

CONSCIOUS CHOICES

LIFE-SKILL RELATIONSHIP TRAINING FOR TEENS



Preparing yourself is to prevent repairing yourself.

CONSCIOUS CHOICES: Life-skill Relationship Training for Teens is a new, healthy *Prepare for Love*™ relationship program for teenage boys and girls facilitated by Relationship Coach Ryeal Simms. A licensed and certified singles/couples relationship coach and marriage educator, Ryeal engages youth in this dynamic tailor-made curriculum, which helps boys and girls interactively explore empowerment and self-esteem in the context of the relationships they build, the way they perceive themselves and how they envision their futures.

WHY IS LIFE-SKILL RELATIONSHIP TRAINING FOR TEENS NEEDED?

According to *The Abolition of Marriage* by Maggie Gallagher, only one third of African American children have two parents in the home. Further, African American children are only half as likely as white children to live in a two-parent household, and are eight times more likely than white children to live with an unwed mother. In fact, for African American children under six, the most common arrangement – applying to 42% of them – is to live with a never-married mother.

The absence of the father from the home and the non-existent union between father and mother – the primary, building block example of ALL relationships for children – has an adverse effect on boys and girls alike. As a result, girls often miss out on learning how to develop trusting, comfortable relationships with men – life skills they need to not only build romantic, but also platonic and business bonds with males. And boys lose the opportunity to learn what it is to grow up male and the positive example of how to behave towards girls and women in love and in life.

The lack of these constructive, enforcing examples in the home unfortunately has fostered an increase in dating violence among teens and gang involvement. According to recent Center for Disease Control statistics, about one in five high school girls have been physically abused by a dating partner. And the overall occurrence of dating violence is higher among African American (13.9%) than Hispanic (9.3%) or white (7.0%) students. Further research also cites that 79% of boys involved with gangs or committed to juvenile prisons - desperately searching for a place to belong and to be loved - came from fatherless homes. Teens involved in such violent relationships and lifestyles are more likely to be involved in other risks such as alcohol, drugs, attempted suicide and fighting. They are also more likely to be involved in violent, abusive relationships when they become adults.

And as adults, these teens – unconsciously programmed to repeat the same mistakes of their parents – perpetuate the deterioration of the African American family by not marrying and continuing to birth children out of wedlock. According to data from The African American Healthy Marriage Initiative, African Americans have lower rates of marriage and marital stability than all other ethnic groups. Specifically, African American males at 42% and females at 40.8% are more likely to be unmarried than Whites, Hispanics or American Indians/Alaskan Natives.

THE GOAL OF CONSCIOUS CHOICES

As a singles/couples Relationship Coach and Marriage Educator, Ryeal coaches many clients who are unhappy in their relationships, tired of repeating the same mistakes, and have no idea how they got in their situations. They, like most adults, are making relationship decisions on autopilot. They're unconsciously shooting from the hip, operating off of learned behavior from their families and reacting from unresolved issues in their childhoods.

This year, Ryeal had the opportunity to engage a relationship workshop with teens at the Tavis Smiley Foundation Leadership Institute at Texas Southern University. The students, extremely grateful and starved for information about relationships, soaked up the new knowledge like sponges, asked insightful questions and poured out their hearts to him about the relationship issues they are *already* experiencing and encountering.

That enlightening experience led the Tavis Smiley Foundation to appoint Ryeal as its' official relationship coach and inspired Ryeal to create the **CONSCIOUS CHOICES: Life-skill Relationship Training for Teens**. The curriculum, designed to prevent teens from repeating the mistakes of their parents, families and communities, arms youth with the tools to make conscious relationship choices. The earlier Ryeal can educate and make young people aware of relationship issues, the sooner they'll be able to look within themselves and make the correct conscious choices for themselves in life and love.

HOW CONSCIOUS CHOICES WORKS

Each 1-hour session – 6 individual for boys and girls and 3 combined – focuses on a different topic. The sessions can, however, be tailor made to meet your organization's needs. Depending on the needs of your young people and the time commitment available, sessions can range from a 1-hour power-overview to a 15-hour in-depth, retreat-style workshop. Review the sessions, choose what best meets your needs and let us help you!

- **Session One: Knowing and Loving Myself First** helps participants learn how to tap into and respect who they are as individuals and gain a sense of acceptance, confidence and love about his/her own self-image
- **Session Two: What Does the Word Relationship Mean to Me?** explores how pressures of cultural and sexual messages might lead teenagers to feel confused about what it is that they want from a dating relationship. Also helps them to

- determine their vision relationship plan and differentiate between their relationship wants, needs and requirements.
- **Session Three - COMBINED: The Science of Relationships** discusses the scientific reasons why boys and girls are different and the chemical trappings of being “in love”
 - **Session Four: What Are Healthy and Unhealthy/Abusive Relationships?** engages teens in a discussion about their value, treating others with respect and teaches them the early warning signs of an abusive relationship
 - **Session Five – COMBINED: Abuse Isn’t Love** brings the boys and girls together to candidly discuss their feelings/experiences surrounding abuse and the strategies they’re learning to avoid violence in relationships
 - **Session Six: The Role of Friendships** helps teens to recognize the ways in which male and female friends serve as confidants and support in their lives
 - **Session Seven: Who Am I and What Do I Bring to a Relationship and Friendship?** helps participants articulate who they are and the unique qualities they contribute to a relationship
 - **Session Eight: What Do I See For My Future?** helps teens visualize their futures, and think about how to find the people who support them in achieving their goals
 - **Session Nine – COMBINED: Improving Relationships Between Men and Women** provides participants with conflict resolution tools and helps participants create strategies to improve communication between males and females

If you are interested in Relationship Coach Ryeal facilitating **CONSCIOUS CHOICES: Life-skill Relationship Training for Teens** – an empowering program from his *Prepare for Love*™ Workshop Series – for your community/youth organization or conference, call Monice Simms, the Director of Business Development at 323.571.3808.