

## Youth and adults unite to 'rethink relationships'

By Communications Staff

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It's time to rethink how we live, work and play with one another.

And to get some fresh ideas from some fresh faces, researchers from The University of Western Ontario are reaching out to more than 400 young Canadians from across Ontario to discuss a wide range of topics including mentorship, community activism, leadership and most importantly, fostering healthy and equal relationships.

Fuelled by an anticipated 400-plus youth (under-30) attendees – several of which will lead plenary sessions – and an additional 200 school teachers, educators and youth-related community group leaders, 'Rethinking Relationships' features theatrical performances, live entertainment, panels, breakout sessions, a marketplace and multimedia/new media exhibits.

The Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Woman and Children, based in the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario, is hosting the one-day conference on Friday, November 20 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the London Convention Centre. The conference was funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate.

"The primary purpose of this conference is to showcase innovative ways that adults and youth can work together toward the promotion of healthy and equal relationships says Helene Berman, Rethinking Relationships Project Director. "The notion of 'rethinking relationships' implies that we need to collectively and individually 'rethink' how we conceptualize and enact relationships in our everyday lives. This includes relationships among peers, dating relationships, and adult/youth mentoring relationships."

Berman is an Associate Professor in Western's Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, and the Scotiabank Research Chair in the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children.

The public forum has also attracted a stellar lineup of participants including groundbreaking fashion industry executive Ben Barry and rising star rapper Shad.

Barry, the CEO of the Ben Barry Agency, the first modeling agency in the world to challenge the status-quo beauty ideal by representing models of all ages, sizes, backgrounds, and abilities, is the featured lunch time guest speaker while Shad, a Juno and Polaris Prize nominated rap recording artist, is set to close the event with a musical performance.

For more information on 'Rethinking Relationships,' please visit [http://www.crvawc.ca/documents/Rethinking\\_Relationships\\_Program%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.crvawc.ca/documents/Rethinking_Relationships_Program%20(2).pdf)

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