

Healthy Futures Peer Education Program

The *Code A* peer education program mobilizes and equips youth to provide relationship education to other youth. In addition to helping other teens, peer educators gain a thorough understanding of sexual health issues, confidence to stand up for their choice to be abstinent among their peers, and skills that help them to sustain this choice through their daily decisions.

Involvement with *Code A* begins with a summer training program based on content from the Healthy Futures classroom program, as well as the basics of improvisational theater and performance preparation. From that foundation program participants create a dramatic presentation that they perform in a professional theater space at the end of the summer for other teens and members of the community. After performances, the actors hold informal question and answer sessions with the audience, during which they share about their experience and motivation for participating in this program.

After the summer program, selected participants join the *Code A* team as peer educators who present to teens through community youth programs during the academic year. These peer educators combine short dramatic sketches about important sexual health and relationship issues with direct education to encourage other teens to make healthy relationship choices.

In addition, peer educators team-teach a 10-week middle school abstinence program in partnership with Citizen Schools. Peer educators teach students about poetry in conjunction with lessons about puberty, decision making, and how to assertively respond to peer pressure, all focused around the choice to be abstinent. The lessons teach the participants to use poetry to communicate their thoughts and feelings about what they are learning and the issues they are facing as middle school students. At the end of the program, the students present their original poems at “poetry slam” events before their friends, families, and the larger community.

If you are interested in scheduling *Code A* to present at your school, community event, or place of worship, or if you know of a teen who would be interested in applying to become a peer educator, please call Healthy Futures at 617-929-1037 or email contact@healthy-futures.org.