

**L**ove Shouldn't Hurt is a youth-led Jewish dating violence prevention program. One in four Jewish women will be emotionally, sexually or physically abused in a relationship during her lifetime. Young women in dating relationships are not immune—yet young people are often not given the tools to recognize abusive behavior, nor the skills or self-esteem for building loving, respectful relationships. That's why in 2002 Shalom Bayit created *Love Shouldn't Hurt*. Our goals are to increase awareness in the Jewish community about teen dating violence; help young people recognize abusive behavior; teach middle school through young adult Jews the skills to build loving, respectful relationships; give girls and women the knowledge and tools they need to make healthy relationship choices; teach boys and young men to become allies in healthy relationships; and educate parents and teachers to successfully offer assistance with the difficult relationship issues facing teens today.

Run by and for youth, *Love Shouldn't Hurt's* main program consists of healthy relationships workshops in synagogues, religious schools, Jewish day schools and summer camps, providing information about relationship abuse and tools to promote healthy relationships from a Jewish perspective. Since 2002 over 2,600 young people have participated in these peer-led, interactive, educational workshops for adolescent, teen, and young adult Jews (ages 11-21). Topics include building blocks of healthy relationships, safety planning, communication skills, self esteem, setting boundaries, identifying warning signs, recognizing abusive/controlling behaviors, power and control issues, and forms of abuse—from verbal abuse to sexual harassment. All are framed within Jewish values. Our workshops build girls' resiliency by promoting internal protective factors, such as girls' ability to make sound decisions, take responsibility, set limits, and know when and how to reach out for help. Our workshops also give boys and young men critical opportunities to become positive role models and respectful relationship partners. We reach those at risk and those who have been victimized, opening dialogue for teens to talk about their relationships and learn how to help themselves or a friend.

We also have companion workshops for parents and educators (teachers, camp counselors, youth leaders) to learn strategies for abuse prevention, successful identification and intervention, and role modeling/teaching building blocks to help young people develop healthy relationships. We have reached over 500 parents and youth leaders. Other programs include our website [www.love-shouldnt-hurt.org](http://www.love-shouldnt-hurt.org) providing educational information about Jewish teen dating violence, "Blue Card Questions" where teens can ask anonymous questions and get a written response sent via their teacher and/or our website, peer counseling for teens and parents of teens, and consultations to teachers/rabbis/educators handling situations of abuse.

The *Love Shouldn't Hurt* curriculum is now available for purchase. The published version includes a facilitators' guide, four core workshop units (middle school, high school, college, and parents), options for "stage II" follow up workshops/activities, Jewish teachings on relationships, bibliography, resources, and reproducible handouts and evaluations. To order *Love Shouldn't Hurt*, call (510) 451-8874 or email [Teen@shalom-bayit.org](mailto:Teen@shalom-bayit.org)

At the heart of *Love Shouldn't Hurt* is our youth leadership development component, building a new generation of young people with a deep commitment to ending abuse. The internship program mentors and trains young women to become dating violence peer educators. Interns receive 40 hours of intensive domestic violence training and "on-the-job" mentoring; conduct outreach to synagogues and day schools; and facilitate healthy relationships workshops. In addition, they gain skills in program development as well as a sense of empowerment and meaningful work experience in the Jewish community. As testimony to the success of the internship program, many former interns have remained committed to the issue of violence prevention long after their internship ended, and several have gone on to choose related careers in the field of domestic violence. The experience they received here becomes a force for social change.

Together, the components of *Love Shouldn't Hurt* place abuse prevention squarely at the center of Jewish youth programming, strengthening our community by teaching youth, adults, and community leaders to prevent abuse before it starts.