



Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships Initiative

Break Up Summit

The Start Strong Boston Break Up Summit centers around creating discussions and tools that can be used to engender conversations around healthy relationships, break up promotion, and media literacy. The annual summits are aimed at preventing dating violence amongst teenagers in Boston and increasing their understanding of what constitutes a healthy break up. The summits:

- are co-designed by teen peer leaders and Start Strong staff;
- use cutting edge technology to reach out to young people;
- use pop culture trends and imagery that are meaningful to teens;
- promote a positive message about healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and communication.

To date, we have helped organizations in Grand Forks, North Dakota, Louisville, KY, and Guam host summits in their locales.

During the morning session, all participants attend Break Ups 101 which focuses on developing a common framework on what constitutes a healthy break up and the theme for that year. Themes are created by Start Strong Peer Leaders and focus on current break up trends. Past examples include cheating, use of social media, and situationships. In the afternoon the adults and the teens attend workshops in separate tracks that further the conversation. All workshops are 90 minutes.

Break Up Summit Modifications

Start Strong Boston hosts the Break Up summit annually in July, with an annual attendance of roughly 200 young people and 50 adults. Our limitations are based on fiscal and logistical capacities. In order to increase outreach and capacity we conduct workshops throughout the academic year in school and out-of-school time settings. We have modified our workshops down to fit a 50 minute window. In the early years of Start Strong we facilitated a summit via webinar across all Start Strong sites around the country. Below are the following ways the summit can be modified to fit different environments

School Workshops: The Summit workshops can be administered in separate class periods or workshop times. Break Ups 101 would be the sentinel workshop to kick off the series and can be followed up with a choice of workshops related to the theme. Each summit has 4-5 workshops associated with the year's theme.

Video Webinars: The Summit can be conducted via video conference. The activities can be modified to give sites a chance to conduct the activity and then present via video conferencing. There are other technologies that can be woven into the summit such as polling via text, submission of video projects before and after the webinar, etc.

In-Person Summits: Start Strong staff can train staff of various organizations to use the workshop materials at their site. In a series of video and phone conference calls we can work to tailor the workshops to the teens in their community and prepare them to facilitate the workshops on the day of the event. In this scenario we encourage them to bring youth on board as part of the preparation and implementation of the summit.

“Healthy Break Up” Materials

Over the years Start Strong staff work continuously and collaboratively with our peer leaders to create BreakUp Summit themes that align with the needs and trends among their peers. Themes have included Break Ups and Social Media, Situationships, and Break Ups and Gender. With each summit we create and use tools that help to facilitate the dialogue around the issue, such as, U R Breaking Up?!, Facebook Boundaries, and Reflect and Relate. After each summit, our goal is to continue disseminating these tools through the internet, social marketing avenues, community contacts as well as other traditional sources such as print media.