

Dare2Care Evaluation Report

Prepared by Carmined Stewart, PhD – Aspire Consulting

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Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation report is to describe the extent to which the Dare2Care Cleveland Youth Leadership Initiative Pilot Program was able to produce transformative youth leaders who are progressive change agents. The custom-Adesigned youth leadership initiative provided four students and two teacher leaders with an opportunity to participate in leadership training to develop collaborative leadership skills and increase their knowledge about multicultural identities. The students were then expected to apply the knowledge and skills they gained from the training.

This evaluation report examines the initiative on two levels. First, the report details Dare2Care's ability to recruit from the target population, retain participants throughout the initiative, and provide participants with a positive experience. Second, the report will describe the extent to which Dare2Care was able to develop the youth leaders' capacity to provide leadership in decreasing discrimination due to identity difference within Lakewood High School and in the community at large. The barometer for success of the latter was the students' ability to disseminate knowledge that 1) promotes acceptance of difference, 2) leads change in diverse identity related conversations, and 3) establishes and sustains a prevention-based model to address lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) targeted bullying issues.

The evaluation follows three years of implementation of the Dare2Care initiative with the first cohort of four students and two teachers at Lakewood High School in Lakewood, Ohio. Findings will be used to improve the implementation of the Dare2Care initiative, to gain financial support for the initiative's continuance, and to inform the expansion of the Dare2Care initiative at other schools both locally and nationally.

Evaluation Questions

Prior to the start of the Dare2Care initiative, the project leaders engaged an evaluation consultant to design a logic model that would guide the work and the evaluation. The evaluator designed the following questions:

1. Did we reach our target population?
2. Were participants satisfied with the initiative?
3. Did the initiative meet its intended objectives?
4. Is the initiative worth the cost?
5. Were there any unintended outcomes of the initiative?
6. What would we do the next time to improve the initiative?

Project Background

Navigating the teenage years can be difficult. Teens experience psychological, physical, social, and emotional changes. In addition to increasing academic demands, they face more difficult developmental decisions as they transition to becoming independent. While these years can be complicated for all teens, LGBTQ youth are at greater risk for experiencing challenges in their personal and academic lives during the middle and high school years (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009).

One reason for this increased risk is due to the various forms of discrimination to which this particular group of youth are susceptible. Victimization of LGBTQ youth can range from the use of homophobic communication to physical violence, and this victimization can have a negative effect on students' mental health (Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, and Sanchez, 2011). The rates of bullying, teasing, harassment, and violence towards, and even suicidal thoughts and behaviors of LGBTQ youth are double that of non-LGBTQ youth (Button, O'Connell, & Gealt, 2012). Button et al. (2012) researched victimization among sexual minority youth (non-heterosexual youth) in Delaware. Their survey of 6,636 youth (of which 353 identified as LGBTQ) found that sexual minority youth are four times more likely to consider and plan suicide, four times more likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe, and three times more likely to be threatened with a weapon than their heterosexual peers. They also found that sexual minority youth are twice as likely to be in a physical fight that results in the need for medical attention.

Further, these students are more likely to experience victimization, and are twice as likely to experience social isolation from having less support from parents and peers. Sexual minority youth face institutional discrimination, struggle with personal acceptance, and struggle for acceptance within their families and communities. Duncan and Hatzenbuehler (2014) found that youth who reported suicidal ideation and suicide attempts were more likely to be from neighborhoods with higher LGBTQ assault rates. This is particularly important given that Button et al. found that social supports may

buffer LGBTQ students from victimization and the effects of such, as well as reduce negative outcomes like substance abuse and suicidal thoughts and behavior (2012).

In addition, Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez (2011) studied LGBTQ victimization occurring in middle and high school and its influence on the social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment and health of the youth in early adulthood. They found that young adults who identified as LGBTQ who were victimized as middle and high school students were more than twice as likely to report depression and over five times more likely to report having attempted suicide at least once, as well as having a suicide attempt that required medical attention. Compared with LGBTQ students who reported low levels of school victimization, respondents with high levels were more than twice as likely to report having had an STD diagnosis and to have been at risk for HIV infection. These findings demonstrate that the effects of victimization in high school and middle school can have consequences that extend well into the future. LGBTQ victimization is a real public health concern.

Dare2Care Cleveland recognizes that these are not LGBTQ issues, but human issues, and that all humans have a role in making schools safe spaces for all students. Through its Cleveland Youth Leadership Initiative (CYLI) Pilot Program Dare2Care endeavored to develop four high school youth (and two adult teacher leaders) who could create transformative change in their schools and communities through education and awareness activities. The group of students and teachers committed to engage in leadership development trips facilitated annually by the Global Youth Leadership Institute (GYLI) over a period of three years. The youth and adult participants learned about leadership development and identity development across a broad range of diversity parameters including race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation.

The GYLI experiences were designed to facilitate the participants' personal change as a means to prepare them for changing their communities. Participants engaged in activities to help them discover their leadership styles. Students worked to develop their leadership abilities, and teachers worked to learn how to work alongside, and learn from, their students. Teachers also received guidance on creating equitable power within the learning environment, allowing student leaders to develop, and supporting the students in their leadership.

Participants also engaged in small-group activities designed to help them focus on their own identities and to discuss a broad range of diversity topics.

In year 1 (2012) the GYLI leadership experience was a five-day trip to Connecticut.

The focus of the GYLI experience in year 1 was “exploration of the self in the context of community.” The participants attended workshops on global faith traditions, and multicultural identity. Through this experience they were able to examine their own identity in relation to others. As well, the participants were introduced to the idea of collaborative leadership, and had the opportunity to apply the concept of collaborative leadership as they worked in small groups to sail a historic schooner. For each GYLI experience participants were asked to consider two essential questions. The focus questions for year one were:

1. Who am I in a multicultural context?
2. What is my relationship to others?

In year two (2013) the GYLI leadership experience was in New Mexico. The students and teachers were in New Mexico for 7 days. The focus of the GYLI experience in year 2 was “personal geography” of leadership. Participants were challenged to discover their individual vision and unique direction as they explored multiple religious traditions within the context of the Native American worldview. The essential questions for year two were:

1. What internal visions guide my emerging purpose and my leadership?
2. What is my relationship to my self?

For the year three GYLI leadership experience (2014) the students and teachers traveled to Costa Rica for eleven days. While the year one experience focused on the participants’ identities in relation to the community, and year two focused on the participants’ identities in relation to self, year three focused on the participants’ identities in relation to the earth. The participants learned about sustainable development at United World College in Costa Rica. Participants worked with local farming families as they learned about economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The essential questions for year three were:

1. “What is my role as a leader in creating sustainable world systems?”
2. “What is my relationship to the Earth?”

Students were charged with taking the lessons they learned from the GYLI, and formulating a plan for disseminating knowledge that 1) promotes acceptance of difference, 2) leads to change in diverse identity related conversations, and 3) establishes and sustains a prevention-based model to address LGBTQ bullying issues, both actual and perceived. Teacher leaders served as advisors to the student leaders.

The students' response to the challenge was to create a school club, Club Identity, with the hope of engaging their peers in conversations that promote the acceptance of diversity in general, and reduce bullying for LGBTQ peers in particular. The mission of Club Identity as described by the student participants is "to create a warm, welcoming, and celebratory environment where everyone of varying identities is welcomed to come in." The students facilitated club meetings that focused on different aspects of diversity. The students planned awareness activities within the school and also facilitated activities using the GYLI curriculum at a local leadership conference with students from 10 public, private, and parochial schools from the Cleveland area.

Evaluation Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this initiative. Qualitative data were collected from the 4 CYLI student leaders, their parents, the two teacher leaders, and the two project leaders via interviews and focus groups throughout the three years of the initiative. The qualitative data provide rich descriptions of the ways in which participants experienced the GYLI institutes, the Dare2Care initiative, the work of creating and facilitating Club Identity. The data also document the participants' perceptions of 1) how they changed as a result of their participation, how they changed as leaders, and perceived positive impacts within the school and the community at large. Quantitative data was collected to provide demographic descriptions of the participants, and to gain a sense of their motivation to lead and their leadership styles. Students completed a leadership survey, a motivation survey, and a GYLI survey prior to their first GYLI Leadership trip.

Qualitative Data

The first focus group with the student leaders took place prior to their first GYLI leadership trip. Students were asked about what qualities they thought a person needed to have to be an effective participant in the Dare2Care experience. Students were asked a series of questions about their perceptions and understandings of D2C, leadership, and courage, including anticipated challenges that might arise as a result of their D2C participation. They were also asked to discuss their interest in the initiative, what they hoped to gain from participation, and why they are ideal to carry out the work. Soon after the first focus group, students left for the 2012 GYLI trip.

Following the 2012 leadership trip students were engaged in a post-trip focus group. Students were asked to share their experiences from the institute. They were also asked to describe the various activities they participated in during the institute and how the activities were connected. The students were asked to reflect on any changes in

their perspectives about leadership, courage, their own education, and their ability to educate that had occurred as a result of the experience. In addition, each student was asked to share the most profound experience from the institute.

The data collection followed this same pattern in 2013 and 2014, with pre-trip focus groups, participation in the annual GYLI institute, and post-trip focus groups. In July of 2013 students and parents participated in a focus group prior to the second trip. Students were asked why they pursued the opportunity to participate with Dare2Care. They were asked to describe themselves as leaders, to reflect on how their participation in previous GYLI activities and curriculum supported their development as leaders, and to share how they have used these skills beyond the scope of Club Identity. Students were also asked to share their expectations of and personal goals for the second leadership institute.

During the focus group, parents were asked to describe their children as leaders. They were also asked to describe any changes or development they'd witnessed in their children as a result of the previous GYLI institutes. Parents were asked about their satisfaction with their children's leadership development and were asked to discuss any perceived benefits or drawbacks of their children's participation. Finally, the parents were asked how they might have changed personally as a result of their involvement with Dare2Care.

The same questions from the pre-trip focus group were asked in the post-trip focus group, with two exceptions. First, prior to the trip students shared their expectations for the trip, and after they returned, they shared whether or not the experience met their expectations. Second, instead of reflecting on their personal goals as in the pre-trip focus group, in the post-trip focus group students were asked to speak about what they hoped to achieve in the upcoming year as a result of their experience at the institute. The parents were asked the same questions in the pre and post-trip focus groups.

Students and parents also participated in focus groups in 2014. In the pre-trip focus group the students and parents were asked the same questions as those asked before the 2013 trip. In the post-trip focus group, students were asked to describe the trip and share what was transformative about it. They were asked to share something they had learned about themselves, including their leadership styles, and something they learned about others. Students were asked what they thought they might do differently as a result of the leadership experience. Finally students were asked to share how their understanding of the word "identity" had evolved as a result of participating in the leadership institute.

In the 2014 post-trip focus group the teachers were asked to describe their personal leadership evolution since they became involved with Dare2Care. Teachers were asked how they had changed, with particular focus on any changes in their levels of passion for or commitment to the initiative. They were also asked to describe the evolution of their own identities and understanding of identity since their involvement with the initiative. Lastly, they were asked to share perceptions of the students' leadership development.

The last round of qualitative data for this cohort was collected in May of 2015, the spring following the 2014 trip. Teachers, parents, students, and project leaders completed exit interviews. The exit interview questions were:

1. What was the most beneficial part of your growth experience?
2. If there was something you could change to improve your experience, what would it be?
3. How has the mission of Dare2Care influenced relationship, first with yourself, and then with others?
4. Please describe yourself as a leader (or as a teacher/mentor).
5. How do you plan to take the work that you have begun with Dare2Care forward in your life?
6. Is there anything specifically that you would like to share that you have not been asked?

Qualitative data were reviewed once to gain a complete picture of the initiative from the -viewpoint of the six participants and the two project leaders. The data were reviewed a second time for content analysis, to identify key words and phrases. The keywords and phrases were analyzed to identify themes present in the data. Reoccurring themes were then examined in light of the evaluation questions. Direct quotes from the data were used to support the identified themes.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected to provide demographic descriptions of the students and to gain a sense of their motivation to lead in addition to their leadership styles. All four of the students were recruited as high school freshmen, and all four students identified themselves as Christian. Three of the four students are Caucasian, and one of the students is Asian. Three of the students are female. Three of the students identified as heterosexual, and one student indicated that she was unsure of her sexual orientation

Students completed a Leadership Potential Inventory (Appendix A), a Leadership Motivation Survey (Appendix B), and a CYLI Assessment (Appendix C) prior to their first

GYLI Leadership trip. The Leadership Potential Inventory was used to help students gain an initial understanding of their strengths in different areas of leadership. The inventory listed leadership behaviors and characteristics. Students were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed each statement applied to them using a five-point Likert scale with 1 representing that the students strongly disagreed with the statement, and 5 representing that the student strongly agreed with the statement. The questions were each related to one of 19 constructs such as taking risks, making decisions, and planning and prioritizing. The students' total scores reflected their areas of greatest strength.

The Leadership Motivation Survey was used to help students determine if they had a high or low motivation to lead. The inventory listed motivational behaviors and characteristics. Students were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed each statement applied to them using a five-point Likert scale with 1 representing that the students strongly disagreed with the statement, and 5 representing that the student strongly agreed with the statement. Students totaled their scores to determine if they have a low motivation to lead (14–27 points), are uncertain about their motivation to lead (28-55 points), or have a high motivation to lead (56 to 70 points).

The CYLI Assessment provided a baseline measure of 5 leadership behavior categories: supports others, self-management, awareness, excellence, and motivates others. Students rated themselves on seven statements for each category using a ten-point Likert scale. The lower the score, the less the student agreed that the statement represented himself or herself as a leader. Students totaled the scores, divided the scores by seven, and charted their mean scores on the Assessment results page.

Limitations and Delimitations

A limitation of the evaluation is the inconsistency between the evaluation and focus group/interview questions to the overall purpose of the initiative. This was largely due to an abrupt change to evaluation personnel during early implementation of the pilot program, and partially to the initial evaluation design. The evaluation questions spoke more to Dare2Care's ability to recruit and retain students from the target population, provide them with a positive experience, determine if the initiative met its objectives, and identify unintended outcomes and recommendations for improvement. The goal of the initiative, as indicated in the logic model, was to produce transformative youth leaders who are progressive change agents as evidenced by their ability to disseminate knowledge that: (1) promotes acceptance of difference; (2) leads change in diverse

identity related conversations; and (3) establishes and sustains a prevention based model to address LGBTQ issues.

The original evaluation plan focused more on recruitment, retention, and evaluation metrics. Once project implementation began, however, the evaluation focused on the key concerns of the project leaders and investors; how did this investment change the participants, school, and community? The focus group and exit interview questions focused more on the students', teachers', and parents' experiences, and how those experiences changed their views and understandings of leadership and multicultural identities. The focus group and exit interview questions also focused on how participants themselves were changed as a result of the experience.

A second limitation of the evaluation was a lack of metrics for the overall project goals. While the evaluation questions certainly sought to provide valuable information about the initiative as a whole, and the focus group and interview questions were designed to elicit the impact of the initiative on the participants, the school, and the community, neither the evaluation questions nor the focus group questions directly addresses the *extent to which* the initiative produced transformative youth leaders who are progressive change agents. In other words, the evaluation methodology did not include a way to measure how transformative the youth leaders were, or the size of their impact on the school and community.

The focus group and interview questions do not elicit information about *how well* the youth leaders were able to disseminate knowledge that 1) promoted acceptance of difference, 2) lead change in diverse identity related conversations, and 3) established and sustained a prevention-based model to address LGBTQ issues.

Ongoing analysis of the data throughout the initiative, rather than at the end of the project, would have allowed for the research team and project leaders to identify emergent themes and review those themes in light of the overarching goal. This would have allowed for the revision of evaluation, focus group, and interview questions, or the inclusion of methods to measure the extent of the impact of participating on the youth and teacher leaders, and the impact of their work on the school and community.

While there are two limitations to how the project was evaluated, these limitations become recommendations for evaluating the project as it continues, and as it goes to scale. Even with limitations, findings revealed relevant information about the participants involved with the initiative, providing rich, reflective iterations of their experiences.

Findings

While project data cannot describe the extent to which the initiative produced transformative youth leaders who are progressive change agents, the data provides evidence that the project did develop youth leaders who were better positioned to impact the school climate by acting as straight allies within the high school. In his research on identifying the factors that predict heterosexuals' alliance with the LGBTQ community, Fingerhut (2011) defines straight allies as follows: "Straight allies range from those who challenge assumptions and jokes about gay people to those who volunteer time and money to organizations that advocate on behalf of LGBTQ issues...Additionally, these allies have worked to change one mind at a time, often voicing their opinions despite potential stigmatization" (p.2231).

The students' experiences certainly demonstrate how they filled such a role, advocating on behalf of LGBTQ students and students of other identity groups, promoting awareness and acceptance of diversity, challenging their peers' use of homophobic language, and risking their own stigmatization in the process. As well, through the creation of the Club Identity, the youth participants recruited other students in the school to be allies alongside them, and planned and facilitated conferences that provided educational experiences to students from other high schools in the area. Additional findings, organized by research question, follow below.

Evaluation Question 1: Did we reach our target population?

With regard to the first evaluation question, which examined Dare2Care's ability to reach the target population of high school students, findings are that Dare2Care did successfully recruit rising sophomores for the project. Dare2Care retained four students from the target population in the initiative through their respective graduations. This included recruiting and retaining four high school students from Lakewood High School, a school where bullying was a recognized problem among the students, staff, and administration. Three of the four students completed all three years of the initiative, and one student completed two years, leaving the initiative after graduating from high school a year early.

Evaluation Question 2: Were participants satisfied with the initiative?

The second evaluation question examined the extent to which participants were satisfied with the initiative. All participants reported overall satisfaction with the experience of being involved with Dare2Care, but this question requires a three-part response to address the satisfaction level of the student participants, their parents, and the two teachers who also participated in the initiative.

The students indicated that the GYLI leadership experiences exceeded their expectations and they expressed satisfaction with these leadership development trips.

It was way more than I was expecting. Everyone was there, like, the crew, the teachers, the students. You're all like one big family. Feels like we've known each other for years and years, not just five days. Um, it was a great experience. It was amazing. (Heather)

The teachers were satisfied with the GYLI leadership experiences, although one of the teachers expressed some frustration with the challenges she had accepting the collaborative leadership model, finding it contrary to her usual way of interacting with students.

That was another activity where we were told that the teachers are suppose to, like, let the kids do the project, and I couldn't just sit there and not put in my two cents or ask questions. Like even asking questions to try to get them, you know, focused, And I was told I couldn't, I wasn't supposed to be speaking, And I physically had to remove myself from the situation 'cause I couldn't stop myself from trying to participate with them. Nancy

The parents expressed satisfaction with their students' development, and believed the experience with Dare2Care and GYLI were responsible for the growth that they observed in their children.

Yes. I am very satisfied...I think she participates in a lot of things, but actually being the point person, being people in a group in charge, this is one area where [my child] has taken ownership. So I am very pleased with that. Very pleased with the continued participation that Dare2Care has put on eight events, you know, that it hasn't fizzled out with the stresses of classwork and other extracurricular activities have popped up.

Evaluation Question 3: Did the initiative meet its intended objectives?

The third evaluation question addressed the success of the project in meeting its intended objectives. Three main objectives were identified: 1) producing transformative youth leaders who are progressive change agents, 2) building the youth leaders' capacity to decrease discrimination due to identity difference, and 3) providing the participants with a positive experience. The data provides evidence to support the finding that the project did meet its intended objectives.

The data supports that Dare2Care was able to produce transformative youth leaders who are progressive change agents. The students expanded their own self-knowledge and general knowledge. They learned about their unique leadership styles and how those styles complement other leadership styles. They combined these two knowledge bases to create Club Identity. Through Club Identity the students created a safe space for exploring diversity and identity, and for addressing the problem of bullying in their school.

Students conducted 2-3 multi-school collaborative workshops each year using the content of the GYLI curriculum that they learned on their leadership training trips. They conducted full-day workshops with students from ten different schools. Students also conducted a mini workshop (half-day) using the GYLI curriculum. In essence, the Dare2Care experience created agency in the youth who previously felt powerless to address the bullying problem in their school. The students recounted experiences of serving as allies in the high school and greater community.

As student scholars we have learned how to have courageous conversations that can push people out of their comfort zones and even push myself and other fellow leaders outside of our comfort zones. But the more of those conversations we can have and we have been having more of them, the more people will start to think. (Heather)

The data supports that Dare2Care was able to develop the youth leaders' capacity to provide leadership in decreasing discrimination due to identity difference within Lakewood High School and in the community at large. Through their club meetings, the leadership conference, and local mini conference, the students did disseminate knowledge that 1) promoted acceptance of difference, and 2) lead change in diverse identity related conversations. The students' efforts through Club Identity to raise awareness and educate their peers about diversity, identity, and the effects of bullying are evidence that the students were able to establish and sustain a prevention-based model to address LGBTQ issues.

I can go out there and be a little bit better than people are expecting and I don't have to doubt myself, because I can take on these projects and see some real change. And you know, with these other two leaders, and Nicole who's obviously off at college right now, um, we definitely saw change during our tenure and actually seeing change that we caused ourselves is unbelievable. That's the kind of thing that absolutely impacts your life and your relationship with yourself, because when you know that you are effective, you know that self-efficacy that I hear about from my psychology teacher; that is so valuable. That is incredibly valuable. (Nathan)

The data also supports that the initiative did provide participants with a positive experience. The GYLI trips consistently exceeded the participants' expectations, and they returned with new insights and energy. The students and the teacher leaders spoke at length about the lessons they learned about themselves, and about their personal growth. This included one student coming to terms with his or her own questions about sexuality after finding a safe space within Dare2Care and the GYLI experience.

One thing I specifically owe to Dare2Care and GYLI is being okay with myself as someone who is queer and kind of in that realm. That was something I never, I actually didn't realize until I was a sophomore and several months into the program. I think perhaps Dare2Care was the result of a guardian angel telling me like, "Oh you need to figure this out, because I know for a fact that you're not who you think you are." Which, I definitely owe to Dare2Care and GYLI in giving me that kind of place, where it's like, "alright, this is entirely normal, these sensations- this is actually a thing- this is not actually the kind of thing that goes away and there are resources out there. (Anonymous)

Evaluation Question 4 Is the initiative worth the cost?

The fourth evaluation question asked if the initiative is worth the cost. It is difficult to draw a conclusion about the financial worth of the initiative because the criteria for determining the financial worth were not operationalized in the evaluation plan. Further, it is difficult to measure the impacts of the initiative without data reflecting changes in the school climate, or changes in the incidence of discrimination and bullying in the school. One teacher leader asked,

Have we affected school climate? I'm not sure because how do you, how do you change the hearts and minds of 2,000+ people? And how, how do you account for that and show the change?....And Lakewood also is a community of such diversity and acceptedness [sic] , I mean, Lakewood's known for its gay population, so the students are already exposed to that. Again, being outside the school, and if we didn't have that here in Lakewood, would we get such a warm and fuzzy response from everybody, if we were in a school system or a city that maybe wasn't so open to diversity? And I think this initiative is coming at a time where society as a whole is starting to look at this topic, and I don't think we would have as big of an impact if society wasn't also talking about this. And I mean, the articles, and the TV shows, and I mean, the publicity around anti-bullying campaigns has just blown up in the last three years." (Timothy)

Despite the questions about quantifying the impact, both teachers believed that participating in Dare to Care and creating Club Identity has had an impact on the school by creating space for conversations to occur. Through the formal educational programs, awareness activities, and the Club Identity Meetings, the students and staff have established themselves as allies in the school. This has encouraged other students and staff to discuss issues pertaining to gender identity and sexual orientation.

The conversations that have been occurring have just been something I could never have imagined. I never thought I, I, I never thought I would see Lakewood High School represented two years in a row, consecutively, at Cleveland's Gay Pride parade. I never thought that I would be mentoring students to speak with our principal about enlarging activities, like Day of Silence. Or attending the Dare2Care Gala May 1st event, with actually our building principal in attendance. During the meetings, there have been moments where other students have shared about family members of theirs who were gay. There have been teachers in the school who've come to the group, or to me, or to the four students. And I feel like their actions and activities as allies in the school is growing in capacity and momentum. Timothy, teacher:

I feel comfortable in knowing what I know and knowing what I don't know. And being able to continue to grow and I think that relates to what has been beneficial for the school, is again, my ability to have the conversations with my peer and with students, uh, as a resource for them when they have questions or concerns. I have a lot of students who come to me with issues having to do with gender or sexuality. Nancy, Teacher

A second factor that complicates the response to this research question is the inability to measure the future impacts of the program, both from the future work of Club Identity in the high school, and in the work that the student leaders carry forward into their lives beyond high school.

I most certainly have hopes of continuing the exact work that I've done with Dare2Care of trying to get involved with the Columbus City Schools and spreading information about the LGBTQ community about giving children positive influences with people all over the spectrum... Dare2Care has shown me that I need to be vocal about what is right because complacency is not going to make the world a better place. (Heather)

The changes in student growth that the students, parents, and teachers documented, and the changes that the teachers observed in themselves all indicate that the participants, their parents, and members of the school community derived value from the initiative. As well, one teacher noted benefits to the school from participating in the initiative.

What has been beneficial for the school is my ability to have conversations with my peers and with students, um, as a resource for them when they have questions or concerns. I have a lot of students who come to me with issues having to do with their gender or sexuality. (Nancy)

The data support that the participants believed the experience was worth the cost. One teacher, Timothy, said, "I believe the- that the things that they did at Lakewood High School have left an impact and a legacy on our campus."

Evaluation Question 5- Were there any unintended outcomes of the initiative?

The fifth research question asked if there are any unintended outcomes of the initiative. Several unintended outcomes emerged from the data.

One unintended outcome of the project was that two of the participants found the courage, support, and language to come out about their own sexuality. One of the teacher leaders and one of the student leaders made the decision to come out within the three years of the project. The student, quoted above, found the courage to come out to self, the family, and the school. The teacher leader came out to the school community. He commented,

First, through the process of the last three years, I've made the decision to be openly gay to my students and it's really, um, brought a deeper sense of meaning and allowed for um really positive interactions with my students.
(Timothy)

The teacher expected that coming out would create barriers with the students in the classroom but found the opposite to be true.

A second unintended outcome would be the extent to which participating in the project contributed to the teacher leaders' personal development as they worked to implement collaborative learning. One teacher leader noticed that her style of supporting the student leaders evolved as she learned to practice collaborative leadership. She learned that it was possible to trust others to take leadership roles, and to trust that they could reach a good outcome without her involvement.

When I started with the initiative I micromanaged my students. I made sure I was with them at every single step, and dotting the I's and crossing the T's, and one of the things I have been working on through my experience with GYLI is how to back off a little bit and let the kids kind of expand and learn through trial and error. (Nancy)

The second teacher noted challenges with the GYLI model of collaborative leadership. He felt the model was an ideal way of working together, but felt it did not account for the context and the character of individuals involved in using collaborative leadership to complete initiatives. He found the model impractical, and unnatural.

"I function 180 days a year, eight hours a day as a classroom teacher, and I'm used to being autonomous and I'm not used to collaborating with anybody except for my students in my room....Being a teacher 180 days, you just stand in front, you deliver the materials. I mean, there's not much time for collaboration."
(Timothy)

He did conclude that he has learned to ask more questions and make fewer statements.

Evaluation Question 6- What would we do the next time to improve the initiative?

Evaluation question six asked what participants would do to improve future implementation of the initiative. One area identified for improvement would be to be more intentional about developing the students' leadership skills. While participating in the GYLI initiative does increase awareness of participants' leadership styles, there is a need for further development for the teacher leaders and students after the institute concludes. Teacher leaders need guidance on how to allow students to take leadership and ownership over the work within the high school. Students also need assistance with learning how to use their leadership styles in collaborative and complementary ways.

The participants all expressed frustration in the way the student leaders worked together as leaders, and in how Club Identity meetings were planned and facilitated. The GYLI experiences helped the students understand their leadership styles, but did not provide opportunities to apply that to practical leadership and the tasks involved in leading a school club. One teacher noted the students' lack of preparation for club meetings, and he also noted that they didn't seem to be aware that they were unprepared.

I do think they are better than their peers and it's through both the training and the opportunities that they have had to employ their leadership skills. We're talking about 17 and 18-year olds. The still, they still, they're, they're just emerging leaders And they're, they're running circles around their peers, but they have a long way to go before they're really going to be, able to be transformative, collaborative leaders in our world, and in the school community and beyond.
(Timothy)

Other participants noticed imbalances in sharing the workload, with some students doing more to help plan and facilitate events. One teacher noted:

We have one student leader who talks too much. We've been working with [this student] to say, 'How do you do less so that other people can do more in terms of having a conversation with a group of 20 to 25 people?'" (Timothy)

One factor that contributed to this, which is another area of improvement, is the students' lack of commitment to the initiative that results from being committed to so many other outside activities. The teachers and students noted that students' involvement in other activities in and outside of school impacted the initiative. Students spoke of having to take on more responsibilities at times when other students' extra curricular activities prevented them from carrying their part of the load. It impacted the motivation of the group. One teacher noted:

I mean I was very gung ho at the beginning. I'll admit I kind of dipped in year 2. You know, again, our students are overcommitted academically and extracurricular. So it was hard to keep my motivation up when I didn't feel like the kids were able to give as much time as needed. Part of me has wondered if it wouldn't be more effective to find a one-year program and to constantly have a new set of leaders every year and there be some sort of demonstrated activity before they scholarship the students.
(Timothy)

The recommended changes all have to do with how to carry the work forward. The project helped the participants learn about themselves and their role in relation to themselves, their community, and the earth. The project helped them learn about their leadership styles. The project gave them the information and motivation to create Club Identity and conduct awareness activities in the school and greater community. What the students needed was additional support in learning what it meant to commit to the project, and to use their leadership skills collaboratively, and equitably.

Other Findings

There were other findings in the data that do not fit neatly under the evaluation questions, but are critical to providing a greater understanding of how participating in Dare2Care benefitted the participants, their families, and the school community.

On Being Allies

In view of the Dare2Care mission, one of the most significant findings is reflected in the data pertaining to being allies. There was a clear shift in the students' understanding of, comfort with, and courage involved in being a straight ally. In early discussions each of the students expressed concerns about their ability to engage in the work related to the Dare2Care mission. Some spoke of the fear of what people will think of their sexuality, and others about their ability to be effective advocates without being LGBTQ.

Well the thing that I know I've discussed with my parents especially is what if people start wondering, "Is he LGBTQ? Is he gay, is he a stupid little fag?" It's like, no, that's I'm just standing up for something that I believe in, is that so hard to believe? (Nathan)

Like, you know, if we want to have an assembly, you know, we'll have, you know, speakers talk, you know, like, at the workshop that we went to. We can have someone like that talk to our whole school. And, you know, have other, you

know, help, because we can't just lecture to students about this topic, especially if we're not LGBTQ students. But um, you know, really I think that what we can do is the anti-bullying. That, you know, that's what we can help with at our school. (Nicole)

I think it's important that like, I'm not lesbian, gay, bi, or transgender so it's hard for me to relate to those sorts of people and try to like, put, force something for them when I, like, I'm not one of them....Why should I be the person doing that when I am not any of those things. (Ella)

By the end of the Dare2Care pilot the students really seemed to grasp that being non-LGBTQ is what made them effective as allies; they embraced the Dare2Care stance that these are not LGBTQ issues, but human issues. The students developed a confidence around their work that allowed them to remain courageous, even as they learned that their support of LGBTQ students could be a point of disagreement between them and some of their friends.

I'm not afraid of um, stepping on someone's toes isn't right, but I'm not afraid of a little bit of agitation in a conversation that involves sharing different beliefs. And I truly believe that when such conversations occur, when people with different experiences are allowed and encouraged to share those events in their life [sic], that everyone can experience growth from that. (Heather)

Recommendations

One recommendation for improving the ability to measure the impact of the work of the student leaders and Club Identity would be to distribute a school climate survey prior to the start of Club Identity meetings and leadership conferences. The survey would measure the attitudes of students, teachers, and administrators around diversity, identity, tolerance, and perceptions of safety within the school. A second survey could be distributed at the end of the year to capture any shifts in school climate. Club identity could collaborate with other student associations also addressing LGBTQ issues in concert with, and separate from Club Identity. It may not be possible to completely control for how much of the change in climate is directly related to Dare2Care's involvement, but it would provide some insight into the impact of the initiative, as well as provide evidence of Dare2Care's efforts to promote change through collaboration with other organizations.

A second recommendation would be to analyze data throughout the entire project. Evaluation data from the first year of a project can inform implementation, data collection, and evaluation in subsequent years. Also, themes identified in early project

years can be investigated further in subsequent years. Participants would have opportunities to confirm or clarify identified themes.

Finally, based on the participants' feedback, it is clear that there is a need for further leadership development beyond the GYLI experiences. Teacher leaders need support in transitioning from leading the students to supporting their leadership in ways that acknowledge shared power. This could include development on how to share power even in their roles as classroom teachers. As well, the students need more support in learning how to implement collaborative leadership to carry out the work of Club Identity.

Conclusions

This evaluation report examined the Dare2Care pilot project on two levels. First, the report detailed Dare2Care's ability to successfully recruit from the target population, retain participants throughout the initiative, and provide participants with a positive experience. The evaluation also described Dare2Care's success in developing the youth leaders' capacity to provide leadership in decreasing discrimination due to identity difference within Lakewood High School and in the community at large. The barometer for success of the latter was the students' ability to disseminate knowledge that 1) promoted acceptance of difference, 2) lead change in diverse identity related conversations, and 3) established and sustained a prevention-based model to address lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) targeted bullying issues.

Dare2Care successfully recruited and retained students from the target population and provided them with positive experiences. Dare2Care made it possible for students and teachers to attend the GYLI experiences to develop collaborative leadership skills, and to increase their knowledge of self, and their knowledge of multicultural identities. The GYLI experiences were successful in helping the participants understand their leadership styles, develop their leadership skills, gain a better understanding of their own identities, gain an appreciation for multicultural identity, and engage in initial planning of how to apply their learning to their school environment.

Dare2Care was also successful in creating transformative youth leaders, and in developing their capacity to educate their peers. The participants increased awareness about LGBTQ issues, engaged peers in conversations about diverse identity related issues, and created a core group of allies in the Lakewood City School District. More importantly, Dare2Care created a group of activists who already have plans for how to continue this work as they continue on as teachers in the District, or as students on campuses and in communities across the nation.

Dare2Care
Evaluation Report
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