



The Mount Sinai Department of Health Education

Public Health & Racial Justice Program



Summer 2024 Program Report

We want all young people to see themselves as powerful agents of change.



Created in the spring of 2020 in direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, this program serves as a safe and empowering educational space where young people explore public health issues through a racial justice lens.

Emphasizing the power of civic engagement, community advocacy, youth activism, and the cultivation of a diverse public health workforce, we build skills, foster pride, and nurture community connection.

2024 Snapshot

28

Youth Participants
girls ages 15-18 years

6

Weeks Onsite
at Mount Sinai Hospital

+45

Partners
from Mount Sinai
& the NYC community



This program is made possible through the generous support of the Helen Gurley Brown Foundation, and the partnership of the Mount Sinai Blavatnik Family Women's Health Research Institute.

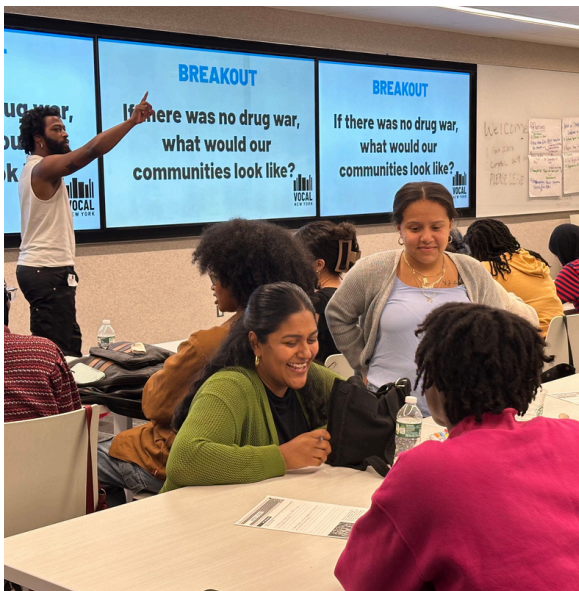
We believe...

everything is public health, and public health is for everyone.

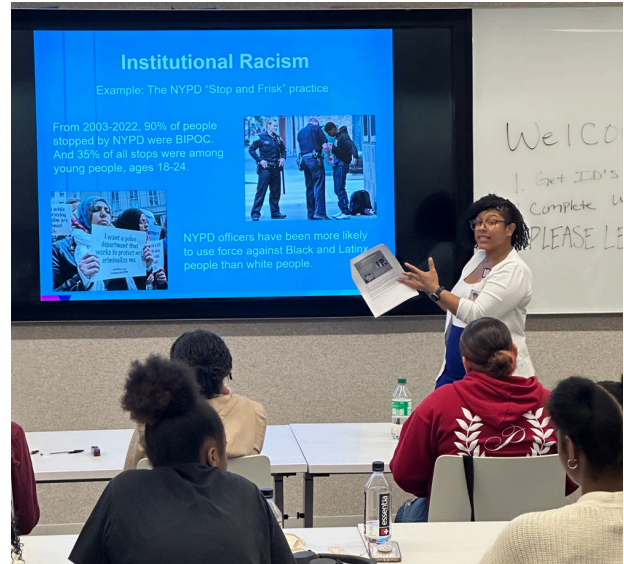
We cover dozens of topics, introducing participants to the expansive field of public health through a racial justice lens.

Key concepts:

- Racism and oppression
- Social determinants of health
- Identity and intersectionality
- Critical Race Theory (CRT)
- Reproductive Justice



“My favorite session was about the war on drugs. I liked learning about the downsides of the drug war and the millions of lives that it has negatively impacted and is still impacting today.” - Marcy, age 16



Issues:

- Mental health
- Healthy relationships
- STIs and HIV
- Contraception
- Maternal health
- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Climate justice
- Workers' health and labor organizing
- Community-based participatory research
- Gun safety and violence prevention
- Self-care for BIPOC women and girls
- Incarceration
- The war on drugs
- Arts, culture, and narrative in public health
- Health justice and civic engagement
- LGBTQ health and advocacy
- BIPOC women's hair and health

We believe... public health inequities must be addressed holistically.

Our hospital-community partnerships allow us to highlight how enhancements in clinical medicine and healthcare access are complemented by the advocacy and activism of community-based movements, often led by women of color.



Our community partners joined us from:

- Ali Forney Center
- Caribbean Women’s Health Association
- The Climate Museum of New York
- Labor unions including, Amazon, Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, and Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (RWDSU)
- The New York Abortion Access Fund
- The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- The New York City Public Advocate Office
- Sese Birthing Freedom Doula Collective
- Voices of Community Activists and Leaders (VOCAL-NY)

“This program has helped me to speak up about the way that I feel about certain issues and to become more educated about issues that I didn’t know about. With the knowledge I’ve gained, hopefully I can go out into the world and be an activist.”
- Bella, age 15



We believe... representation matters.

To rectify racial and gender disparities in the public health workforce, we must not only expose our young people to a diverse range of educational and professional paths - we must also introduce them to positive adult role models who will broaden their sense of what is possible for themselves.

We were honored to host Mount Sinai leaders and staff from:

- The Adolescent Health Center
- The Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Emergency Medicine
- Graduate Medical Education
- The Institute for Health Equity Research
- Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Pediatrics
- Preventive Medicine
- ...and more!



“I learned a lot from people from the hospital who would come talk to us and tell us about their career and how they got where they were. I was able to understand everyone’s experience and how everyone has a different story to tell. Sometimes they fell down and got back up. Their stories were rocky but they ended up in a good position they enjoyed and that gives me hope.” - Jeslene, age 16

We believe... interactivity facilitates learning.

Through our partnership with the Mount Sinai Simulation Teaching and Research Center, we provided numerous opportunities for skill-building and hands-on learning, including:

- Narcan administration and overdose prevention training
- Birthing simulation
- “Stop the Bleed” training and tourniquet application
- Adult CPR
- Infant CPR



“I loved being in a hospital. There’s something so exciting about getting to go to a hospital every morning and learn from people who actually work in in healthcare. To be able to meet people who could help connect me it was like ‘oh wow this is really happening for me’.” - Poppy, age 15

“I got to know a lot of people in the medical field that are women of color. They gave me a lot of advice. Their advice made me feel excited for college because I like challenges and they told me not to give up and just do my best. It made me excited, like I want to try.” - Thara, age 18



We believe...

in supporting the social-emotional needs of youth by promoting their strengths, agency, self-expression, and sense of belonging.

Emotionally safe spaces are critical to learning. Affirmation and joy help build community, confidence, and self-efficacy among young people, and are bolstered by opportunities for creative expression and the cultivation of healthy peer relationships.



*“This program felt like a supportive environment. Everybody being so kind and open-minded made me feel good and heard.”
- Karla, age 17*

The Culminating Project: Photovoice

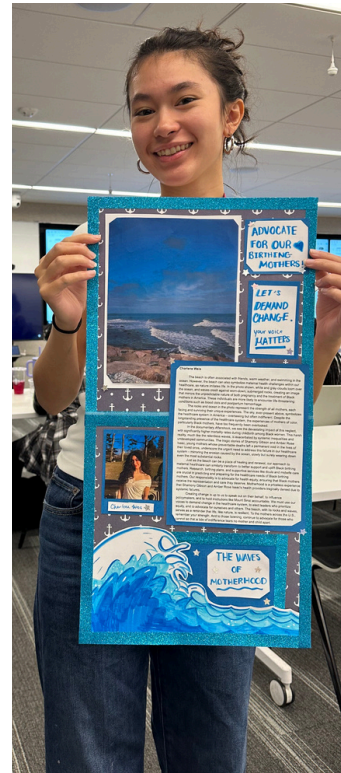
Photovoice is a community-based engagement and empowerment approach to driving social change through photography and narrative. Participants selected a public health issue that mattered to them and had the platform to voice their perspective, educate Mount Sinai staff and representatives from NYC government and community-based organizations, and facilitate critical dialogue to encourage action as youth leaders.



Each participant shared their Photovoice project at our culminating event, attended by Mount Sinai staff, community partners, family, and friends.



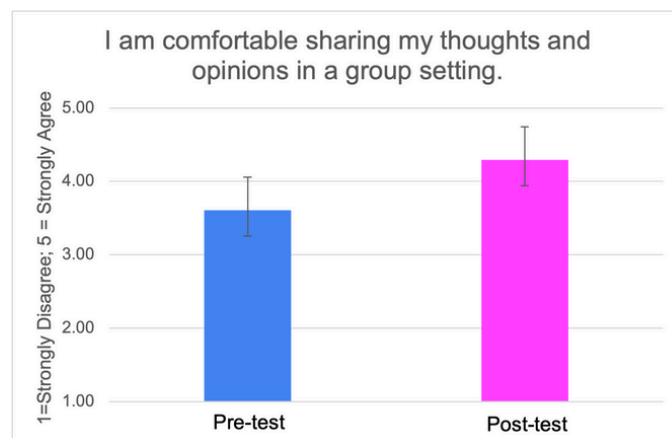
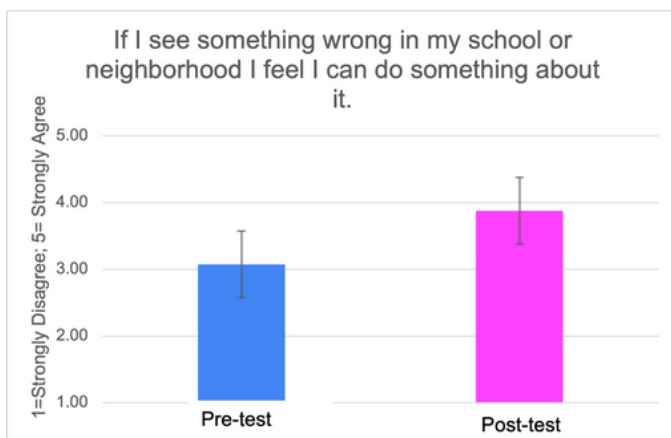
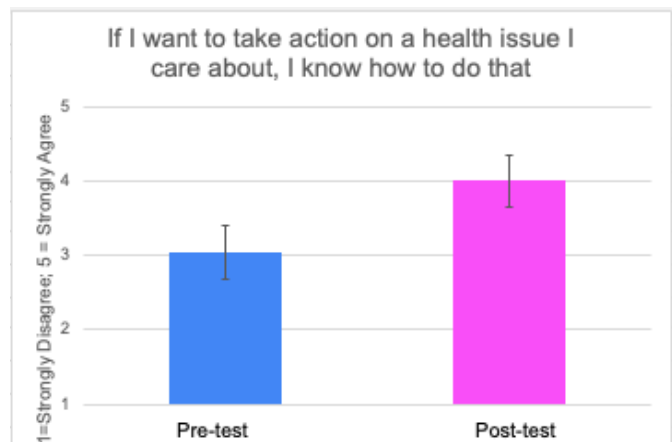
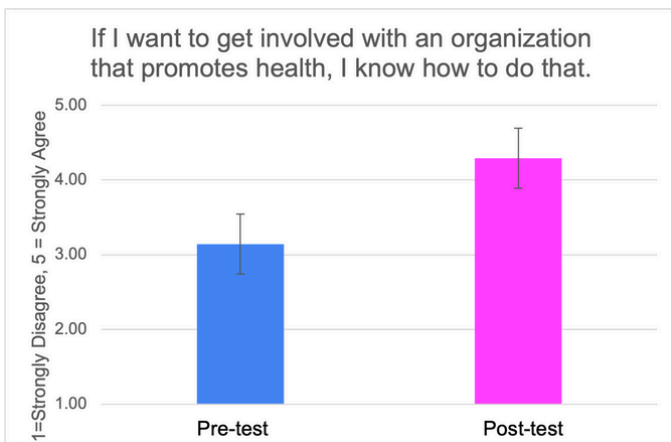
“After this program and talking to all these amazing people it’s been very inspiring and it makes me want to help other people. Especially in the maternal health aspect seeing all these health disparities. Overall the program has really opened my mind to so many different topics that I didn’t know about.”
- Charlene, age 17



Evaluation Highlights

We surveyed participant knowledge, self-efficacy, attitudes and beliefs before the program start and after program completion. The endline survey also included open-ended questions to elicit personal feedback on the program. Surveys were anonymous and administered online using Google Forms.

Improvements were seen in 21 out of 22 measures with the greatest changes in the following areas:



Evaluation Highlights

Your favorite part of the program:

- *“The help and support I got from everyone, I felt like I really belonged and I don’t feel that way often.”*
- *“Learning about topics that I wouldn’t have been educated on otherwise.”*
- *“My favorite part was meeting new people. It felt empowering being surrounded by a group of girls my age who were so intelligent, kind, and dependable.”*



“I really liked how the facilitators cared for all of us. Like checking up on us and giving us breaks after heavy topics. It was really nice to have people who actually cared.”

Sessions that changed your thinking:

- *“I think I learned a lot more about American history. I have personal experiences with the maternal mortality rate so seeing it affect other families just made me feel more strongly about my desire to go into a womens’ health field.”*
- *“My view on describing mental health changed how I thought about it. I always try to be sure not to use the words “crazy” or “insane” to describe a person now.”*

Evaluation Highlights

Your favorite topics and sessions:

- *“I loved to learn about pregnancy issues and not being heard. It gave me an enlightenment about the different issues that are really happening throughout the world that is not talked about enough.”*
- *“The birthing simulation and that whole day in general. I liked it because it was very hands on and I got to connect with many women of color who had different roles in maternal health. I was very grateful for that experience.”*
- *“All the simulations and the networking lunch. As a visual learner, the stimulations were super fun and I don't think I'll ever forget them. The networking lunch introduced me to different careers and I received a lot of great advice.”*

The most meaningful part of the program:

- *“Being able to present everything we'd been working on and learning about for 6 weeks. I loved hearing the things people found to be impactful in their communities during the Photovoice presentations.”*
- *“Making connections and seeing Black women in positions of power.”*



“I really felt like I was wanted and appreciated.”



Evaluation Highlights

Additional comments:

- *“The best summer program I’ve been in. The facilitators are nice, they explain the problem being presented very well so anyone who wanted to listen would be able to understand.”*
- *“Thank you for making my summer so memorable. Whenever I think about everyone in this program, it feels like I’ve known them for years.”*
- *“I’m really gonna miss you guys, I appreciate everything you’ve done for us and for me too. I was going through a rough time in the beginning but being here really helped me forget.”*
- *“Thank you so much for giving everyone the opportunity to do this program!! I’m doing a program at [a hospital] for the next 2 weeks and I think doing this program first really gave me an edge and a lot of background knowledge. I will do my best to advocate for the issues I learned about at this program! Thank you for everything!!”*



“The topics we went over were such eye opening lessons and I feel empowered now to try to make a change for my people and community.”



The Department of Health Education thanks our many health system colleagues and community partners for their support of this program.



Congratulations to our 2024 cohort!

For more information, please reach out to:
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