tell friends, their friends don't know what to do either. So a program like MVP, which empowers peers to not just passively watch or not just be upset, but to really be proactive, is wonderful!*

Regarding, again, the need for the Program and what the social worker spoke about as the very real danger of students not approaching authority figures for help with their problems, I can relate an experience I had while spending the afternoon at Suburban High. I was speaking with one of the vice principals in his office one day, and we were interrupted by a phone call that he had to take. He seemed to speak freely in my presence, but all I could gather was that it was a concerned parent. When the phone conversation terminated, the vice principal told me it was a call from a mother about her son. Although her son had already graduated from Suburban High, the mother was concerned about his ex-girlfriend, who still went to school there. Apparently, the girlfriend had broken up with this woman's son, and he had begun threatening and stalking her. The young man's mother called to advise the school of the problem and to caution them to look after the young woman, as she would probably be unwilling to ask for help herself. The vice principal was relieved that the mother had called, he said, because now the school could be proactive in protecting the young woman.

Another key informant at Suburban High was a high ranking administrator. When asked in an interview what he saw as the need for the MVP Program at his school, he failed to mention an incident that had taken place a couple years before involving members of the football team and a cheerleader. The cheerleader had been targeted by these football players, and they sexually assaulted her. I eventually heard about the incident from a couple of student interview participants, but I had first caught wind of it during the meeting Jon and I had with the school principal and vice principal at the beginning of

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the year. I was unable to get many details from anyone about the assault or the consequences to the members of the football team who were involved. I was told, however, that the incident was something that concerned the principal greatly and was part of the reason he wanted MVP's services at the school.

In addition to observing program sessions and talking with key informants at the schools, I interviewed students directly, and part of my job also was to observe the environments in which the students came to be educated each day. The following sets of dialogue offer several different "snapshots" of City and Suburban high schools based on those observations and interviews:

Training Observation: **Observation During a Student Interview: 11/18/99**

> *Immediately after we began our conversation, the student decided she needed to use the restroom. It was my first interview of the morning, and we were both sitting at student desks, which we had turned so that they were facing one another.*
> *During her brief absence, I noticed the graffiti on her desk:*
> *"I fucked Valerie Jones…So did I…Me too…Yeah, that's what good whores are for."*

Training Observation: **Interview with Female Student: 11/18/99**

Interviewer:	*So do you think that any of these issues — gender violence, rape, sexual assault, harassment — do you think these issues are a problem at your school?*
Respondent:	*I don't think they're a huge or really big problem, but they're present at the high school.*
Interviewer:	*Can you give me an example, or a story about that?*
Respondent:	*Like if a girls is wearing a skirt, right? The guys will make a comment to her.*
Interviewer:	*Give me an example of what the guys might say.*
Respondent:	*Oh, I don't know. They might be like, "I just saw everything she's got to offer!" or something like that.*
Interviewer:	*How often do you think things like that happen?*
Respondent:	*At least once a day to somebody.*
Interviewer:	*So you see it a lot here?*

Respondent: Yeah, well, just today before I came to see you, I was just walking down the hall with my friend. And she's tall, and she's blonde, and she's pretty. And she's got, well, [gestures] she's kind of top heavy, if you know what I mean. And we were walking down the hall, and she's dressed regular today, and I'm kind of spiffed up [it was dress up day for spirit week]. And they walked by and said, "Amber, you're so hot! You've got the best rack!" And I'm, like, thinking, they should just say, "Amber, you look nice today" or something. Or also, they shouldn't be singling her out of the two of us like that, you know what I mean?... It must make her feel kind of like, "Is that all they notice about me?" But at the same time, it makes me feel like, "Oh great, I'm not even good enough for them to say hi to just because her breasts are bigger than mine." It made me feel kind of bad.

Interviewer: Would you feel better or worse if they were commenting on just your physical attributes?

Respondent: Sometimes, I think the guys think they're complimenting a girl when they say stuff like that. So if they don't say it to me, then sometimes it makes me feel bad. And when they do say things like that to me, I do get kind of angry, but also it — it has to make you feel kind of good! I'm like, "Oh, I must look good then!" Or maybe I do have a nice butt or whatever. Maybe it shouldn't make you feel good if somebody says something like that to you, but you can't help it [laughs].

Training Observation: **Observation of Program Setting: 11/19/99**

As I wander the hallways during the 12 minute homeroom period before my last interview for the day, I notice a "campaign poster" promoting one young Felix Fairlong for class officer. It reads, "Be a peach and vote FELIX FAIRLONG for freshman class president." On it is a drawing of a young woman with very ample breasts, complete with well-defined nipples. She is wearing a tight, hot-pink sweater and has long, blonde (yellow crayon) hair with cheerleader-type, puffy piggy tails, tied up with pink bows. She is kneeling in her skirt (as if subservient and begging) and leaning forward (to accentuate her breasts) with pleading, blue bedroom eyes.

Training Observation: **Interview with Male Student: 1/10/00**

Male Student: Like, honestly, I've hit a girl. I'm not going to lie to you; I've disrespected a girl. But that's because she disrespected me in a way that, well, I didn't think I did anything to her for her to disrespect me. So I told her straight out, "Relax!" But she annoyed me, and I hit her, and I left. But then I apologized, you know what I'm saying? But a lot of girls, they do ask for it sometimes... Sometimes guys don't

want to hit her, it's true, but girls ask for it. Like my dad, one night I was in my house and my dad was drunk and my dad punched my mom in the face. And 'cause they was arguing and he was drunk – I mean he was really drunk. And my mom's eye was swollen. And my dad just wasn't thinking right. He started crying, because he knew he hit my mom hard, but he didn't mean to do it, because he was drunk… Because my dad is the type of person who is macho, and my mom is the type of lady who won't stay quiet. So he tells her, "don't brink it up," but she brings it up anyway. And that's how, I guess, she can ask for it.

Training Observation: **Interview with Female Student 5/19/00**

Female Student: *I didn't know, you know? Like, with the freshmen, the senior guys always go for the freshmen girls. And that's always how it happens, and I just didn't know… And I have talked to a lot of girls who have gone through that, because I went through it last year when I didn't know. I was only two weeks into my freshman year at high school, and I met an older guy at a party. And I guess it just happens that you flirt with a guy and you just happen to be drinking, or whatever, and one thing leads to another. And then you learn it was just a senior guy who wanted to get something from a naïve freshman. I got called a slut by everyone all the time after that. But I thought that he liked me. I didn't know it was just a game for the guys.*

The MVP Program theorizes that male violence against women occurs and is tolerated in society at least in part because of the way women are portrayed and objectified in the media and elsewhere. As the argument goes, these negative and stereotypical images of women as sexual objects and targets of violence are so common in our society that people are conditioned to think both that the images are real and that the maltreatment of or violence against women is acceptable, even normal. As I spent time in both case study sites and observed the students' environments, I began to see how common and inescapable these images really are in students' lives. In fact, students don't have to watch MTV or go to NC17 movies to hear about or witness the degradation of women in society. They need only look to the graffiti on their desks or the student campaign posters in their hallways, to listen to how many times the word "bitch" is called out in the hallway, to emulate popular members of the football team or their own fathers, to witness how boyfriends keep tabs on their girlfriends with curfews and beepers, or to go to the occasional weekend party where alcohol and "x" (the drug ecstasy) are used to loosen the 9th grade girls (and other females) up for the senior boys.

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And so where do students turn for guidance in understanding, interpreting, and dealing with these images and realities that bombard them in their daily lives? They don't go to adults. If they look anywhere at all, it is to their peers, who are as confused as they are. Education and awareness are needed – but what difference can they make? How effective can prevention and education initiatives be? The following section details the key results from the Year 1 MVP evaluation, which shed light on those very questions.

Impact Data: Was MVP Effective?

Knowledge Change, Attitude Change, and Change in Self-Efficacy

As mentioned, a key objective of the Year 1 evaluation was to start tracking Program impact in terms of student knowledge, attitude, and behavior change. The following paragraphs detail results from the respective survey sections and provide evidence that the MVP Program did, in fact, make a difference in the lives of many participants.

Student Knowledge Change (Quantitative Survey Results)

The survey contained five "True/False/I don't know" knowledge questions. These survey questions and results are presented in **Table 3**, and the survey instrument is available in **Appendix A**. In order to asses the impact of the MVP Program on student knowledge, pre- and post-program survey data were compared by conducting Pearson Chi-Square tests with SPSS.

Overall, there was a statistically significant difference between students' pre- and post-test scores on four out of the five questions presented on the survey **[see Table 3]**. On these four questions, significantly higher percentages of students gave the correct answer on the post-test than on the pre-test, indicating that students had more complete knowledge and awareness of gender violence after completing the MVP Program.

Specifically, at the end of the program 98.6 percent of student respondents knew the rape law in Massachusetts, versus 75.9 percent of students who were aware of the law before participating in MVP. In addition, after receiving

SURVEY RESULTS: KNOWLEDGE SECTION

TABLE 3

Significant Student Knowledge Change from Pre- to Post-Test

SURVEY QUESTION	% CORRECT (total of all students)		STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE *P < .05 = significant change		
	PRE	POST	Overall	FEMALE	MALE
1 *According to MA law, it may be considered rape if a man has sex with a woman who is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.*	75.9 F=76.1 M=76.2	98.6 F=99.0 M=98.1	*P=.000	*P=.000	*P=.000
2 *Violence against women mostly affects poor people of color.*	80.5 F=88.4 M=72.1	91.8 F=93.3 M=90.4	*P=.002	P=.373	*P=.001
3 *Emotional and/or verbal abuse can be just as harmful as physical abuse.*	96.9	98.1	P = .524		
4 *In heterosexual relationships, men and women are equally violent toward one another.*	42.4 F=43.9 M=41.0	66.7 F=72.8 M=60.6	*P=.000	*P=.000	*P=.013
5 *In the U.S. a woman is physically abused every 9 to 18 seconds.*	56.9 F=59.7 M=54.1	79.9 F=75.0 M=84.8	*P=.000	*P=.032	*P=.000

MVP training, students exhibited a better understanding that women and men are not equally violent in their interactions and relationships with one another. Likewise, students who completed MVP were more aware of the prevalence of men's violence against women than they were before program participation.

Gender differences appeared in student responses to three of the five knowledge variables. At pre-test, girls already possessed the knowledge that race, ethnicity, and class are not determining factors in gender violence. Also, the message that men are more violent than women seemed to impact females to a greater extent than their male counterparts. After program completion, more boys than girls knew the frequency of physical abuse against women in this country.

Knowledge Change (Qualitative Data)

Qualitative data gathered from interviews, observations, and "page 6" of the post-test survey offer insight as to the importance MVP participants placed on the knowledge they gained from their training. In addition, these qualitative data reveal the importance students attribute to other things they learned (or skills they feel they gained) through participation in the MVP Program. Students cited knowledge of the rape law, learning more specific facts about male violence against women, skill acquisition, and understanding the need for active bystanders as important knowledge gained through MVP training.

Perhaps the most frequently mentioned thing that students reported learning from the MVP Program, in terms of knowledge gain, was the legal definition of rape in Massachusetts. Certainly this information hit close to home for students, given the frequency with which they are confronted with situations involving alcohol and sexual activity.

Recall the conversation described earlier regarding the rape incident at the party attended by Suburban High students **(see p. 21)**. Because the MVP students had been taught the rape law and the definition of consent, they understood that, legally, a rape had taken place that night – the young woman was clearly too drunk to have consensual sex. However, the two young people directly involved with the case evidently had no idea either of the law or what to do with the situation they found themselves in the morning after. Presumably, many of the other students at that party were not knowledgeable about the rape law, either.

In this case, as the female friend of the rape victim lamented, "I only know what the rape law is because I went through MVP, but most people don't know! It needs to be more clear."

During an interview with a sophomore student at Suburban High, she agreed that learning about the rape law was the most important that happened to her in MVP. In fact, if not life-altering, the knowledge she gained from MVP was behavior-changing, as she attests:

Cathy:	*It's weird, because they say stuff like "one out of four of your friends have been raped," and then they give you the definition. And then I learned I'm one out of four! By definition, by consent laws and stuff like that, I'm one out of four! And I never knew that before. And it's just, like, something that a lot of people just don't know. I was like, "Wow!" I mean, when you hear the word rape, you're, like, terrified — "Oh my God! She was raped!" But to be one of those people and to have close friends be those numbers, those statistics, those people who have been raped!? It was shocking. I don't know. I can't even explain it. Learning that was a big deal.*
Interviewer:	*And you think if you had known — or that if girls had been warned as they came in as freshmen — that females would be less vulnerable?*
Cathy:	*I think if people saw that as rape, it would be a lot bigger of a deal. And people would definitely consider it more of a big deal, because a lot of people don't know that at this school. Like, very few people at this school probably know that by legal definition what they're doing, or what has been done to them, is rape. People who have been through the MVP program know it, and that's it. And people that have heard it word of mouth through us — like, I've told people that before. And they're like, "Wow! I never knew that!" And then, I bet they go running through their heads whether or not they've been raped or whether their best friend or sister has been raped.*
Interviewer:	*So it sounds like you've talked to your peers about the MVP program?*
Cathy:	*I've talked to a lot of girls who have gone through that, because I went through it when I didn't know the law. So I've talked to a lot of freshmen girls this year about it. I've been, like, "You don't need them; you don't need those guys!" You know, whether or not I decide to go and party in the future, I'm going to stay away from the guys — as far away as I can. And my [girl] friends and I have a deal now that we're going to watch out for one another.*

A freshman at City High also testified to the importance of the knowledge he gained through MVP and how, specifically, knowledge of the rape law helped him change his behavior at a party.

Male Student:	*I was at a party, and we were all, well, we were all drunk and stuff. And some girl was coming on to me, right? And I told her to step off.*
Interviewer:	*This girl was flirting with you, and because you knew she was drunk, you told her to stop?*
Male Student:	*She was more than just flirting, you know? She wanted to go to a bedroom. I told her to calm down, and I told her some facts I learned from the MVP Program. I knew I could get into trouble, so I just tried to talk to her and calm her down.*

Over 20 percent of students who took the survey post-test reported on "page 6" that a personal gain in knowledge regarding gender violence was their favorite thing about participating in the MVP Program. Besides the rape law, other things students reported as important knowledge ranged from "learning the line of where sexual harassment begins" to "learning a lot about the other views of people in my school" and from "learning about the 'Cycle of Abuse'" to "understanding I was in an abusive relationship and finally realizing that I had to get out."

Students also reported an increase in knowledge in terms of the skills they built through participation in MVP, including skills to interrupt violent behavior. In fact, one-third of the student respondents reported that "learning how to help intervene if someone is being taken advantage of" and "learning how to handle [gender violence] situations and to do the right thing" were the most important things learned during the time in MVP. Some students even reported using the "distraction" techniques that they learned in MVP to intervene in situations they had encountered since training.

Roughly 20 percent of the students responded that having knowledge about the prevalence of violence against women and the need for people to intervene was important. Learning that they, as individuals, could make a difference inspired some to "stand up and be a leader" and "to stop watching and take action." Additional qualitative data pertaining to knowledge gain is presented in **Tables 6 and 8**.

Student Attitude Change Regarding Gender Violence (Quantitative Survey Results)

The second section of the survey is a five-point, Likert-type scale (the "AV Scale") comprised of 16 questions created to understand student attitudes toward gender violence. Pre- and post-test data from the AV Scale were analyzed by conducting Analysis of Variance tests (ANOVAs) using SPSS. Results from this scale are found in **Table 4**. All items were rated on a scale of one to five, with one being the most positive and five being the most negative response (responses to numbers 1,2,7,8,10, and 15 were re-coded prior to analysis).

Overall, the MVP Program was effective in increasing students' awareness of and improving their attitudes about gender violence. As a whole, student scores on the AV Scale changed significantly (p= .000) from pre- to post-test administration. The mean score of all students decreased after going through the program, indicating that the MVP Program reduced ignorant or sexist attitudes concerning the appropriate treatment of girls and women in our society. According to Program theory, this positive shift in attitudes means that students became less accepting of sexist or violent behavior toward females after MVP training.

There was a statistically significant difference between how girls and boys scored on the survey. Girls exhibited significantly lower mean scores than boys at both pre- and post-test administration, meaning that females began and ended the program with more desirable attitudes (being less accepting of gender violence) than their male counterparts. While this difference between genders at both ends of program training exists, the data reveal that both females and males improved significantly on the AV Scale after MVP Program participation. However, it does appear as if the Program impacted males more dramatically than females. For boys, the drop in pre-to post-test mean scores from 2.149 to 1.891 was quite significant (p= .006). The change for girls was less marked (1.794 to 1.692) and just barely statistically significant (p= .05).

One last thing to mention about gender comparisons regarding attitudes. One of the main goals of the MVP Program is to "raise awareness among young men of issues that traditionally have been considered 'women's issues.'" At the end of program training, 19 percent of young women in MVP believed that men and women should not be equally concerned about sexual assault. This is almost twice the percentage of females who felt that way before

SURVEY RESULTS: AV SECTION

AV SURVEY QUESTION		% of FEMALES responding						% of MALES responding					
			SD	D	U	A	SA		SD	D	U	A	SA
AV 1 *Teenagers sexually harass one another at my school.*	PRE		0	8.6	21.6	53.2	16.5	PRE	3.3	12.3	13.9	55.7	14.8
	POST		1.0	6.7	12.5	56.7	23.1	POST	2.9	5.7	13.3	49.5	27.6
AV 2 *A boy who tells his girlfriend whom she can hang out with is being too controlling.*	PRE		1.4	1.4	6.5	37.4	53.2	PRE	1.6	9.8	10.7	54.1	23.8
	POST		1.0	0	2.9	28.8	67.3	POST	1.0	3.8	3.8	50.5	41.0
AV 3 *Girls at school should expect to be touched when they wear short shorts or short skirts.*	PRE		66.9	25.9	2.9	2.2	2.2	PRE	50.8	34.4	4.9	4.1	4.9
	POST		71.2	21.2	4.8	1.9	1.0	POST	54.3	34.3	7.6	1.0	2.9
AV 4 *If I see a guy and his girlfriend physically fighting at school, it is none of my business.*	PRE		24.5	41.0	22.3	10.1	2.2	PRE	27.0	34.4	17.2	13.9	7.4
	POST		25.0	53.8	19.2	1.9	0	POST	30.5	42.9	18.1	6.7	1.9
AV 5 *If a girl gets really drunk and is raped at a party, it is partly her fault.*	PRE		37.4	30.2	15.1	14.4	2.9	PRE	18.0	23.8	13.9	37.7	6.6
	POST		41.3	32.7	13.5	11.5	0	POST	36.2	36.2	11.4	15.2	1.0
AV 6 *Sometimes girls want to have sex even when they say "no."*	PRE		41.7	22.3	20.1	13.7	1.4	PRE	26.2	35.2	22.1	11.5	4.9
	POST		42.3	31.7	14.4	10.6	0	POST	38.1	32.4	16.2	13.3	0
AV 7 *Sexual assault is an issue that should concern both men and women equally.*	PRE		1.4	3.6	5.0	49.6	39.6	PRE	1.6	7.4	6.6	52.5	31.1
	POST		1.0	4.8	13.5	45.2	35.6	POST	4.8	9.5	2.9	47.6	35.2
AV 8 *Making unwelcome sexual comments to a girl in the lunchroom or hallway is wrong.*	PRE		1.4	.7	2.2	46.8	48.2	PRE	3.3	5.7	7.4	54.1	29.5
	POST		1.0	1.9	1.0	45.2	51.0	POST	1.9	1.9	5.7	50.5	40.0

SURVEY RESULTS: AV SECTION (cont)

TABLE 4

AV SURVEY RESULTS (cont)

AV SURVEY QUESTION		% of FEMALES responding					% of MALES responding				
		SD	D	U	A	SA	SD	D	U	A	SA
AV 9 *It is harmless to tell dirty jokes about women.*	PRE POST	16.5 21.2	39.6 46.2	26.6 21.2	12.9 7.7	3.6 3.8	5.7 9.5	36.9 55.2	21.3 21.9	30.3 8.6	5.7 3.8
AV 10 *The media portray disrespectful sexual stereotypes of women.*	PRE POST	.7 0	2.9 0	37.4 22.1	45.3 50.0	11.5 27.9	.8 3.8	16.4 6.7	40.2 14.3	35.5 60.0	6.6 14.3
AV 11 *A person is not really abusive as long as they don't physically harm anyone.*	PRE POST	52.5 61.5	38.1 31.7	4.3 2.9	3.6 1.9	0 1.9	27.0 37.1	57.4 54.3	5.7 4.8	8.2 2.9	1.6 1.0
AV 12 *In serious relationships between males and females, males should be the leaders and decision-makers.*	PRE POST	77.7 77.9	16.5 18.3	2.9 2.9	.7 0	.7 1.0	18.0 30.5	56.6 53.3	11.5 9.5	11.5 4.8	2.5 1.9
AV 13 *If a female is battered, she has done something to cause it or ask for it.*	PRE POST	73.4 78.8	18.0 16.3	6.5 3.8	0 1.0	0 0	31.1 56.2	38.5 32.4	20.5 9.5	8.2 1.9	.8 0
AV 14 *It is okay for a boy to force a girl to have sex with him if she has flirted with him or led him on.*	PRE POST	77.7 85.6	18.7 10.6	1.4 1.9	0 0	.7 1.0	45.9 61.9	43.4 32.4	7.4 4.8	.8 0	2.5 1.0
AV 15 *If a guy forces his girlfriend to have sex with him when she doesn't want to, it is rape.*	PRE POST	2.9 3.8	2.9 1.0	3.6 1.9	30.2 28.8	58.3 64.4	1.6 4.8	6.6 3.8	7.4 2.9	39.3 31.4	45.1 57.1
AV 16 *Men and women are treated equally in our society.*	PRE POST	29.5 38.5	52.5 51.0	9.4 6.7	4.3 1.0	3.6 1.9	18.0 16.2	42.6 58.1	18.0 11.4	16.4 6.7	4.9 7.6

program training. Additionally, the percentage is slightly greater than that of males who felt the same way at the end of program training (17 percent).

In addition to exploring the effects of gender on student performances on this attitude scale, it is important to understand the impact that a student's grade level might have on her or his response to the MVP Program. The data pertaining to grade level and student performance reveal that students in grades 10 and 11 scored significantly lower on the post-test than on the pre-test survey, meaning that their attitudes shifted dramatically in the desired direction ($p=.000$ and $p=.005$, respectively). Students in grade 12 exhibited virtually no change in attitude after participating in the MVP Program. Finally, mean scores actually rose from pre- to post-test for students in grade 9, although the change was not statistically significant.

Student Attitude Change (Qualitative Data)

Students' shift in attitude regarding the acceptability of gender violence and their increased level of awareness about the problem of gender violence and its prevalence in society were readily observed in the program setting and stand out in the qualitative data as well as the quantitative data presented above. The following paragraphs describe the typical transformation many students seem to undergo during their time in the MVP Program. During the first phase, most students enter the program displaying stereotypical male and female behavior. Then, they learn to think critically about those socialized gender roles. Finally, many students exemplify the desire to change their own behavior and that of others based on what they learned from the MVP Program.

In the early days of program training, it was all too easy to observe in the MVP participants, themselves, the very behavior that the Program was trying to raise awareness about and put an end to. For example, one of the first things that the MVP trainers talk about in program training is the reason why they focus on male violence against women. Without fail, someone (usually a young man) would find that unacceptable and would interject, "Why do we have to talk about just male violence against women? Why pick on the guys?" Others might sarcastically reply that it was "because all men are wife-beaters" or murmur about male bashing. Female MVP participants, too, were very often quick to defend the guys and insist that girls really do "ask for it"

sometimes. Usually, an MVP trainer would then calmly counter with the statistic that over 95 percent of violence in this country is perpetrated by males.

While the conversation would generally proceed without much further discussion, the issue would inevitably pop up again during the first few hours of training. During these relatively early moments of the Program, the boys and girls would often cling to common ideas (about such things as the cause of violence against women or the propriety of sexual comments) that reinforce stereotypical gender roles. For instance, when observing the all-female portion of the first training at Suburban High, I made note of the following conversation:

Trainer:	*Why do guys hit girls?*
Female 1:	*Because they're frustrated with her.*
Female 2:	*Because they see it happen all the time and think it's okay, that it's normal.*
Trainer:	*So one reason would be because violence is a learned behavior.*
Female 2:	*I guess. But some girls do start it. Some girls get into the guy's face; they try to see how far they can go.*
Female 1:	*If I did some of the things that I see girls do, I would expect to get hit back.*
Female 2:	*I wouldn't expect it, but I wouldn't be surprised by it…*
Female 3:	*Guys are frustrated. They're animals, and they need to take out their frustration. They can't help it…It's hard to re-teach the natural order of things. I mean, biologically, everything is telling them to act superior. So it's hard to teach them not to. When women started gaining rights, men started treating them badly again, because they feared them.*
Trainer:	*If some girl's boyfriend gets frustrated in football practice and gets pissed at the coach, does he then go off and hit the coach?*
Female 3:	*No.*
Trainer:	*So why can't a guy control his anger toward his girlfriend, but he can control it with his coach?*
Female 4:	*Because the coach has power or authority, or because he respects the coach.*
Trainer:	*So another reason a guy would hit a girl is to regain power and control over her. Do you agree?*

The males at City High were not any more enlightened about the causes of male violence against women at the beginning of program training. This excerpt comes from my observation of the second training session with the freshman leadership group at that site:

Trainer:	*What's the first thing you think of when you see a guy hitting a girl?*
Male 1:	*She did something wrong. Or she didn't obey.*
Male 2:	*She cheated on him.*
Male 3:	*Maybe she questioned him or his authority.*

The above examples portray students at the earliest phases of MVP training, before they are able or willing to think critically about male violence against women. Instead of focusing on the male violence, these students criticize female behavior as "asking for it." Essentially, they are repeating a message or idea in society that is so common it seems natural or correct to them.

Remember a female student's struggle (described earlier) with her personal response to "sexual harassment" or unwelcome sexual comments being directed at her and her friends at school? She wondered to herself whether she should be upset or flattered by boys' comments regarding her friend's and her physical qualities. It is not out of the realm of possibility to imagine that she, and others like her, take cues from these adolescent interactions about how to act as a female in society. In order to feel good about herself, this student admits to needing attention and positive reinforcement from other human beings in her life. She notes that one way to get both from boys is to flaunt her physical attributes, even though she would prefer they took note of her other qualities. Indeed, she even recognizes that her friend must feel kind of bad if all that the boys notice about her is her "great rack." Although she registers confusion about this dilemma, she lacks the knowledge and confidence to be critical of male behavior. Instead, she pushes her feelings of discomfort aside and contemplates changing her own behavior in order to receive more male attention.

One of the things MVP is tasked to do during the early phases of training is to teach students that young women and men "learn" to be females and males

based on the cues they get from society (e.g., if men hit women, it's probably because the woman "asked for it," and the best way for a female to get male attention is through her body). In order to accomplish this, the MVP trainers use a number of materials, including contemporary video clips from popular movies and MTV videos. Additionally, they use different participatory exercises to demonstrate the concept in a way that the students understand and to which they respond very well. One such exercise is called "The Box." This exercise is generally conducted when males and females are split into single-gender groups. Here, I describe an example of "The Box" exercise during an all-male session. The female version of the exercise is virtually identical.

The main purpose of "The Male Box" exercise is to illustrate how society constructs gender roles for boys and men which may have a negative impact on their behavior and development (e.g., men's violence against women, other men, and themselves). Also, the exercise serves to encourage boys and men to define their own individual identities and to stand up for others who may not fit into socially constructed gender roles.

First, participants are asked to differentiate between gender and sex. Students respond that a person is born with their sex and assigned a gender. Next, they are asked how they learn to be men. The usual replies include, "media, parents, friends, society." The male trainer then draws a large box on the blackboard and writes "To Be a Man" at the top. He asks, "What does society stereotypically say it means to be a man?"   At this point, the students generally have a pretty good time blurting out answers while the trainer writes them in the box: "Strong!" "Hairy!" "Can't be a virgin!" "Athletic!" "Have to be tough and in charge!" "Control!" "Provider!" "He has to have a big dick!" "He has big balls!" "Can't cry!" "Have to have sex all the time!"

Because it is still early in the Program, and the lesson hasn't been learned yet, the boys act out some of this stereotypical behavior while actually participating in the exercise. For example, they make fun of each other's penis size, and they often can't resist talking about who gets sex and who doesn't.   During the session described above, the boy who yelled, "He has big balls!" was quickly told "You must not be a man, then, 'cause you have small ones!" With this demeaning comment, this young man was basically confronted with and forced to conform to traditional norms of masculinity (i.e., he was effectively put back into "The Box").

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In the next step of the exercise students are asked, "What names would a boy be called if he steps outside of the box?" Again, the students are eager to yell out their answers: "Pussy!" "Fag!" "Girl!" "Woman!" "Bitch!" "Needle dick!" Once more, the trainer writes the responses on the board, but this time, he puts them outside of the box. Then he asks, "What do all of these words outside the box have in common?" The boys respond: "They degrade women!" "They're insults!" "They're all negative!" "What message," the trainer asks, "does this send to men?" "You'd better stay in the Box!" cry the boys. "They show that you shouldn't be like a woman, because women are inferior!" "How does this impact men's attitudes and behavior towards women?" the trainer prods. The boys reply, "It probably makes them think that they can disrespect the women, treat 'em bad."

And this is where the exercise becomes effective – when the boys start to reflect on their experiences as males and when they start processing their reactions to those experiences. During every session I observed (both male and female) where the "The Box" exercise was completed, one student would say something to the effect of, "When you put it like that, it seems really bad. I never thought about it like that before. I never thought of words being used like that, but we do it all the time!" And a roomful of students would nod in unison.

One interview participant at Suburban High described the impact that "The Box" lesson had on him:

Male:	*Um, they try to teach us how little stuff that we're unaware of actually is abusive or is just putting people down. Like, I remember this one thing they did with us where [the trainer] had us say words that we would call other guys just to make fun of them, and it was stuff like "queer," "fag," "bitch" — stuff like that. Then he asked us, "Now, when you look at the words, what are they actually?" And they're making fun of homosexuals and stuff like that, and making fun of women. And when he said, "Well, see what they are?" it was clear that without realizing it we've adopted the words without thinking about what the meanings are! And [MVP] showed us that. Now, whether that stops it or whatever, I don't know. But I thought that it was a good thing, because it actually showed me. And I was kind of like, "Oh, yeah! We do do that!" I thought that was kind of one of the better [lessons]. I was like, "No, I don't make fun of people or help to keep them 'In the Box'." But then I realized, "Well, I kind of do."*
Interviewer:	*So it opened your eyes to how we sometimes use language that we don't think about, and that it can be harmful…?*
Male:	*Exactly.*

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Qualitative data from "page 6" of the survey also reflects how students from all school sites felt about "The Box." Following is testimony from a number of students regarding the importance of that exercise:

- *I learned that it's okay to be out of "The Box"…*

- *"The Box" was most important, because now I see how people are forced back into it — I don't want to be in it!*

- *I am not as stereotypical as before — I don't judge people.*

- *I learned that nobody (gay, lesbian, straight, race) deserves to be rejected because of who they are — this changed who I am and gave me a more open mind.*

Post-program student interview data was also useful in demonstrating the effect MVP had on raising student awareness and changing their attitudes toward male violence against women. Recall that during pre-program interviews, students were either unable or unwilling to name gender violence as something that existed in their lives and environments. Again, while they could cite example after example of it, they were not able or willing to recognize it for what it was. After the Program experience, however, students marveled at the amount of gender abuse and sexist behavior that they were able to observe in their everyday lives. Following are excerpts from different student interviews regarding this phenomenon.

Interviewer:	*Did the MVP Program change you or your attitudes at all?*
Female:	*Well, [the MVP Program] changed me because, well, for me, I was always blind to [male violence against women]. I would always say, "Oh, it's my fault." You know, I would always think like that. I would always think it was the girl's fault or whatever, you know? That was how I'd always think about it. It was like, "Oh, the girl made him do this or the girl made him do that." But I realized, yeah, that it's not always that. So for me, that's what I learned — that it isn't right and not to blame yourself for things that happen. You're not always at fault. Guys are at fault, too.*

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Interviewer:	*So in your opinion, was the MVP Program useful?*
Female:	*Yeah, it was.*
Interviewer:	*Can you elaborate on that at all?*
Female:	*It was useful because it made us more aware of what goes on around us that people don't really talk about. I guess that's the real reason.*

Female:	*There's one girl in my gym class who is in MVP with me, and we were talking about [the program]. And we could talk about it quite freely. We were very open about the subject. And we talked about, like, what we had seen since we were in the program and how we noticed so much more once we got out of the program. You know? Like, you're really alert and aware of stuff that's happening around you – more than before.*

Interviewer:	*Okay, now that you've been through the MVP Program, how would you define gender violence, or male violence against women?*
Female:	*I still have it in my mind that it's just, like, men hitting women and stuff like that. But I also knew before I entered the program some stuff that they taught us about how it's mental and physical and emotional abuse, too. And now you just look in the hallways and you see somebody yelling at each other, and you're just like, "You shouldn't be doing that!" [laughs] Whereas before, you were just like, "Dude! I wonder what she did!" Now it's just that you think about it more.*

Interviewer:	*How did the experience of going through the MVP Program change you and/or your attitudes about gender violence, if at all?*
Female:	*It made me more aware. If that has been my answer to every question, I'm sorry. But that's the main thing that MVP did! [laughs]*

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Interviewer:	*Did you talk to anyone about MVP?*

Male:	*I talked to other kids that were in MVP about stuff. We just kind of talked about the scenarios they gave us, or situations and what we would do. We didn't talk about whether we liked MVP or not, but about whether it was opening our eyes to [gender violence]. And, yes, it was showing us stuff, and we were talking about situations that might happen, or that almost happened some place where we were at. And we talked about what we would have done or what nobody did at the time.*

Male:	*This stuff in MVP was really something I went home and I thought about all the time. And everything that happened, you know, it got to the point where I really couldn't watch something on TV or anything without thinking about it, you know? I couldn't sort of passively – well, you know, everything just started to register more. It was always something that was on my mind.*

Interviewer:	*Do you see it more now that you went through the Program?*
Male:	*I notice it more. Like, I see it and think, "Yo! This stuff ain't supposed to be happenin'." But before [MVP], I'd see it and I'd be like there was nothing wrong.*
Interviewer:	*Do you see more stuff like that now?*
Male:	*Yeah I do. Like, on MTV, there's some bad videos. Like, they usually have these girls dancing with, like, booty shorts and a short shirt on or whatever. And [pro] wrestling, too... I wonder how come they don't show, like, other kinds of people [laughs]. Like, not just those kinds of females, you know? Why don't they show some normal people with some clothes on? Stuff like that I notice more now.*

Interviewer:	*How often do you think about the things you discussed in MVP?*
Male:	*I probably think about it every day, because you hear about it on the news. Sometimes you see it and sometimes you don't, but you usually hear about it. I mean, it's everywhere.*
Interviewer:	*Did you notice it before?*
Male:	*Yeah, but not as much as I do now. I guess I just kind of looked over it then, but now that I've gone through the MVP program, you know, they train us to pick those kinds of problems out. So they did a very good job.*

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Interviewer:	*Do you feel you know more about gender violence now than you did when you started MVP?*
Male:	*I know that it happens more than I thought — both because of the statistics they taught us, and because everybody in class could think of one example of it! Since everyone could think of a story, then it's got to be kind of a big deal. And I didn't really think it was that big before… It just kind of makes me more aware, and I kind of look at things differently. I don't just see two people going up to a bedroom. I see a drunk person and another person going up to a bedroom — you know what I mean? And that way, I'd be more apt to stop it instead of just being like, "Oh. Whatever."… I kind of feel more responsibility, because I know people don't do anything about it. And I know, then, that if I don't do anything, it will just keep giving others an excuse not to do anything. So now I kind of look out and think, well, I have to do it.*

In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of MVP at raising students' awareness about and improving their attitudes toward gender violence, this last quote, especially, alludes to a willingness and sense of responsibility on the part of students to do something with their newfound knowledge and skills. After one of the last basic training sessions at Suburban High, I overheard the following conversation between a young male participant and a trainer, which provides further illustration that students try to moderate their behavior based on lessons learned from MVP:

Male:	*I suppose you heard me make a slip when I was joking around during class.*
Trainer:	*What did you do?*
Male:	*Well, Tom was giving me some crap, so I called him a fag. Sometimes I still say the wrong things, you know, bad stuff still slips out sometimes.*
Trainer:	*Well, yeah. I mean, it's hard to change how you act after many years of acting like that, right? The important thing now is that you recognize the need to change some of your behavior.*
Male:	*I promise that I'm really trying to apply what I learn in MVP to my every day life. I just want you to know that every guy in here takes this stuff seriously.*

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Other actors in the program setting also were able to observe the impact of the MVP Program on student attitudes and behavior. During an interview at City High, a key informant insisted:

Key Informant:	*I've seen changes in people who have gone through the Program.*
Interviewer:	*Can you say more about that, or give me examples of what you've seen?*
Key Informant:	*Yep. You know, there have been times when the boys on the team have been in one large group and a girl will walk by. And one time, there was a student who wasn't part of the MVP training who was with them and said something that was out of place to the young woman. The other students who were in the Program corrected him. So, the awareness and the behavior change is there. And we also talked about some music. We were listening to some music and a certain song came on. Someone who had taken the Program said, "That's derogatory toward women." And then we had a discussion. You know, it's just from time to time things will come up and they'll notice it and even take action.*
Interviewer:	*Can you talk a little more about what it was like before this group went through the training?*
Key Informant:	*Around me, I've seen changes. When they get away from me, I don't know. They know I'm conscious of how they interact with their peers. But I've noticed differences just in terms of their interactions with females. I've seen them be more appropriate in their language, appropriate in their behavior. Whereas before, even when I was around, I would see some cases where they were using terminology that wasn't proper or where there was inappropriate touching or whatever. So I've seen less of that and more of the positive stuff since they went through the MVP Program.*

Finally, students' excitement about the MVP Program and their enthusiasm to continue beyond the basic training to advanced train-the-trainer (TTT) education is another clue that MVP works at changing student attitudes and even behavior. This will be discussed at greater length in the following sections.

Student Self-Efficacy (Quantitative Survey Results)

Questions 1-10 in the third section of the 1999-2000 MVP survey comprised the "SEV Scale." This scale was designed to measure the level of efficacy students have regarding their own ability to speak out against gender violence and sexism and to intervene in potentially dangerous situations involving male violence. Pre- and post-test data from the SEV Scale were analyzed by conducting Analysis of Variance tests (ANOVAs) using SPSS. The results for this scale are summarized in **Table 5**. All items were rated on a scale of one to five, with one being the most negative and five being the most positive (responses to numbers 2,5,6, and 10 were re-coded prior to analysis).

Overall, student scores on the SEV Scale changed significantly (p=.007) during the period between pre- and post-testing. As a group, students' mean scores increased at post-test, indicating that the MVP Program training had the desired effect of increasing students' confidence in themselves to prevent and/or confront sexist and violent behavior.

It was hypothesized that female students may be less confident than their male peers in terms of their ability to insert themselves into threatening and potentially violent situations involving confrontation with abusive or sexist males. However, no statistically significant difference in the attitudes of girls and boys emerged from analysis of the SEV Scale, indicating that gender does not affect confidence to speak out against gender violence or intervene in situations involving violence against women.

Even though both genders improved positively and significantly after Program training, there remains substantial room for improving student confidence regarding these issues. An overall post-test mean score of 3.7 on this scale illustrates that students are only slightly more than "Unsure" about their ability and resolve to be pro-active and effective bystanders. In fact, fewer than half of survey respondents (41 percent of girls and 50 percent of boys) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "It is intimidating to think about trying to stop a guy from hitting his girlfriend." Only 23 percent of girls and 33 percent of boys gave the most positive response (Agree or Strongly Agree) to the statement, "A group of guys would listen to me if I confronted them about their sexist behaviors." Upon program completion, over one quarter of female respondents still believed, "It would be too hard…to confront a stranger who was being abusive toward a woman," and one-third of them were still "Unsure" about it.

That said, readers should take note that there was some ambiguity in interpreting the meaning to the SEV Scale data[9]. For instance, qualitative interview data (presented below) reveal that students may be intimidated when they think about intervening in potentially dangerous situations (as survey results suggest); however, these same students say that intimidation won't necessarily stop them from "doing the right thing anyway" (i.e., intervening). Thus, the MVP Program conceivably may have been even more effective in increasing student self-efficacy and motivating desired behavior change in students than the already positive survey data results suggest. The qualitative data that follow help us to decipher the meaning of the survey results.

Student Self-Efficacy (Qualitative Data)

To repeat, while the survey numbers showed a statistically significant improvement in students' attitudes about their confidence or ability to confront, interrupt, or prevent sexist and abusive behavior, the overall mean score indicated some amount of uncertainty as to whether MVP students actually felt confident about intervening in potentially uncomfortable or violent situations. In essence, students felt more confident than they did when they entered the Program, but the level of confidence they reached at the end of the Program still looked to be lower than what might be needed for them to be the active bystanders that MVP wants them to be.

Qualitative data from the interviews, observations, and "page 6" of the survey again provide useful insight into the meaning of the quantitative survey results. Importantly, they demonstrate that while MVP heightens student awareness regarding their responsibility as bystanders, students also think carefully and realistically about any actions they may take and the potential consequences of those actions. As will be seen, this is true both when students speak hypothetically about their willingness or ability to intervene, as well as when they describe actual circumstances where they were confronted with the decision of being passive or active bystanders.

First, according to interview data, students consider the context of each incident separately. For instance, before deciding whether or not to intervene, students say they take into consideration a number of variables: 1) whether the conflict is verbal or physical; 2) whether or not a violent male is involved (especially important to young women – or at least they were more likely to

SURVEY RESULTS: SEV SECTION

TABLE 5

SEV SURVEY RESULTS

SEV SURVEY QUESTION		% of FEMALES responding						% of MALES responding				
		SD	D	U	A	SA		SD	D	U	A	SA
SEV 1 I can help prevent violence against women at my school.	PRE	2.2	5.0	25.2	51.1	15.8	PRE	.8	12.3	24.6	48.4	13.9
	POST	1.0	3.8	17.3	55.8	22.1	POST	1.9	5.7	9.5	59.0	22.9
SEV 2 It is intimidating to think about trying to stop a guy from hitting his girlfriend.	PRE	10.8	29.5	18.7	36.0	4.3	PRE	18.9	30.3	18.9	27.0	4.1
	POST	8.7	32.7	8.7	44.2	4.8	POST	16.2	33.3	22.9	23.8	2.9
SEV 3 A group of guys would listen to me if I confronted them about their sexist behaviors.	PRE	14.4	42.4	23.7	15.8	2.2	PRE	25.4	26.2	23.8	15.6	9.0
	POST	9.6	38.5	28.8	20.2	2.9	POST	3.8	37.1	24.8	25.7	7.6
SEV 4 I have the skills to help support a female friend who is in an abusive relationship.	PRE	1.4	6.5	15.1	46.0	30.9	PRE	.8	2.5	20.5	47.5	27.9
	POST	1.0	1.0	10.6	51.0	36.5	POST	0	1.9	7.6	54.3	36.2
SEV 5 I don't think I could stop a group of guys who are harassing a girl at a party.	PRE	16.5	37.4	25.9	18.0	2.2	PRE	18.0	47.5	19.7	13.1	.8
	POST	15.4	42.3	25.0	15.4	1.0	POST	21.9	49.5	19.0	9.5	0
SEV 6 The fear of being laughed at would prevent me from telling a group of guys it was disrespectful to whistle at girls.	PRE	26.6	49.6	13.7	8.6	1.4	PRE	18.9	36.1	24.6	18.0	1.6
	POST	29.8	47.1	17.3	5.8	0	POST	23.8	47.6	16.2	9.5	1.9
SEV 7 I would be comfortable telling my friend to stop calling his girlfriend names.	PRE	.7	5.8	7.9	53.2	32.4	PRE	1.6	11.5	19.7	51.6	14.8
	POST	0	3.8	1.9	53.8	39.4	POST	2.9	6.7	10.5	50.5	29.5
SEV 8 I believe my peers will listen to me if I speak out against gender violence.	PRE	1.4	4.3	35.3	45.3	13.7	PRE	2.5	15.6	31.1	39.3	10.7
	POST	0	5.8	30.8	50.0	13.5	POST	1.9	7.6	31.4	47.6	10.5
SEV 9 I have the confidence to say something to a guy who is acting inappropriately toward a woman.	PRE	.7	7.2	18.0	48.2	25.2	PRE	2.5	3.3	13.1	61.5	18.0
	POST	0	5.8	22.1	51.9	20.2	POST	0	2.9	15.2	62.9	19.0
SEV 10 It would be too hard for me to confront a stranger who was being abusive toward a woman.	PRE	12.2	25.9	35.3	24.5	2.2	PRE	20.5	30.3	25.4	18.0	4.1
	POST	8.7	30.8	33.7	23.1	2.9	POST	21.0	39.0	25.7	12.4	1.9

admit it); 3) whether or not the actors involved are strangers or known to the student; 4) the student's own ability to analyze the situation (i.e., is it obvious that the woman is being abused, or is the couple having a mutual argument?); and 5) the availability of any sources of support to which the bystander could turn for help in the situation. Next, students consider their options. Depending on the context, they say, they might anonymously call the police, intervene directly, cause a distraction, or choose to talk to one of the parties after the actors involved have cooled down.

All of this deliberation is a credit both to the students and to the Program. Every option listed above by students in consideration of their "next move" was discussed time after time during role playing at MVP sessions. MVP never teaches students to ignore their personal safety; instead, they emphasize that the only "bad" or "unacceptable" option is to "do nothing."

The following paragraphs display examples of how students think carefully and contextually about their actions or potential actions as empowered bystanders. They show why the survey results intimate that a level of uncertainty remains after MVP Program training, and at the same time provide clear illustration that MVP changed students' ideas about their personal responsibility and desire to intervene in or to help prevent gender violence.

It was rare that a student expressed the idea that MVP's proactive bystander approach would not work. Even in the next example, which was the closest I ever came to hearing a student say that gender violence was none of their business, the student did not go so far as to say she would never be a proactive bystander.

Interviewer:	*Do you think MVP's goal of having their students become more active bystanders is realistic?*
Female:	*It's not going to happen.*
Interviewer:	*It's not going to happen? What do you mean by that?*
Female:	*Like, you'll have a few out of our group that will do it. But if you bring 20 people into a room like MVP does, you're only going to get a few that are going to go through with it, you know? A lot of people will just think, "It's none of my business."*
Interviewer:	*Before you went through the MVP program, did you think it was none of your business?*

Female:	*Yeah.*
Interviewer:	*Do you still think it's none of your business?*
Female:	*To a point. If I saw someone really getting hurt, then I'd have to, like, go in there and do something. But to a point, it isn't my business, you know? I don't know what they're arguing about. I don't know what they're screaming about. Then, if you go over there and make a big scene, and it ends up being nothing — then what?*
Interviewer:	*So is it a fear of embarrassment, in a way?*
Female:	*It's just that why would you go over and start this big thing when there's nothing even happening, you know? You need to be really sure that something's going on.*

During most student interviews, the students recognized their responsibility to be active bystanders and said they would use what MVP taught them. Some spoke to this in hypothetical terms, while others said they had already had the opportunity to put their new knowledge and skills to work. The first sets of dialogue below are conversations with students who speak only in hypothetical terms about their responsibility and willingness to be active bystanders. The second group of quotes presents student accounts of actual confrontations and how they were handled.

Group 1: **Students Discuss Hypothetical Situations**

Interviewer:	*How realistic do you think it is for MVP to expect that their students are going to stand up and confront violent or sexist behavior next time they see it?*
Male:	*Not that realistic. But, I mean, if someone else doesn't step in, you've got to step in when it gets — I mean, if they're just arguing, it's fine. People argue. But if it goes to abuse or anything like that or harassment where the girl is crying and everything — if he's just going off and she's just sitting there crying, then you have to do something.*
Interviewer:	*So there's some line where you decide whether it's bad enough for you to intervene.*
Male:	*Yeah. Exactly.*
Interviewer:	*And that's generally going to be when you actually see physical abuse, or…?*
Male:	*Probably just before that. Like, if he was yelling at her or she was just sitting there crying, then you would go in there and say something. Definitely.*

Interviewer:	*Do you think you have the responsibility to be an active bystander?*
Female:	*Yes. Yeah. Like, if I was in the hallway, and I saw someone doing something, I think I have the responsibility to say something to them. I mean, if he has enough balls to yell and scream at her in front of other people, then I think he'll have enough balls to go home and hit her. I think you should say something while they're there. Maybe make the girl think about it.*
Interviewer:	*Did you feel like you had that responsibility before you went through the Program?*
Female:	*Not as much as I do now. Before, I'd look at it and say, like to myself, you shouldn't be doing that. Now I would say something out loud. So there's a difference.*
Interviewer:	*Do you feel you have the skills to be an effective bystander?*
Female:	*Yeah. I think I do. I mean, I've never been a very quiet person [laughs], so I would have no problem saying, "Just back off!" But sometimes, you're more shy, I guess. Like, if a big, huge guy is sitting there yelling at his girlfriend, are you going to yell, "Get away from her!"? No! You're probably going to be over in a corner hiding. But MVP taught me that there are more distracting techniques to use and stuff like that. Yeah, I think I learned some stuff about how to make a distraction, and that can be important.*
Male:	*I'd like to be an active bystander, but I don't — I don't know. Sometimes, depending on the situation, it can be stressful for some people. But I'd like to try it. Seriously, I would.*

Group 2: **Students Discuss Real Confrontations and Experiences**

Female:	*I was in a musical, and there was a girl who had an ex-boyfriend who kind of just showed up at practices. And the two of them were fighting, and she was crying, and he was screaming at her. And he punched a locker, like, right by her head. And then he stormed off and everything. And it was like a big uproar and a big deal, but nobody was talking about it, you know? I mean, some people asked her what was wrong, but she said it was fine. But it really wasn't fine. Because he kept showing up and bothering her, and nobody ever really intervened or did anything to stop it, because he was really, well, he was just not right [in the head], you know? And nobody really wanted to step in. He's a big, intimidating kid who's not really afraid to punch anything or anyone.*
Interviewer:	*Kind of hard to be an active bystander in that situation then?*

Female:	Yeah, it definitely is. I mean, she was my friend, and I knew what was going on, and I comforted her, but I really couldn't step in physically when there's a kid there who's twice my size and very volatile!
Interviewer:	So then, what was your role in that situation, if anything?
Female:	I just tried to talk to her and be supportive. That's basically what I did, because that's all I could do.
Interviewer:	In that situation, did you use anything that you learned in MVP?
Female:	Yeah, yeah. I definitely did. Because I knew that she was upset, but I also knew she needed to be talked to, even if she didn't want to be talked to…
Interviewer:	What did you find most challenging about MVP?
Female:	The fact that they expected that the best thing to do would be to intervene in a situation that you saw. And especially, I think, personally for myself, I could step in when it was a guy hitting on a girl who was drunk or something like that, but with a case where there's violence involved and there's risk of the bystander getting hurt physically, then it's definitely hard to step in, especially being a girl. When that guy was harassing my friend at musical practice, all I can remember was him punching a locker and thinking, "I'm not going out there to help!" There were guys behind me who were much bigger than me, and there were teachers there, and they didn't do anything, so…
Interviewer:	Did you think that going out and confronting the guy was the only thing you could do?
Female:	No, not the only thing. But I definitely felt this obligation that I shouldn't just stand there even if I was going to have to put myself at risk. And if there really was some serious, imminent danger, then I think I would have stepped in. But I know that there are other things that I can do, because I did do something else in that situation, and I know it helped.

Interviewer:	So, you said that since you went through the MVP Program, you haven't witnessed anything — you haven't been a bystander?
Male:	Not really.
Interviewer:	What does that mean?
Male:	Well, I was at a party where my friend was really drunk and so was this girl, and they were making out and stuff. And I just said to him, "Well, don't do anything stupid." And I thought about the rape law and kind of just talked to him about what the consequences might be. They didn't end up doing anything, but I don't know. I guess if they would have taken it farther, then I would have stepped in. But I don't know.

FINDINGS

Male:	*The Program has helped me, especially with my brother.*
Interviewer:	*Tell me about your brother.*
Male:	*Him and his wife argue a lot and fight. Before MVP, I used to be, "That's their life," you know? I had nothing to do with it, really. Since I've taken the program, it's gotten me to know what I have to do. Like now when they fight or whatever around me, I call her name, and I start playing around with her. Or I take her out of the house or something, you know? But before I never did nothing. Now I'm able to do something. I tried to talk to my brother, too, but nothing goes through his head, I guess [laughs].*
Interviewer:	*I assume your brother is older than you?*
Male:	*Yeah, he's 20.*
Interviewer:	*And, you said you've tried to talk to him? How did that go?*
Male:	*Yeah, I tried. I asked him why do you hit her for. And I told him, "It's not right; you shouldn't hit her. You always used to say when I was younger that I shouldn't ever hit a girl, and now you're showing me that you can hit a girl."*
Interviewer:	*And how does he respond when you try to talk to him?*
Male:	*Sometimes he just walks away and forgets about it. Or sometimes, he'll say, "Yeah, I understand." But it's all blah, blah, blah — you know? Like, he's talking a lot of caca. And then, from there, he tries to avoid fighting with her sometimes, I can tell. But most of the time he just does it. But he doesn't really respond too good when I say something to him right there, like when he's hitting her or whatever. He just says, "Mind your business."*
Interviewer:	*So what do you do in those situations?*
Male:	*I just concentrate on getting her away. I get up and say, "Let's go. Let's go to the mall; I need you to help me pick out something." You know? I do those types of things.*

Over 32 percent of students reported on "page 6" of the survey that the skills they obtained regarding how to interrupt or confront males violence were the most important benefit of the MVP Program. Several students who responded

to the survey also described how they had already had an opportunity to use the information they learned through MVP to take action:

- *I used my knowledge at a party where a guy grabbed a girl by the throat.*

- *The most important thing I learned in MVP was how to handle a possible rape situation at a party; I used this information to stop a potential incident at a party.*

- *I learned that distractions work great! I tried it once, and I know how to handle situations and do the right thing.*

Because students appreciated and acknowledged the fact that they acquired important skills as a result of their participation in MVP, it is likely that they gained confidence to interrupt and confront abusive and sexist male behavior. While some questioned their confidence and abilities to intervene, most felt they could and would intervene when necessary, and all students remembered that direct intervention isn't the only course of action that can be taken. In fact, as the interview data suggest, in a number of situations students did have the confidence to use those skills successfully.

Students reported gaining a different sort of confidence as well – not confidence in specific skills, but in their ability to make a difference more generally. The following are quotes from "page 6" data (for more detail, see **Tables 6-14**).

- *I learned that even one person can make a difference in stopping violence/harassment.*

- *Being a third party is important, and I can make a difference.*

- *I can make a difference.*

- *I have the power to stop someone from suffering.*

As has been demonstrated, understanding the need for active bystanders, embracing their responsibility to be active bystanders, and gaining confidence in their own abilities to intervene or make a difference led several students to act. And one of those actions is simply to talk about the problem. Indeed, let us not forget that simply talking about male violence against women is a behavior change for most students – and a very important one. It was clear in both school settings that many students never had the opportunity to talk about these issues before MVP. During and after Program participation, students began talking about these issues and didn't want to stop talking about them.

FINDINGS

Qualitative data provide evidence that most students took action in one form or another based on what they learned in MVP. For some, that meant following the MVP model and mentoring others. Data from "page 6" show that over 90 percent of MVP students talked to others about the MVP Program and its content. According to the survey, nearly 70 percent talked to their friends about the Program, and just over 60 percent talked with members of their family about MVP. Data from the qualitative interviews substantiate this finding, as interview participants expressed their excitement about sharing what they had learned in the program with their friends and others.

A key informant (teacher) at Suburban High School also observed this willingness and excitement on the part of MVP participants to discuss with others the things they learned in MVP:

Key Informant:

There are several of the kids in MVP that I see daily, because they're in a class I teach called "Life Education." I began hearing back from the students how much the MVP program had empowered them. There are many, many times in my class that they would quote the MVP program; or, in giving an opinion, they would say, "This is what I would do because of what the program has taught me." I just, I know the purpose of the Life Ed class is to help kids see what they're looking at, or to look at what they're seeing, you know? And I saw MVP as another program like that — teaching kids that you don't have to just observe something but that you can react to it in a way that does good. And that's in fact what was happening with the students who were in MVP. And it affected more than just observing peers in violent relationships. I mean, it was spreading over to the idea that it is possible to have a voice, and it is possible to make change happen, and it is possible to change what's wrong.

Interviewer:

So you're saying that you saw the students becoming more confident and maybe even becoming activists, so to speak?

Key Informant:

And I was very excited about that awareness and confidence.

While in the Program setting (during interviews and while attending program sessions), I too observed this desire on behalf of students to take what they learned from MVP and to apply it. At the last basic training session at Suburban High, I was observing the all-male group. The MVP trainer explained to the boys that this was the last regular session but that they could continue with TTT if they were interested. He went on to explain what that

would entail. As the bell rang at the end of the period, the trainer pulled out a sign up sheet and asked whomever was interested to sign up. Every young man at that session signed his name. A similar thing occurred at City High, when members of the girls' basketball team were told that that particular session was their last meeting.

One student explained the positive experience he had presenting an MVP workshop to younger students at his school:

Interviewer:	*Did you do the TTT workshops for younger students?*
Male:	*Yeah, I did two freshman classes.*
Interviewer:	*And how was that?*
Male:	*I thought it went pretty well. I enjoyed doing it. I liked talking to the younger kids about the subject, you know, because it was kind of interesting to see if I could get them to think about what I had been taught to think about by MVP – maybe even to the point where they wanted to do something about it like I did. That was pretty interesting to me; it seemed like a nice challenge. And at the same time, I thought it could do some good.*

Another student explained:

Interviewer:	*Do you feel it's easier to talk about these issues now that you've been through the program?*
Male:	*Yeah. I think that I can do it – like, because, we're supposed to go into freshman classes anyway. And I can now go to kids I don't even know and talk about it. It's just a matter of them paying attention and wanting to listen and being willing to learn about it.*
Interviewer:	*Do you want to go into the classroom and talk to younger students about what you've learned in MVP?*
Male:	*Yeah. Definitely! To make them aware.*

In sum, quantitative survey results show an increase in student self-efficacy after Program involvement. And even though these efficacy levels hover just slightly above "unsure" (meaning students may still be intimidated by the idea

of confrontation and unclear as to whether people will listen to them when they speak out against gender violence), qualitative data clearly bare the fact that students find the need for preventing male violence and sexist behavior compelling enough to try to use what they learned through MVP. In fact they have demonstrated that willingness by investing their personal free time and energy into the Program. Additionally, belief in the MVP message and confidence in their own ability to be the messengers certainly plays a part in why so many MVP participants are enthusiastic about continuing with the TTT portion of the MVP Program.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction with the MVP Program was measured at post-test through qualitative, open-ended questions on "Page 6" of the survey. Results are presented in **Tables 6 through 14**.

According to data from this segment of the survey, students were highly satisfied with their MVP experience. Ninety-seven percent reported learning something new and valuable during MVP training, and over 90 percent of survey respondents said they would recommend the MVP Program to a friend. In fact nearly 70 percent of the students surveyed at post-test had spoken to a friend about MVP. Only two percent of MVP student respondents reported feeling that the Program training was a "waste of time."

In reporting their favorite thing about the MVP Program, 31 percent of students ranked the materials and exercises as number one. Just over 24 percent mentioned the MVP trainers as their favorite part of MVP. As mentioned in an earlier section of this report, 20 percent of survey respondents most appreciated personal knowledge gain. As well, 20 percent of students felt that the "confidential," "safe," and "real" atmosphere created during MVP sessions was an important component in helping them participate and learn. Eighty-three percent of students reported feeling comfortable and safe during all of the MVP sessions they attended.

When asked directly about their least favorite things about MVP, 40 percent of student respondents had no complaints. Moreover, of complaints that were registered, a majority dealt with student dissatisfaction with the number of MVP sessions – 20 percent of students were unhappy that there was not more time for MVP training!

Dissatisfaction was noted regarding class content (mentioned by 11 percent of student respondents). For example, some students were disturbed by the "touchy subjects" that were covered, and others thought that the materials were "boring and repetitive." Approximately 9 percent of student respondents did not like certain attitudes or approaches taken by MVP trainers. Most notably, a few of them felt their confidentiality had been betrayed by MVP. This having been said, it should be noted that over 70 percent of students reported being satisfied with the trainers (63 percent had "no complaints," and another eight percent complained only that they "couldn't see the same trainers for every session").

In a number of Program sites during 1999-2000, train-the-trainer (TTT) sessions did not take place (see **Table 2**), which was an important source of dissatisfaction among certain students. Several students spoke with me about their disappointment at this turn of events, and part of those conversations are presented below.

Interviewer:	*So, I guess because of time constraints, it's possible that you won't get to go into freshman classes to do workshops this year.*
Male:	*Yep.*
Interviewer:	*How would you feel about it if that happened?*
Male:	*Um, I'd kind of be mad. Because, I mean, we got this far, and this is what we were trained to do. I would be mad if we didn't get the opportunity to go and teach the other kids about it.*

Interviewer:	*How do you feel about the fact that you won't be able to present what you've learned in workshops with younger students this year?*
Female:	*I think that really stinks, because I wanted to, and we did all that preparation! That was a good part; I liked preparing ourselves to speak to younger people or our peers. That was a good part, if we could do it. We'd get a chance to recall all of the information and put it all together and present it… That would have been a step in the right direction. That would have been getting out there and the first step to talking to people about it – at least a wide group of people, not just our personal friends.*

FINDINGS

Interviewer:	*How do you think MVP could be more successful in your school?*
Male:	*We never did – and I don't think we're going to get to do – the presentations to younger kids, but I think that would help a lot! But we're not going to do that, so I don't know. I think that would be the best thing, to have more presentations to the other kids. Because you can only get so far – I mean, if MVP only has a limited time here, then they have to teach us what they know and then send us out. I mean, if we never get sent out to the other people, then it's like, it just stops with us.*

Certainly students would not be upset at losing the opportunity to participate in TTT and mentor presentations if they did not believe in the MVP message or like the Program so much. Overall, the data relating to student satisfaction are overwhelmingly positive. These data provide clues as to why the MVP Program is so popular and what MVP can do to sustain and expand that success. To close, the following quotes from MVP participants nicely reflect the overall enjoyment and enthusiasm they felt for the Program:

- **I'd tell my friends to join so they can see how to treat a girl right and become a real man.** *(male survey respondent)*

- **I would tell them to join; it's the best thing you could do.** *(female survey respondent)*

- **I strongly recommend this program to anyone. It helped me in ways I never thought possible, and it could definitely help others. If everyone had MVP, we would have nothing to talk about.** *(male survey respondent)*

- **My friends were in it, too, and we couldn't stop talking about it! I learned a lot.** *(female survey respondent)*

- **The MVP program is great, and every student should experience it.** *(male survey respondent)*

SURVEY RESULTS:
Qualitative ("pg.6") Data

QUESTION 1:

TABLE 6

Please write down one or two of your favorite things about the MVP program and training sessions.

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS[10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE[11]
A **The Materials and Exercises** (Note: 30 students specifically mentioned the movie clips)	60 (32,28)	31.25
B **The Trainers**	47 (19,28)	24.48
C **Personal Knowledge Gain**	39 (26,13)	20.31
D **The Atmosphere**	39 (22,17)	20.31
E **Personal Change/Realization**	32 (15,17)	16.67
F **Gain in Skills and Ability**	17 (9,8)	8.85
G **Fun**	9 (1,8)	4.69

STUDENT QUOTES:

A   The Materials and Exercises

… *"I liked the movies used to underscore each topic; they make the discussion seem more applicable to reality"*

… *"Scenarios were realistic and common"*

… *"I liked the clips because I never noticed how bad [movies and videos] really are"*

… *"I liked "The Box," because I didn't realize until then how much society uses bad words that degrade women"*

… *"The playbooks helped me think about what I would do in certain situations"*

B   The Trainers

… *"My favorite thing was the way [the trainers] talked to us like people, not kids, because that is how we should be treated"*

… *"They were real because they told it like it was about how it is out there. They didn't hide anything or the realities"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

B   The Trainers

... *"They were very respectful and truthful"*

... *"They were good at what they presented"*

... *"They didn't try to force their own opinions on us"*

... *"They got into the program as much as I did"*

C   Personal Knowledge Gain

... *"I learned things I never knew about women, and my whole attitude changed"*

... *"I never knew the exact definition of rape; now I know it"*

... *"I was always blurred on the line of sexual harassment, and now I know it's anything that makes you feel uncomfortable"*

... *"Getting more information about what to do in those situations helps me in the future"*

... *"I liked the discussions because I learned a lot about the other views of people in my school"*

D   The Atmosphere

... *"This wasn't a classroom atmosphere — no lecturing. We were involved and excited and this allowed us to add more of ourselves to the program"*

... *"One of my favorite things was how honest we could be"*

... *"We got to talk our normal language; we better understand each other when we can express ourselves 'our' way"*

... *"I liked associating with and meeting a lot of people that I normally wouldn't"*

... *"I liked not being judged on what you say"*

E   Personal Change/Realization

... *"I learned about how girls felt when boys made fun of them; I never really knew how much damage it did to girls when you said stuff to them"*

... *"I got to learn what other guys really do think about [gender] violence"*

... *"I finally realized I was in an abusive (verbal) relationship. It wasn't until after/during the program that I realized this. Now I have finally moved on after almost two years of verbal abuse"*

... *"The trainers made many strong points that caused me to think about my opinions or biases"*

... *"I learned how to be a man and stick up for girls when they get harassed"*

F   Gain in Skills and Ability

... *"Now I know the signs and can help people who are being abused"*

... *"I benefit from these classes because now I can share it with my friends and make them more aware"*

... *"I learned to walk away when things in a relationship were getting out of hand"*

... *"You learned how to hand yourself in situations like parties, etc"*

G   Fun

... *"It gave us a chance to learn and yet have fun at the same time"*

... *"It was fun and creative"*

... *"The format was fresh and interesting"*

... *"The instructors were serious but fun"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

QUESTION 2:

TABLE 7

What did you like least about the MVP program and training sessions?

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS[10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE[11]
A Students who had no complaints	77 (36,41)	40.1
B Not enough time for training	37 (19,18)	19.27
C Class content, topics, materials	22 (13,9)	11.46
D Trainers (approach & attitudes)	17 (11,6)	8.85
E Gender separation	13 (9,4)	6.77
F Atmosphere	13 (8,5)	6.77
G Missing School	6 (1,5)	3.12
H Filling out the survey	2 (1,1)	1.04

STUDENT QUOTES:

A Students who had no complaints

... *"Personally, I loved it and wouldn't change anything"*
... *"I don't have any complaints about the program"*
... *"There was nothing I didn't like"*
... *"I enjoyed it all"*
... *"I enjoyed being involved in something so positive"*

B Not enough time for training

... *"It was too short; we never really completely finished discussing a lot of things"*
... *"Classes were too far apart, and there was not enough time"*
... *"I think we would learn more if we could get together more often"*
... *"I think for it to affect me more, it would be better to meet more often"*
... *"We should have more time, because with more knowledge we could help people more"*
... *"Time always ran out, and I always had unanswered questions"*
... *"I wish they could have been more frequent; sometimes I'd forget things from the session before"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

C *Class content, topics, materials*

... *"I didn't like the extreme situations they used; most of their teachings reinforced a male-dominated society — men with the power and women as victims"*

... *"Talking with girls about rape was a very touchy area"*

... *"In some sessions you guys would bring up some type of topic that would run in my family. I'm sensitive towards things like that and that's what I didn't like"*

... *"The playbooks were boring and repetitious"*

... *"I thought that there should have been a booklet or packet we could bring home with us to keep as a kind of refresher course"*

D *Trainers (approach & attitudes)*

... *"I didn't like when MVP leaders stressed extremes as if they were the 'norm'"*

... *"I think the instructors were sometimes hypocritical and made you feel like your opinion was wrong"*

... *"They told you stuff was confidential, but it really wasn't"*

... *"The women instructors made all men look like wife beaters"*

... *"Some of the leaders were less than interesting"*

... *"It's kind of tough to meet new trainers every time"*

E *Gender separation*

... *"I think there should have been more discussions with the guys and girls together"*

... *"I think it is important for guys to hear stories, feelings, and points of view from the ladies"*

... *"I didn't like how we didn't really get to know how the boys felt; we never heard feedback on what the boys were learning"*

... *"There needs to be more communication between the males and females"*

F *Atmosphere*

... *"I didn't like it when we were having serious discussions and people were arguing or yelling back and forth"*

... *"I didn't like the time limit we had on open discussion"*

... *"The session seemed long — maybe a break of some kind could be put in"*

... *"The sessions were too repetitious — they were a little boring sometimes"*

G *Missing School*

... *"I don't like the idea that I miss main classes; this affects my grades and stops me from learning the info that's on my tests"*

... *"Meeting during school was inconvenient, and it caused me to have to miss a bunch of meetings"*

... *"I missed a lot of [MVP sessions] due to not being able to miss class, so I feel that affected my learning"*

H *Filling out the survey*

... *"I least like filling out the surveys"*

... *"I don't like this test, because it's boring"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

QUESTION 3:   **T A B L E** 8

What was the most important thing or skill you learned in the MVP program?

S T U D E N T A N S W E R	# OF STUDENTS [10] (F, M)	P E R C E N T A G E [11]
A *Skills (how to handle situations, how to treat women better, "the art of distraction")*	63 (25,38)	32.81
B *Confidence/Belief that one can make a difference*	45 (27,18)	23.44
C *Awareness/Understanding of how gender violence affects people*	29 (11,18)	15.10
D *Ability to think for oneself, to be open-minded*	20 (13,7)	10.42
E *Facts and Information about gender violence*	19 (16,3)	9.90
F *Didn't learn anything new*	5 (4,1)	2.6

STUDENT QUOTES:

A   *Skills (how to handle situations, how to treat women better, "the art of distraction")*

… *"I learned how to deal with potentially threatening situations — I used my knowledge at a party where a guy grabbed a girl by the throat"*

… *"I learned how to help intervene if someone is being taken advantage of — going to college next year, this stuff will come in handy"*

… *"The most important thing I learned in MVP was how to handle a possible rape situation at a party; I used this information to stop an incident at a party"*

… *"I learned not to be abusive and cruel towards women"*

… *"The most important thing I learned was that distractions work great — now when I'm at parties, I know how to handle situations and do the right thing"*

B   *Confidence/Belief that one can make a difference*

… *"The most important skill I learned is that I have a voice, and my voice is very important"*

… *"I learned it's okay to stand up for myself, and it's helped me a lot to stand up to those doing damage"*

… *"I learned to stand up and be a leader"*

… *"I learned that even one person can make a difference in stopping violence / harassment"*

… *"Being a third party is important, and I can make a difference by using different tactics and techniques"*

65

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

B   Confidence/Belief that one can make a difference

... *"I learned to stop watching and take action!"*

... *"Trying to help someone isn't butting in — it can be your business"*

... *"I can make a difference"*

... *"I have the power to stop someone from suffering"*

C   Awareness/Understanding of how gender violence affects people

... *"I learned to listen more and to look into situations more carefully, because there sometimes is more there that you cannot see"*

... *"I learned that what might be the 'guy' thing to do is most of the time not the right one"*

... *"now I know how girls feel when guys say sexual remarks to them"*

... *"Men have no right to sexually assault a girl in a short skirt and tight clothes; I always thought girls wearing this were sluts and were asking for it"*

... *"I learned that it is not my fault for dressing a certain way, and I learned how to deal with these situations better — it's important to me, because I have been in relationships like that, and now I know I wasn't wrong"*

D   Ability to think for oneself, to be open-minded

... *"I learned that it's okay to be out of 'the Box'"*

... *"The 'Box' was most important, because now I see how people are forced back into it — I don't want to be in it"*

... *"I learned how society sees people — so now I can try to stop myself from doing what other people do"*

... *"I am not as stereotypical as before — I don't judge people"*

... *"I learned that nobody (lesbian, gay, straight, race) deserves to be rejected because of who they are — this changed who I am and gave me a more open mind"*

E   Facts and Information about gender violence

... *"I learned a lot more about the laws on rape"*

... *"I learned about abuse and how to identify it and deal with it"*

... *"The knowledge of sexual harassment and rape were things I did not know a lot about, but now I do"*

... *"The most important thing was 'The Cycle of Abuse,' — it helps me understand and know ahead of time in relationships"*

... *"The most important thing was the rape law concerning alcohol — it is useful for convincing people against maltreatment of women"*

F   Didn't learn anything new

... *"I didn't learn anything 'new'"*

... *"The things taught were common sense"*

... *"What I was taught I already knew from Health class, like the definition of rape"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

QUESTION 4:   TABLE 9

During any of your MVP sessions, did you ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe?

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS [10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE [11]
A No.	159	82.81
B Yes.	31 (20,11)	16.15
• Materials (videos)	4 (4,0)	2.08
• Uncomfortable with such a personal topic	10 (4,6)	5.21
• Afraid to share personal opinion	5 (2,3)	2.60
• Flashbacks/Brought back memories	7 (7,0)	3.65
• When confidentiality was broken	3 (3,0)	1.56
• When 'male bashing' occurred	2 (0,2)	1.04

STUDENT QUOTES:

A   No.

... *"Everybody was open, and no one forced us to talk"*

... *"I felt safe"*

... *"I was completely comfortable"*

... *"Everything was brought forth properly and respectfully"*

B   Yes.

• Materials (videos)

... *"I felt uncomfortable watching some of the videos, because they were so disturbing, but I understand the point of watching them"*

... *"Yes, especially when we watched the rape scene in higher learning"*

... *"Just during one of the movies, when the woman was being really beaten by her husband — it made me a little emotional"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

- *Uncomfortable with such a personal topic*

  ... *"Some topics were hard to discuss due to personal experience, but it helps to see how other people deal with similar issues"*

  ... *"One time the kids were talking about a girl who I was friends with. They were talking about her as a sex object — I really didn't like that at all"*

  ... *"Talking about how women are raped with women in the room was tough"*

- *Afraid to share personal opinion*

  ... *"I was uncomfortable, maybe, when I had a different view and no one else did or wanted to listen"*

  ... *"I was uncomfortable, because sometimes I was the only one who felt a certain way"*

  ... *"I felt scared at points to share my opinion — I didn't want anyone to be upset if it came out the wrong way"*

- *Flashbacks/Brought back memories*

  ... *"I felt uncomfortable once only because the issue was something I had to deal with once before, but I never really got over it — it brought up bad memories"*

  ... *"Sometimes I felt a little uncomfortable — I've been through a bad experience"*

  ... *"I did feel uncomfortable a few times because they would talk about things that I've seen or done (I'm the type that gets flashbacks)"*

  ... *"I did feel uncomfortable at first, because we were talking about rape (which I can relate to), and I didn't want everyone to see my pain"*

- *When confidentiality was broken*

  ... *"When I found out that our privacy had been betrayed, when something said in the room got out"*

  ... *"When I found out they told the administration things that we had been saying — I lost a lot of trust in them"*

- *When 'male bashing' occurred*

  ... *"Yes, because they blamed everything on the guys"*

  ... *"Yes, when the female leaders kept disagreeing with the men"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

QUESTION 5:		TABLE 10

What did you like most about your MVP trainers?

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS[10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE[11]
A How they treated us/ related to us	**104 (57,47)**	**54.17**
• *Real, Straight-up, Truthful*	27 (12,15)	14.06
• *Respect, Connection, Understanding*	22 (11,11)	11.46
• *Not authoritative, Shared of themselves*	19 (11,8)	9.9
• *Let students speak freely*	16 (11,5)	8.33
• *Listened and Cared*	14 (10,4)	7.29
• *They were open*	6 (2,4)	3.13
B Their Personalities	**77 (37,40)**	**40.1**
C Their Knowledge of Topic	**18 (9,9)**	**9.38**
D Their Teaching Skills	**16 (11,5)**	**8.33**
E Their Age	**5 (3,2)**	**2.60**
F I don't know	**1 (1,0)**	**0.52**

STUDENT QUOTES:

A *How they treated us/related to us*

• *Real, Straight-up, Truthful*

    … *"They were real with us"*
    … *"They were truthful and made it comfortable for us to open up and talk"*
    … *"They were straight and to the point"*
    … *"They were not afraid to talk about what really goes on in the school atmosphere"*

• *Respect, Connection, Understanding*

    … *"They could relate to us young kids"*
    … *"They were respectful and polite"*
    … *"They were understanding"*
    … *"They respected our feelings"*
    … *"They could relate to most situations"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

• *Not authoritative, Shared of themselves*

> ... *"They spoke the way we talk — not like teachers"*

> ... *"They talked to us like they were our friends"*

> ... *"They were open and shared their own experiences"*

> ... *"They talked to us with respect and also like peers — not like they're the boss and we have to listen"*

> ... *"They were cool because they shared personal experiences"*

• *Let students speak freely*

> ... *"They let us express ourselves and be ourselves even if they didn't agree"*

> ... *"Most of them just let you say what you had to and speak your mind"*

> ... *"They let us talk about life without judgment"*

• *Listened and Cared*

> ... *"They really seemed to listen and care"*

> ... *"They were always willing to listen and help us"*

> ... *"They were very caring about us"*

• *They were open*

> ... *"They were open to any discussion"*

> ... *"They weren't afraid to say what they felt"*

B   Their Personalities

> ... *"They didn't act phony; they were real people"*

> ... *"They were down to earth"*

> ... *"I liked how they had a sense of humor"*

> ... *"They always had a positive attitude"*

> ... *"I liked the way they were dedicated to teaching us what they know and to help us understand"*

> ... *"They were funny and personable"*

C   Their Knowledge of Topic

> ... *"They knew what they were talking about; they knew all the facts"*

> ... *"They were comfortable with their topics"*

> ... *"They knew what to say and when to say it"*

> ... *"They were up-to-date about a lot of things"*

> ... *"They know their stuff"*

D   Their Teaching Skills

> ... *"They were good communicators"*

> ... *"I liked their ability to educate us without forcing their opinion on us"*

> ... *"I liked their ability to take such a serious subject and make it fun and easier to learn"*

> ... *"They seemed to have an example for every situation that was easy to understand"*

> ... *"They are all good teachers"*

E   Their Age

> ... *"They were young and sort of close to our age"*

> ... *"They fit in with students"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

QUESTION 6:   TABLE 11

What did you like *least* about your MVP trainers?

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS[10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE[11]
A Nothing	120 (62,58)	62.5
B How they treated us/ related to us	19 (12,7)	9.90
C Administration Constraints	15 (5,10)	7.81
D Teaching Skills	15 (6,9)	7.81
E Personalities	15 (12,3)	7.81

STUDENT QUOTES:

A   Nothing

… *"Nothing; I think you guys are doing very important things for students"*

… *"No complaints"*

… *"I liked everything"*

B   How they treated us/related to us

… *"They were sometimes abrupt and didn't want to hear something we had to say"*

… *"Whenever you were about to make a point different from theirs, we had to move on and not 'drag out the subject'"*

… *"At times they were just plain condescending and didn't seem to get us"*

… *"The women made guys all look bad"*

… *"At one point we talked about something we thought would stay between us, and they went and told the administration — we were pretty mad"*

C   Administration Constraints

… *"The same trainers weren't there every time"*

… *"I didn't like when different trainers were in and out — I like having the same for each session"*

… *"I didn't like that they couldn't stay longer"*

D   Teaching Skills

… *"Sometimes they rushed through things too quick"*

… *"They don't seem to know how to control noisy teenagers"*

... *"They sometimes lost control of the class"*

... *"They were very repetitive sometimes"*

... *"I got annoyed and bored with the repetition"*

... *"Sometimes they seemed to talk about outlandish resolutions that I didn't think would have very much effect or work in changing anything"*

E   Personalities

... *"Some of them were just boring"*

... *"Not all were good 'discussion starters' — you need to use a lot of personality to get people talking"*

... *"They were sort of uptight — sometimes too harsh"*

... *"They were rude"*

QUESTION 7:   T A B L E 12

During MVP sessions, did you like it better when you were in a large group with both boys and girls, or did you prefer to be separated into groups with just boys or just girls?

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS[10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE[11]
A Single	73 (30,43)	38.02
B Mixed	58 (35,23)	30.21
C No Preference	43 (27,16)	22.40
D I Don't Know	1 (0,1)	0.52

STUDENT QUOTES:

A   Single

... *"We could talk without offending the girls"*

... *"I liked being separated, because you can get more personal"*

... *"I liked being separate, because it gave us a chance to compare how we felt and talk more openly"*

... *"Separated, because the guys in our school are so immature that we couldn't have a serious discussion"*

... *"It was easier to talk in front of just girls"*

... *"Easier to speak up and contribute"*

B   Mixed

... *"I liked being together, because girls have talked these issues to death with one another it seems, and being in a large group gives a different perspective"*

... *"Large group because we heard both sides of the situation"*

... *"Together so that the conversations weren't one-sided"*

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

... *"I like being together, so we can change our opinions"*

... *"When we're together, I can see how the girls react to the question"*

C   No Preference

... *"Both are good"*

... *"I liked being separated for awhile, but I also wanted to know how the boys felt about these issues"*

... *"Both were just as educational"*

... *"They were equally important"*

... *"It didn't matter to me"*

QUESTION 8:

TABLE 13

To whom have you spoken about the MVP program?

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS[10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE[11]
A Friends	130 (71,59)	67.71
B Family	119 (64,55)	61.98
C Teachers	60 (33,27)	31.25
D Boyfriend	26 (26,0)	13.54
E Girlfriend	20 (0,20)	10.42
F No one	16 (7,9)	8.33
G Everyone	12 (5,7)	6.25
H Classmates/Teammates	10 (4,6)	5.21
I Misc.	8 (6,2)	4.17

QUESTION 9:

TABLE 14

If one or more of your friends had the opportunity to be in the MVP program, would you tell them to join, or would you tell them that MVP was a waste of time?

STUDENT ANSWER	# OF STUDENTS[10] (F, M)	PERCENTAGE[11]
A Yes (Join)	172 (90,82)	89.58
B It Depends	7 (6,1)	3.65
C No (A waste of time)	4 (2,2)	2.08

VII *DISCUSSION*

To review, the specific objectives of the Year 1 evaluation were:

1   To evaluate MVP Program outcomes (paying special attention to gender differences), including:

> a) Changes in levels of student knowledge and awareness

> b) Changes in student attitudes
>> • Attitudes regarding gender violence
>> • Attitudes regarding self-efficacy and prevention

> c) Changes in student behavior

2   To document and understand the experiences of students who are exposed to the MVP curriculum (paying special attention to gender differences), including:

> a) Students' every-day experiences with gender violence (documenting and contextualizing the need for the MVP Program)

> b) Students' reactions to the MVP sessions and curriculum (including change in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and behavior)

> c) Students' satisfaction with the MVP Program

These evaluation objectives were met, and the results are very encouraging both for the MVP Program and the schools that it serves. As detailed in the previous pages, there is a great need for gender violence prevention and education in today's high school setting. Student experience with gender violence and sexist behavior is commonplace. Survey data reveal that positive and significant changes in student knowledge and attitudes were recorded for students who underwent MVP Program training. As well, data from student self-reports and key informant interviews indicate that many students changed their behavior(s) in a positive way after participating in MVP. Finally, students reported being highly satisfied with the MVP Program.

Overall, the evaluation data speak to the excellent quality and important impact of the MVP Program. Still, some issues require further attention and exploration. As is true with most non-profit organizations, MVP is confined by limited funding, staff, and time. Moreover, MVP functions mostly within the high school setting and is thereby in competition with an assortment of other "enrichment programs" at each school and can be further constrained by the limited time allotted to them by school officials. This combination of factors means that decisions and trade-offs are made on a constant basis at MVP, not all of which are completely under the control of the MVP management and staff. Many of the issues facing the MVP Program will require partnership from schools in order to be adequately addressed.

The following pages include evaluator insights and analysis of the Year 1 MVP Program evaluation, as well as recommendations for next steps. Specifically, this section begins with small, administrative changes that MVP should consider, mainly to strengthen on-going evaluation activities. The focus then shifts to process-level issues and recommendations for change that should be explored for Program refinement. Finally, discussion of gender issues and the impact of MVP on female participants is presented.

Administrative Changes

Program Attendance and Tracking Drop-Outs

During the 1999-2000 academic year, MVP did not take attendance during their training sessions. The evaluation was hindered by an inability to track student absences as well as the Program drop-out rate. As a result, important information as to why students may have quit the Program is missing, and we are left without answers to the following questions:

* *Why were 40% of 9th graders who were pre-tested not present during post-testing?*

* *Why were there 25% fewer females at post-test than at pre-test?*

* *How come ethnic groups saw a decline from 33% to as much as 75% of students from pre- to post-test, while less than 11% of white students missed the post-test?*

It is possible that the students who were gone during post-testing were simply absent from school or unavailable (due to a test or other conflict) on the day of testing. It is also possible that they quit the MVP Program. Because attendance was not tracked, it was difficult to follow up with students who were not post-tested. We are left unsure of the impact that gender, grade, and ethnicity may have on drop-out when it comes to the MVP Program.

The opportunity to make improvements to MVP based on the type of information that attendance tracking and follow-up with drop-outs would afford is an important one. It is recommended that MVP track student attendance and drop-out in the coming years.

Process-Level Changes

MVP and the schools that recruit their services envision culture change around the acceptance of gender violence and sexist behavior as an ultimate end of MVP Program training. In fact, the MVP Program is based on a peer mentoring model, which assumes that those who receive first-hand training will use their knowledge and skills to help and to serve as role models for others in their peer groups and school setting. The increased use of mixed-gender leadership groups further demonstrates the goal of spreading the MVP message to a broader range of the student body.

Culture change is an appropriate and ambitious goal, and it is one that will take time to achieve. MVP Program policy stipulates that MVP can contract to service an individual school for a maximum of three years. Given this constraint, MVP should consider the most effective and efficient ways to realize culture change in the school setting. Student self-efficacy is an essential ingredient for this change to occur. Students who have been trained by MVP need to have confidence both that their efforts to combat gender violence are important and that they will work. Another essential ingredient is opportunity. MVP students should be provided with formal opportunities to teach others what they have learned in order to promote culture change.

Evaluation data suggest that there are at least three process-level changes that might increase student self-efficacy and opportunity and that may make culture change a more likely result of MVP's time and effort in high schools. These process-level changes are discussed in detail below.

Working with Students at Certain Grade Levels

According to the first year of survey data, MVP participants in grades 9 and 12 did not show significant levels of change or improvement in their attitudes toward gender violence. However, students in grade nine accounted for only eight percent of the sample. At the same time, roughly 60 percent of all seniors in the sample went to a school at which a supposed breach of student confidentiality led to student discontent with the Program and to what one MVP staff person called "difficulty in working with the group." These factors preclude us from using this sample to make definitive statements at this time about the effectiveness of working with students at these grade levels.

That said, however, there are arguments to be made for having MVP concentrate on working with students in grades 10 and 11, especially with the goal of culture change in mind. First, both of these groups showed significant positive change in attitude from pre- to post-test during the Year 1 evaluation period. Furthermore, students at these grade levels have both sufficient influence over their peers and adequate time remaining in the school setting to have an impact. For example, students in grade 11 have enough status and visibility to be recognized as leaders in the school environment. Likewise, students in 10th grade can be leaders among their own classmates and role models for those in lower grades as well. Moreover, students who are trained as sophomores and juniors are able to receive MVP training – and use it to help others – for multiple years within the same school setting. Seniors who are trained by MVP, regardless of whether or not they show improvement at post-test, leave the high school environment just months after MVP training ends. This leaves little time and opportunity for formal peer mentoring and decreases the likelihood that culture change will occur. It may well be the most effective and efficient use of resources for MVP to concentrate on the sophomore and junior grade levels.

Train-the-Trainer and Student Mentor Presentations: Increasing Self-efficacy and Promoting Culture Change

The train-the-trainer (TTT) portion of MVP was designed to allow students to disseminate the information and skills they acquired during their time in the Program. TTT is meant to reinforce, through practice, what MVP students have learned during basic awareness-raising training. Its proposed benefits are twofold: first, it can raise student self-efficacy; second, it provides opportunity to reach a greater number of students in one school setting than can be reached by MVP trainers alone.

Data reveal, however, that TTT and student mentor presentations do not always come to fruition at the high schools served by MVP during the first year of Program training.[12] In five out of the ten sites included in the Year 1 evaluation, student groups either did not receive or did not complete the TTT portion of the Program. In only three out of the ten sites did MVP participants give mentor presentations to students at their schools (**see Table 2**). If trained student leaders are not given the opportunity to conduct mentor presentations in front of their peers, there may be serious implications as far as Program impact is concerned. First, in terms of culture change, fewer students in the high schools receive the MVP message when mentor presentations are not given. Second, student self-efficacy regarding their ability to interrupt and confront sexism and violence is less likely to be enhanced when there are no formal opportunities to talk about the issue or to practice the skills they learned in MVP.

Survey results suggest that although students' confidence in their ability to interrupt and confront gender violence and sexism grew after MVP Program training, there remains room for improvement in this area. One possible way to help solidify, if not cement, this confidence is to make sure that TTT and student mentor presentations happen at every site, every year. Self-confidence and efficacy are bolstered by successful experiences performing tasks and meeting challenges. Certainly students may realize increased benefits from MVP training if they are provided a formal outlet for mentoring and educating their peers. It is reasonable to believe that the MVP Program goals are more likely to be met when students are given an opportunity to use what they have learned and to feel ownership or personal investment in a cause. It appears as if MVP could take greater advantage of the potential of its own program model, which revolves around peer mentoring.

The Importance of School Involvement and Commitment

If student enthusiasm and desire to participate are not hindering the go-ahead for TTT and mentor presentations, what are the obstacles? Many come from the inability or unwillingness of schools to commit the necessary time and effort that MVP needs. When working in the school setting today, enrichment programs (such as MVP) compete for student time not only with required academic courses and official school extracurricular activities, but also with multiple other enrichment programs. Throughout the course of the year, MVP encountered many roadblocks to successful Program implementation due to coordination difficulties and lack of time on the part of schools. MVP staff reported that this is the norm. Key informants at the case study sites concurred that lack of time and competing programs render coordination difficult. Furthermore, teachers do not like pulling kids out of their classrooms; yet conflicts with after-school activities (drama, athletics, etc.) make it necessary to conduct MVP sessions during school time. At many school sites, it appears as if the contact person or liaison for MVP is given coordination duties without really having the authority, resources, or commitment to make scheduling happen. Each of these factors certainly came into play at the two case study sites during the 1999-2000 academic year.

How can MVP overcome such obstacles? While it is unlikely that they will disappear completely, there are a couple things the MVP could try (or continue to try) in order to strengthen the implementation and effectiveness of their program in the high school setting and to promote student confidence, as well as culture change.

First, the MVP Program staff know how important it is for schools to make a full and formal commitment to the MVP Program in order for it to work most effectively at promoting culture change. The need is for school administrators to see the importance as well. Because of the obstacles mentioned above, MVP has experienced the phenomenon of schools not honoring their promises of making students fully available to MVP. While MVP requires schools to make commitments to sufficient training time and mentor presentations before agreeing to work there, some schools cannot or do not come through. At that point, MVP is forced to make independent decisions about whether or not to continue working with a particular school. The prevailing philosophy is that if some students get some exposure to MVP,

it is better than nothing. It may be better, but MVP and school administrators must know that ultimately this may be an inefficient strategy. In the long term, it is likely to be ineffective in promoting culture change.

MVP may be able to use the positive Year 1 evaluation results to persuade schools to give them more time and a greater level of commitment. Positive changes in student knowledge, attitude, self-efficacy, and behavior should encourage school officials to embrace the potential of MVP. Once MVP is in the door, they should continue to push for the three-year commitment and negotiate time for TTT and student mentor presentations at the outset. MVP should continue to emphasize the importance of this component of the Program, both to enhance student self-efficacy and to promote culture change within the school environment. Next, schools should understand the importance of providing MVP with a liaison who is committed to the program and has some authority to get things done (i.e., deal with scheduling conflicts, make sure students are informed of schedule changes, make sure there is an adequate room or space for MVP to hold sessions). Finally, MVP should continue to try to get teachers on board by giving a presentation or training for school faculty and staff.

Schools need to think seriously about how to institutionalize the MVP Program into their school setting. Despite the obstacles and difficulties that will inevitably arise, schools that are truly interested in seeing culture change around sexism and gender violence would do well to make MVP a priority at their school. Year 1 evaluation results show that the Program has great potential. Institutionalization of the Program may be tantamount to culture change, while three years of training by MVP staff might only ensure that 50 (or so) students are effectively reached. With TTT and student mentor presentations, hundreds of students' lives might be touched.

MVP and Female Participants

As mentioned, the MVP Program was initially designed for males, by males and was intended to inspire male leadership on the issue of men's violence against women. The Program's target population gradually shifted to include female participants. Since that time, Program staff, materials, exercises, and information have been added in a manner reflective of that female presence. However, MVP's core approach to gender violence prevention and education

– that which focuses on the responsibility of the bystander – has remained the same. Further, MVP has not formally investigated whether any changes might be necessary for, or beneficial to, female participants. This initial year of evaluation activity at MVP was meant, in part, to explore females' reaction to the Program.

Several interesting findings about female participants emerged from the evaluation data, and the following paragraphs include discussion of these findings and what they might mean for the MVP Program and its female students.

Summary and Review of Findings for Female Participants

Following is a list of the main findings pertaining to female participants of MVP:

- In the knowledge section of the survey, females showed significant gains in three out of the five questions presented. They did not show significant gains for the remaining two questions, apparently because their knowledge level was already very high at pre-test. Females scored higher than males on four out of the five questions presented in the knowledge section.

- Females began and ended the MVP Program with more desirable attitudes about gender violence than males

- Females exhibited only a marginal change in attitude toward gender violence – the change on the AV Scale for girls was just on the border of statistical significance

- Females' self-efficacy improved after Program training

- Females reported being highly satisfied with the MVP Program

- The number of females who identified as survivors increased by almost 15% from pre-test to post-test. Almost 54% of female MVP participants identified as survivors at the end of their training

- 25% of female participants were not present at post-test

DISCUSSION

Is the "Level" of MVP Training as Appropriate for Young Women as It Could Be?

According to evaluation data, females began and ended the MVP Program with higher levels of understanding and awareness – and more desirable attitudes about – gender violence in our society. Here we see our first clues that the MVP message may speak differently to adolescent males and females who are likely to be at different understanding and empathy levels regarding these issues. Girls may be on a higher level than boys when it comes to understanding gender violence for a couple different reasons: First, girls are much more likely to experience different forms of gender violence or sexist behavior than their male counterparts; second, given their experience with the topic, girls might be more likely to discuss gender violence with friends or to seek out more information about it on their own; finally, girls might pay more attention to discussions about gender violence (either within or out of the school setting), because it is traditionally thought of as a "women's issue."

Because we know the MVP Program was originally tailored to the male athlete, it makes sense that female participants might require a more sophisticated approach to the topic in order for any true change in their levels of knowledge and awareness to occur. Females may find the basic level of MVP materials repetitive, or they may not be allowed to delve deeply enough into the issues during training sessions to change their attitudes significantly. It is possible that the level of instruction is partly responsible for a higher drop-out rate among female participants, but more research is necessary to fully understand females' reaction to MVP.

In the future, MVP could spend some time talking with female students about this issue. From what we know from this year's "page 6" data, female participants indicated that there was a feeling of running out of time during sessions and not having adequate opportunity to discuss issues in depth. However, these same data also revealed a high level of overall satisfaction with the program among female students. Again, MVP should go directly to the source for information about the appropriate level of instruction in an effort to understand if improvements in this area are warranted.

Does MVP Training Empower or Overwhelm Its Female Participants?

What is the impact, on girls, of gaining knowledge about the prevalence of gender violence and their own risk of becoming victims of it? Is knowledge power? Or is it just really scary? These are important things to consider when delivering gender violence education to females. Of course, it is not an option to not educate females on this topic; but there may be more and less effective ways to do it.

According the SEV Scale, self-efficacy increased among females after Program training. Girls were more confident in their ability to confront sexist behavior and interrupt violence once they had completed MVP. As stated, more could be done by MVP to increase self-efficacy among students. Still, survey data do not suggest that female students were overwhelmed by the information they learned through MVP. In fact, many females suggested that certain knowledge (such as facts about the rape law) actually helped them and their friends to be more safe, and a majority of survey respondents stated that they were always comfortable during MVP sessions. In interviews, female participants did not indicate any feelings of being overwhelmed or frightened, even though a few said that the topic was "depressing."

Although data suggest that feelings of empowerment or self-efficacy are not as high as they could be, the idea of overwhelming females with the MVP message and training does not appear to be a matter for much concern based on Year 1 data. Still, it may be a worthy idea to talk more directly with females about this issue. We must remember that not every voice was heard or represented in the evaluation data. Again, 25 percent of female participants who were pre-tested were not accounted for at post-test. Was there something different about the females who dropped out of the program? Did they find the MVP message difficult to cope with? Once more, it is necessary for MVP to track attendance and drop-out in order to more fully understand the impact of their Program.

Is MVP's "Bystander Approach" to Gender Violence Prevention and Education Appropriate for Females?

The MVP Program endeavors to educate young men and women to be active bystanders, to take responsibility for intervening in situations involving male violence against women. Of course, this is an appropriate philosophy for training the males for which the Program was designed. It effectively minimizes the defensiveness of males who are not targeted as actual or potential perpetrators but as strong, influential males who can take the leadership role in eradicating a societal ill. It is also positive in that it does not treat women as potential victims, but rather as strong, influential women who can also make a difference. But, given what is known about the prevalence of gender violence and a woman's statistical chance of being a victim of male violence at some point during her lifetime, are females ever really "bystanders" the way that males can be?

Despite knowledge that many of the females present in MVP sessions will have experienced male violence, the MVP Program leaves little room for addressing the issues of the survivor in its midst. There is minimal time during Program sessions to discuss personal issues or disclosures. Moreover, Program staff members are not trained to provide counseling to students. They do hand out resource sheets with local numbers of shelters, rape crisis centers and the like at the beginning of Program training.

Secondary trauma can occur when a survivor is placed in a situation where they are reminded of their own past victimization or where they may feel re-victimized by that situation. During MVP training, the potential for secondary trauma is present. For example, student discussions about date rape and physical abuse often take place during sessions. Certain teaching materials use by MVP, such as movie clips and visualization exercises, also have the potential to induce secondary trauma. I witnessed three young women leave Program sessions in tears, and at other times, females who chose to stay in sessions looked visibly upset. To be sure, an MVP trainer would follow up with the students who left and would report to teachers or administrators as needed. But is that enough? What about the students who are better at hiding their upset and emotion, or who are too embarrassed to walk out of a session? The lack of time, space, and ability to address flashbacks or strong emotions in the context of the regular MVP sessions may have serious repercussions for survivors, most of whom are female.

DISCUSSION

As it takes care to look at female participants and their well-being, a concern of the MVP Program should be the implications of bypassing meaningful discussions with girls about their experiences and feelings as survivors in favor of teaching them how to be proactive bystanders. Obviously, Year 1 evaluation activities were not geared specifically toward understanding secondary trauma in the MVP setting, and no conclusions can be drawn about its presence or absence. In the future, MVP may wish to explore the issue by going directly to female participants to learn more about the possible effects of secondary trauma during MVP sessions. It would be especially helpful to speak to those females who identified as survivors, but there are at least two problems associated with that. First, abuse is a sensitive issue, and it may be difficult to negotiate access to survivors. Second, if access is granted, the research itself (e.g., interviews, focus groups) could cause secondary trauma if not handled carefully and correctly. Still, tracking student attendance and drop out once again should be useful in finding out more about the presence or absence of secondary trauma in the MVP setting. Finally, the ability to match individuals' pre- and post-test surveys will allow us more insight into the behavior of survivors.

The MVP Program appears to have a positive effect on its female participants that should not be overshadowed by the critical eye that this evaluation placed on gender differences. Many questions about MVP's impact on females remain after the first year of evaluation activities at MVP, and new questions have emerged. The main question seems to be, "How can MVP be even more effective for girls?" MVP's interest in ensuring the highest quality of programming for females is important and should be commended. In light of the findings from the first year of evaluation activities, MVP should maintain its commitment to studying gender differences and female reaction to the Program. Future research could include in-depth interviews and/or focus groups with females about many of the questions raised above, including the appropriate "level" of training, reasons for program drop-out, and the potential of secondary trauma in the MVP setting. At this point, recommendations for change include providing some advanced training for females during the all-female portion of MVP's regular sessions and providing supplemental time for a support group for females to discuss issues surrounding their survivor status. Perhaps school or community counselors could be involved in these extra support group sessions.

VIII *CONCLUSION*

We live in a society where objectification of and violence against women are frequently ignored or tacitly condoned, often because they are seen as normal or natural. Gender violence prevention and education programs are necessary in order to deconstruct the learned behavior that says men are allowed to disrespect and violate women.

MVP was designed to meet a need for gender violence prevention and education. The first year of evaluation activities at MVP demonstrated both that the need for such programming clearly exists and that MVP was successful in beginning to meet that need. Case study data from two disparate sites illuminated the common and pervasive problem of gender violence and sexist behavior among high school students. Survey data suggested that the MVP Program influenced a positive change in student participants in terms of their level of knowledge and awareness about gender violence, their attitudes toward gender violence, and their confidence to confront male violence against women in our society. Further, the evaluation data revealed that students who underwent MVP training were extremely satisfied with their experience in the Program and that many changed their behaviors because of it.

The MVP Program brings something to the lives of high school students that they desperately need and desire – the facts about gender violence, the opportunity to discuss gender violence issues with peers and adults, and the leadership skills necessary to make a difference both in their own lives and the lives of their peers.   As the students who participated in this first year of evaluation activities would attest, it is difficult to overstate the importance of MVP's service to students and their schools.

ENDNOTES

1   The MVP Program administration and staff are committed to a multi-year evaluation strategy. A second year of evaluation activities is currently underway at MVP, and plans are being made for Year 3 of the MVP evaluation.

2   On the survey, the term "survivor" was defined as "a male or female who has been victimized through an experience with sexual assault, battering, rape, and/or sexual harassment."

3   Names of the high schools have been changed.

4   Student demographic data received from City High School was from 1998.

5   Names have been changed.

6   Student demographic data received from Suburban High School was from 1999.

7   In the MVP Program, students are taught that, according to Massachusetts law, it may be considered rape if a man has sex with a woman who is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

8   Key informants were adult teachers or administrators at the two case study sites, as well as one veteran student of the MVP Program.

9   As a result of the light shed upon the SEV survey scale by qualitative interview data, it has been revised for Year 2 evaluation activities.

10   Out of the 209 students who filled out post-test surveys, 192 completed the "page 6" questions. The numbers given are out of 192 total.

11   Percentages will not total 100, because students were allowed to respond with more than one answer.

12   In most instances, when TTT is not completed during the first year that MVP is at a school, training is resumed in the second year, and students then give mentor presentations in front of their peers.

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APPENDIX A