

# Girls Only!



A prevention education toolkit designed to promote self-esteem, develop life skills, and inspire positive motivation in young girls

## Dedication

This toolkit is for all girls in San Diego: may you love yourself, may you believe that your dreams can come true, and may you work to make your world a better place.

This toolkit is for all educators: may you seek to engage students with love and interactive lessons, may you seek to create community in the classroom, and may you work to make your world a better place.

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## Acknowledgements

The following people and organizations have put time, effort, and passion into this project; it could not have been done without them!

- Lieutenant Debbie Farrar, Sergeant Sylvia Yepiz, and Officer Monica Laird, with the San Diego Police Department (SDPD).
- Rahsaan Brown, Bettina Sandoval, Santisha Lemmons, and Lynn Sharp-Underwood with the San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention.
- Michelle Darsey and Lena Schmidt, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) **members with Community Programs at the San Diego County District Attorney's Office.**
- Angie Pulu, Sergio Mendez, and Irieanna Sesma with the Encanto branch of the Boys and Girls Club, and all the staff at the Boys and Girls Club.
- Lisa Covington and Dante Duaz with the Alliance for Community Empowerment (ACE).
- JJ Anderson and Grace Liu with Community Programs at the San Diego County District **Attorney's Office.**
- Vangie Akridge with My Community Huddle, Inc.
- Jen Finkelstein with the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF).
- Gabriela Baeza with the San Diego County Office of Education, Student Support Services Department.
- Lanae Gutierrez with Star/PAL and the Girl-E, leadership and empowerment program.
- Reggie Washington with Attitudes When Angry & Resolving Emotional Issues Non Violently (AWARE)
- San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis.

Special thanks to the San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention, the San Diego County **District Attorney's Office**, the **San Diego Police Department**, and the Encanto Boys and Girls Club.

## ABSTRACT

Girls Only is a gender-specific, prevention education program for girls ages 8 to 12 designed to:

- Inspire and promote self-love, self-esteem, and motivation
- Develop life skills, healthy coping skills, and decision-making skills
- Keep girls who are at risk out of the influence of gangs and drugs
- Inspire girls to further their education
- Prevent unplanned pregnancy

Girls Only was created to specifically attend to the needs of young girls in San Diego. Girls in San Diego live in a large, diverse county that faces border politics, racial divides, gangs and drug activity, high unemployment rates, prisoners returning to communities, and disproportionate divisions of wealth. Girls in San Diego, following national trends, are increasingly involved with drugs, gangs, prostitution, and the criminal justice system. Girls Only programming intends to prevent young girls from getting involved with these elements by building self-esteem and empowering them to make healthy choices. The goal of working with girls at the critical ages of 8 to 12 is to help them build self-esteem, develop life skills, and develop positive motivations so they are equipped with the tools to help them achieve their goals and avoid getting into trouble as they physically and developmentally mature, especially before they enter their teenage years and high school. Specifically addressing the needs of girls in this age range fills a need in San Diego, as existing programs target teens or girls already in the juvenile justice system.

Girls Only was created because there is a need to empower girls. Racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other oppressive forces persist at institutional and individual levels in American society and they disproportionately affect girls and women, especially women of color and women living in poverty. Girls today are exposed to sexual violence and abuse, domestic violence and abuse, relationship violence, unplanned pregnancy, drug use and abuse, prostitution, direct and indirect gang involvement, involvement with the criminal justice system, influential media exposure, unrealistic and unhealthy body expectations, inhibiting gender expectations, and poverty. Girls grow up in a world today where one out of every six women in America will be a victim of sexual assault sometime in her life, women earn approximately eighty cents for each dollar a man makes, women make up just 17% of government representation, and women and children represent 74% of the total number of people living in poverty worldwide. These startling statistics are motivation enough to pay serious attention to girls. Efforts to empower girls must be based on the belief that every girl deserves to love themselves and their body and to have opportunities that allow them to make choices that benefit themselves, their families, and their community.

The Girls Only toolkit is intended as a contribution to efforts to empower and educate young girls through prevention education. The activities in Girls Only programming are hands-on, engaging, and relevant **to participants' own life experiences**. Research shows that girls who are engaged in positive activities such as school or sports or prevention/intervention programs are more likely to complete school, attend college, positively serve their communities, and reach their potential for future success than their peers who get into trouble. Girls Only uses reputedly effective approaches to prevention, including: consistent mentorship, positive role models, supportive peer groups, interactive teaching methods, culturally specific programming, gender specific programming, and experiential education.

Girls Only began operating at the Boys and Girls Club in Encanto in the Southeast region of San Diego County in the summer of 2009. **Girls Only is now a "highlighted program" at the Boys and Girls Club in Encanto.** Girls Only operates under the facilitation of the Girls Only Committee (GOC), a collaborative group formed from dedicated volunteer representatives from several law enforcement agencies and community organizations. The girls who were part of the inaugural years of the program were positively impacted by the program. The participants did not immediately get along with each other and often hung out in exclusive cliques. Similarly, many of the girls were not interested in listening to the session facilitators. As the sessions continued and participants got to know each other, they hugged facilitators and shared personal stories. **Staff pointed out changes in participants' behavior outside of curriculum hours, including** willingness to discuss issues with each other and with staff members instead of fight and willingness to help others. Girls Only is projected to expand programming to young girls and organizations throughout the county and beyond.

## INTRODUCTION

**Welcome! We're here because we care about girls. We care about what they think. We care about what they think about themselves. We care about what happens to them. If you're** considering this toolkit, we hope that it means you do too. Girls Only is a preventative education program designed to:

- inspire and promote self-love, self-esteem, and motivation
- develop life skills, healthy coping skills, and decision-making skills
- keep girls who are at risk out of the influence of gangs and drugs
- inspire girls to further their education
- and prevent unplanned pregnancy

It is designed to use interactive educational segments and positive role models to attend to the serious issues facing young women in San Diego before they manifest as life-threatening problems.

Girls Only is a research based program developed from best practices and informed by evidence-based research.

This toolkit is intended to be relevant to all girls. But all girls are different! We know it. We love it. Therefore, this toolkit is not only gender specific, it is intentionally race and class conscious, culturally specific, and reflective of the particular geographic area served. The need for this type of engaging, adaptable, focused education is undeniable. It is our hope that this toolkit can function for you as either a guide or protocol for addressing this need. Every topic and every lesson plan can and should be appropriated to fit the specific needs of the girls with whom **you're working**.

This toolkit includes: research on the necessity for girl-specific programs, research on the necessity for preventative education in San Diego County, operational procedures for organizing a Girls Only program, useful forms for operating a Girls Only program, and detailed lesson plans to be used in applying a Girls Only program.

# Why we need this program: A Research Based Report

## WHY GIRLS?

Before proposing ways to empower girls, it is important to acknowledge why there is a need to empower girls. This toolkit focuses on combating the effects that an environment of community violence has on girls and young women. This focus is based on the acknowledgement that racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other oppressive forces persist at institutional and individual levels in American society and that they disproportionately affect girls and women, especially women of color and women living in poverty. Focusing attention on the needs of girls does not dismiss the serious issues facing boys and men in the same communities, nor does it disregard the intersecting relationships between the experiences of women and men. This toolkit is limited in its scope to pointedly and effectively attend to the particular issues concerning girls and young women.

What girls face:

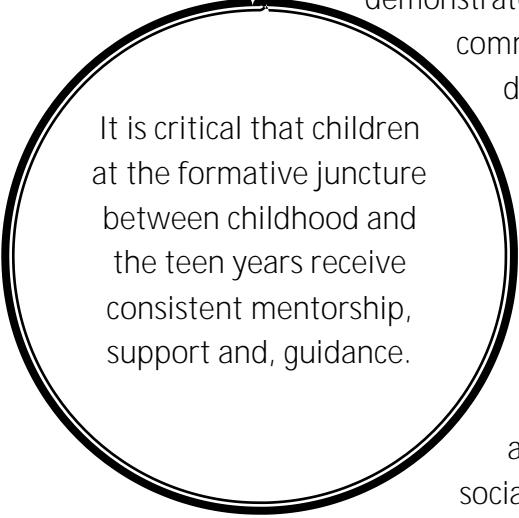
**It's hard to be a girl.** Girls and boys deal with many of the same issues; however, there are certain issues unique to the experience of growing up as a girl in this society. Girls today are exposed to sexual violence and abuse, domestic violence and abuse, relationship violence, unplanned pregnancy, drug use and abuse, prostitution, direct and indirect gang involvement, involvement with the criminal justice system, influential media exposure, unrealistic and unhealthy body expectations, inhibiting gender expectations, and poverty. The startling statistic that one out of every six women in America will be a victim of sexual assault sometime in her life, as noted by the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, is motivation enough to pay serious attention to girls.

Efforts to empower girls must acknowledge the multiplicity of historically constructed identities combined **to create life experiences; analyses of girls' experiences** as girls cannot be done without attending to the racial aspects that inform gender and, for example, the socioeconomic class aspects that inform a racialized experience. This means recognizing that a girl who is Mexican-American and comes from a middle-class background experiences being a girl differently than a girl who is white and comes from a low-income neighborhood. Due to historical oppression and continued racism and sexism at institutional and individual levels, girls **of color, especially girls living in poverty, are more "at risk" for the negative consequences of** these many issues girls face than their white sisters, especially those living in affluence. Each of **the aforementioned topics affects any girl's ability to feel good** about herself, make healthy choices throughout her life, and be a viable member of her community.

## Girls ages 8 to 12:

The focus of this research, and of this program, is on girls ages 8 to 12. Although the lessons in this toolkit are adaptable for both younger and older participants and the research that follows

demonstrates that girls of all ages are especially vulnerable to community violence, girls ages 8 to 12 are physically and developmentally changing as they mature and go through puberty. Girls and boys experience many of the same risk factors at this age, but, as pointed out by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), **“they appear to differ in sensitivity to and rates of exposure to these factors”** (Slowikowski 3). As young people begin to form their sense of self and their own opinions during their impressionable pre-teen years, they are bombarded with messages from numerous cultural and social influences, including from their parents, family, siblings, friends, peers, teachers, extra-curricular activity leaders, and from the media.

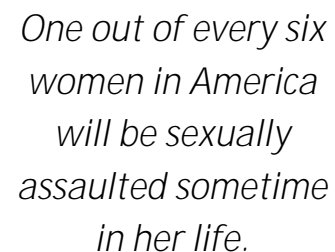


It is critical that children at the formative juncture between childhood and the teen years receive consistent mentorship, support and, guidance.

Also, child development research has revealed that children begin to conceptualize gender, racial, and ability differences and begin to show signs of influence by societal norms and biases within their third year of life (Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force 2), therefore it is crucial that children at the formative juncture between childhood and the teen years receive consistent mentorship, support, and guidance. The goal of working with girls at the critical ages of 8 to 12 is to help them build self-esteem, develop life skills, and develop positive motivations so they are equipped with the tools to help them achieve their goals and avoid getting into trouble, especially before they enter their teenage years and high school.

## Issues girls face:

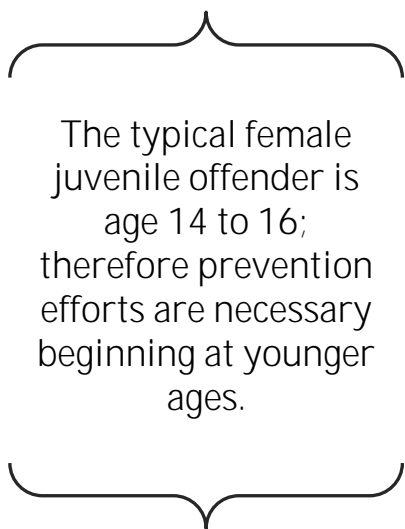
Girls and women survive in a culture of rape, violence, and abuse. Girls and women are directly or indirectly affected by sexual violence and abuse, physical violence and abuse, and/or emotional abuse sometime in their lives. The OJJDP says, **“sexual assault is a risk factor for both boys and girls, but the rate of exposure to this risk factor is greater for girls”** (Slowikowski 3). Children, girls and boys, who grow up in communities that face poverty, widespread drug use, and gang presence are also often exposed to general community violence. Community violence—defined by Mental Health Systems, Inc. of San Diego as frequent and continual exposure to the use of guns, knives, and drugs, and random violence—often leads to feelings of anxiety, low-self-



*One out of every six women in America will be sexually assaulted sometime in her life.*

esteem, fear, aggression, PTSD, depression, anger, distrust, alienation, betrayal, and impaired body image. These feelings often manifest as behaviors such as learning difficulties, trouble paying attention, acting out or risk taking behaviors, suicide attempts, fighting, inappropriate sexual activities, involvement in prostitution, and involvement in drugs, making community violence a tragically cyclical problem (Hamblen 1). It is no surprise, then, that girls in the juvenile justice system have higher rates of histories of abuse than girls who are not involved in the system (Slowikowski 3), pointing to the lasting, negative effects of violence. Much abuse of young women especially at the hands of parents or random violence is tragically unavoidable. However, if girls are able to build confidence, learn to respect themselves and their bodies, and to make responsible choices at a young age, some violence against them can be prevented. The Center for Community Solutions, a domestic violence prevention organization in San Diego notes that roughly 30% of teens nationwide are affected by relationship violence (Wager), therefore if girls are taught how to make healthy choices before they grow older and enter into potentially harmful relationships, teen relationship violence, for example, can be prevented. The education of boys and men is equally, if not more, critical to preventing and ending violence against women and girls. Girls are increasingly becoming perpetrators of violence themselves and must be taught healthy coping skills for anger and other emotions. The prevention of all forms of violence must be a priority for those interested in empowering girls.

Adolescent girls who are exposed to community violence, have experiences of trauma or abuse, or are involved with alcohol and drugs are in danger of becoming involved with the juvenile criminal justice system. **The OJJDP defines delinquency as “the involvement of a child younger than 18 in behavior that violates the law.** Such behavior includes violent crime, property crime, burglary, drug and alcohol abuse, and status offenses (i.e., behaviors that would not be criminal



The typical female juvenile offender is age 14 to 16; therefore prevention efforts are necessary beginning at younger ages.

if committed by an adult) such as running away, **ungovernability, truancy, and possession of alcohol” (Slowikowski 2). Considering that “the typical female juvenile offender is age 14 to 16” (Baeza 1), prevention efforts are necessary beginning at younger ages. It is known that “girls in the juvenile justice system are more likely to have a history of abuse and neglect than nonjustice-involved girls” and “there is further evidence that girls more often experience certain types of trauma (e.g. sexual abuse and rape) than boys” (Slowikowski 3). Factors significantly correlated with girls’ delinquency are: negative and critical mothers, harsh discipline, inconsistent discipline, family conflict, frequent family moves, multiple caregivers, longer**

periods of time with a single parent, and growing up in socioeconomically disadvantaged families (Slowikowski 12). Young people who have parents involved in the criminal justice

system are also more vulnerable to becoming involved in the justice system themselves. Girls Inc., an education program for girls, reports that the custody rate for African-American young women is more than three times that for white young women (Girls Inc. 2), pointing to racial inequalities within the justice system and with access to resources for young women of color. Educating young people about the consequences of becoming involved with drugs, gangs, violence, and therefore the criminal justice system, is recommended as a prevention strategy. Similarly, developing positive motivations in young people through exposure to alternative activities is recommended as a prevention strategy.

Girls even as young as those ages 8 to 12 are vulnerable to the influences of direct and indirect gang involvement. Girls who live in low-income neighborhoods and have family members or friends involved in gang activity are most susceptible to the consequences of gang related activity. Gang involvement for females can include being a full member of a female gang or an **integrated gang, being a “homegirl” associated with a gang, or being an alibi for crimes committed by gang members.** The OJJDP reports, “though most females join gangs for friendship and self-affirmation, recent research has begun to shed some light on economic and family pressures motivating many young women to join gangs” (Moore 2). “Drug offenses [are] the most frequent cause for arrest” for female gang members and women associated with gangs. It appears that more females are dealing drugs, often those drugs to which they are addicted (Moore 5). Girls are being recruited by gangs or involved younger than before; the pimping out of young girls as sex workers by male gang members is a growing problem. The National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families states, “prevention efforts are particularly important given the young age at which many gang members join”: most gang affiliated youth join between ages 12 and 14 (National League 1). Providing girls with support, mentorship, and consistent care is essential in preventing gang involvement, as many seek the love of a family in the familial structure a gang. Similarly, teaching young people about making responsible choices and motivating them to work towards their goals diverts them from potential gang activity. Educating girls about the negative consequences of being associated with gangs and gang members, such as serious physical harm or death, jail and prison time, and drug abuse, also hinders participation in gang activity.

*Though most females join gangs for friendship and self-affirmation, recent research has begun to shed some light on economic and family pressures motivating many young women to join gangs.*

*The film Gangs: Awareness and Prevention, by the San Diego County Office of Education, CSU San Marcos, and the Vista Sheriff's station, suggests the following tactics for parents to help prevent gang involvement; these strategies are useful for educators as well.*

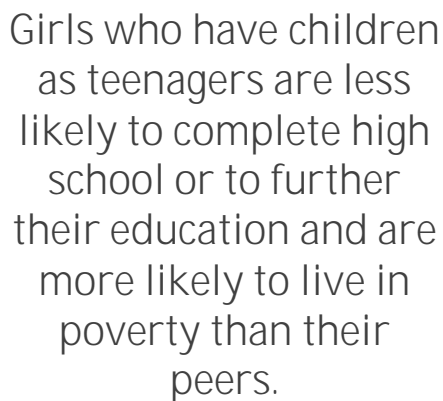
spend time with your kids • ask questions • find out their interests • get involved in community activities • find community resources • show your love • create a routine • develop rules and consequences • know their friends • know who they communicate with • be a model of forgiveness

Prevention efforts must focus on diverting girls from using and abusing drugs and alcohol. “A number of findings have shown that adolescent females display unique vulnerabilities that can lead to substance abuse. Furthermore, research reveals that drug abuse has a profound impact **on teen girls, both physically and psychologically” (Girls and Drugs 2). Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** reports that key risk factors for substance abuse, such as stress, depression, anxiety, physical or sexual abuse, and excessive concerns about weight and appearance, are also key elements by which girls and young women are affected (Girls and Drugs 4). According to several studies, young people begin experimenting with drugs at ages 12 to 17; considering this reality, drug and alcohol prevention efforts must target younger children to prevent them from ever using drugs in the first place. Effective drug prevention strategies include education about the harmful physiological, emotional, and social effects of drugs, engaging young people in school and positive extra-curricular activities, teaching young people healthy coping skills, how to resist peer pressure, to care for their bodies, to value their safety, and to make healthy choices for their future.

More girls of younger ages are being sexually exploited and getting caught up in prostitution, defined as that oldest of professions whereby a person is paid in exchange for sex. Women in prostitution may be paid for sex strictly in money, often little of which they keep for **themselves, or may engage in “survival sex” in which “sex is offered for food, shelter, protection, or money” (Slowikowski 12).** According to Stirring the Fire, a global multimedia movement dedicated to empowering girls and women, it is estimated that one million girls are coerced into prostitution internationally each year and almost three million girls are modern day slaves in the sex industry (Borges). According to the documentary Very Young Girls, girls who come from homes where drugs, gangs, and sexual abuse are present are most at risk for being involved in prostitution than other girls, although abusive coercion, low self-esteem, and the need for familial connection are the most common reasons for involvement in prostitution. Prostitution is illegal in most states, which means that women get arrested for selling their bodies even though it may be due to their own abuse and victimization that they are caught up

in the first place (Very Young Girls). In San Diego in 2010, prostitution and sex trafficking of young girls was a growing problem. As previously mentioned, young girls are often pimped out at prostitutes as part of gang involvement; investigative reporter Ana Tintocalis reported in a local newspaper that more gangs in San Diego are turning to pimping for profits which means more young girls are being targeted for prostitution (Tintocalis 1). Suggested strategies to prevent young girls from becoming involved in prostitution include keeping them out of the influence of gangs and drugs, providing stable mentorship and encouraging familial support, and teaching girls to value and protect their sacred bodies.

Although rates of teen pregnancy are going down overall, the number of pregnancies among young women is still **too high**. **The National Latino Research Center (NLRC) reports, “the incidence of pregnancy among teenage girls is considered a serious societal problem in the United States due to the economic and health issues associated with early parenting” (NLRC 1).** Although rates of pregnancy among girls ages 8 to 12 are low in general, preventing girls from becoming pregnant as teenagers requires that preventative education efforts target younger girls. **The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) states, “medical complications from**



Girls who have children as teenagers are less likely to complete high school or to further their education and are more likely to live in poverty than their peers.

pregnancy are the leading cause of death among girls ages 15 to 19 worldwide. Compared with women ages 20 to 24, girls ages 10 to 14 are **five times more likely to die from childbirth...worldwide”** (The Girl Effect 2). Girls who have children as teenagers are less likely to complete high school or further their education and are more likely to live in poverty than their peers. Similarly, children of teen mothers have an increased risk of health complications and are more likely to live in poverty than other children (NLRC 1). Even if a young girl plans to become pregnant—as opposed to becoming pregnant by accident or as a result of being raped—a girl who becomes pregnant at a young age may do so to get attention, attempt to please an abusive

partner, or feel loved by someone; considering the lifelong consequences of having a child, these are not encouraging rationales to risk the economic and health issues associated with early parenting. Comprehensive sex education is a key strategy to lowering rates of teen pregnancy and STDs, as well as providing girls with positive, pro-social alternatives to sexual activity. It is imperative that this education is presented to girls even as young as 8 to 12, which is ideally prior to their becoming sexually active.

For each of the issues previously highlighted, girls who live in poverty are at a higher risk. Poverty is defined as the lack of basic human resources such as food, shelter, clothing, and money; in the United States, most people living in poverty are relatively poor compared to other members of society in that some basic needs are met but they may possess fewer resources, opportunities, or goods (AmeriCorps 18). **“In 2005, women and children (under 18) represented 74% of the total number of people living in poverty [in the United States]”** (Girls Inc). Girls living in poverty, like many people living in poverty, are faced with homelessness,

unemployment, fewer educational opportunities, fewer health care options, and higher rates of illness and substance abuse issues; girls of color in the United States are more likely to live in poverty than girls who are white (AmeriCorps 26). The OJJDP reports that **“poverty and economic marginality”** have long been associated with gang emergence and that gangs proliferate during periods of unemployment (Moore 2).

Gabriela Baeza, a girls education specialist with the San Diego County Office of Education, explains that girls who run away from home to escape abuse or other circumstances, then, are often leaving one bad situation for another: federal investigators say one out of three teenage girls living on the streets will be lured into prostitution or fall prey **to street gangs within 48 hours of leaving home. Stirring the Fire states, “Empowering women with resources has proven to be the most effective means of getting a family, community, and country out of poverty” (Borges). Strategies that work for bringing girls and communities out of poverty include promoting literacy and education, providing skills training, improving health care, and meeting basic needs.**

**“Empowering women with resources has proven to be the most effective means of getting a family, community, and country out of poverty”**

-Stirring the Fire

Teach girls to deconstruct media images.

Influential media exposure infiltrates the minds of girls ages 8 to 12 at an alarmingly high degree. The inundation of media influences in our society such as television, movies, the internet, music, and magazines has real effects on our minds and **bodies. “The average North American girl will watch 5,000 hours of television, including 80,000 ads, before she starts kindergarten” (Baeza 1). Despite the incredible benefits that the presence** of advanced media technology has in our lives, especially the ever-increasing possibilities for communication and interconnection of people around the world, media can be dangerous. The majority of the images seen in advertisements and in the media portray women (and men) in stereotypical roles: women are shown as sex objects and/or doing traditional female work. Many of the images we see have also been photo-shopped or altered to portray a **different version of “reality” than we may believe. Women of color, when portrayed at all in the media, are often shown in negative and/or stereotypical roles; variation of body type, size, and**

ability in mainstream media imagery is rare; variation of gender expression and sexuality in mainstream media imagery is rare; and safety on the internet is compromised by cyberbullying and online criminal activity. This media influence manifests in the minds and bodies of tween girls as unrealistic body expectations, stereotypic racial and gender ideas, and misguided notions of love, success, and career opportunities. Effective strategies for teaching girls about the realities of media exposure include: discussing the role of media, doing activities that critically analyze and deconstruct images shown in the media, teaching girls about internet credibility, safety, and manners, and teaching girls how to create their own media through arts education and technology education.

Unrealistic and unhealthy body expectations, **including “ideal” sizes, weights, abilities, and physical attributes, influence girls ages 8 to12.**

**Body image, or how one views one’s own body, is an essential** element of self-esteem: in general, those who view their own bodies positively have higher self-esteem than those who view their own bodies negatively. Girls ages 8 to 12 are at an age in which their minds and bodies are changing and developing: body hair begins to grow, **menstrual cycles begin to flow, and hormones influence emotions. Standards of “normal” and “beautiful” put forward by the media, parents, peers, and society at large (i.e. thin body, small clothing size, large breasts, no hair except on your head, smooth skin on your face) mean that girls at this age often feel pressured to look a certain way. This pressure, however unrealistic, unhealthy, or at odds with one’s abilities or body, sometimes sadly manifests as low self-esteem, eating disorders, desire for plastic surgery, self-mutilation, and bullying or aggression. The average age at which girls begin dieting, Baeza notes, is nine years old (Baeza 1). Escape from the pressure to attempt to conform to these bodily expectations is challenging, however, there are several effective strategies for combating mainstream society’s pressures and** encouraging girls to have healthy bodies and positive body image. Some strategies include teaching girls to accept and appreciate their bodies as they are, providing opportunities for a variety of physical activities, discussing healthy eating habits, providing healthy snacks and meals, teaching girls how to give and receive compliments, deconstructing media images, and presenting positive role models who embody a variety of sizes, weights, abilities, and appearances.



Considering the issues illuminated in the previous paragraphs, it is clear that educating and engaging girls is critical. Girls everywhere are deserving of specific attention with regards to these issues. The Girls Only Initiative in San Diego was started based on these motivating factors. Girls Inc states, **“In a world where gender expectations still play a significant role in defining young people’s lives and their aspirations for the future, girls’ communities [girls’ groups] help girls build their sense of self and develop their confidence by offering them**

opportunities to express themselves, be heard, and **explore their world in a safe environment**" (Girls Inc. 19). And investing energy into girls is not a fruitless endeavor. Educating and empowering girls ripples out into the community and benefits everyone (The Girl Effect). **Phil Borges of Stirring the Fire claims, "the world empowerment of women and girls is essential to our prosperity and peace."** **When girls are empowered,** peace and nonviolence are possible; it is imperative that we work to empower girls.

Offer girls opportunities to express themselves, be heard, and explore their world in a safe environment.

## WHY PREVENTATIVE EDUCATION?

Education comes in many forms and is any site where people learn; education can be formal schooling, personal experiences, and specialized training in vocations, physical and creative endeavors, and spiritual practices. In the United States, quantity and quality of education help **determine a person's ability to contribute as a responsible citizen and earn enough money to make a living.** Preventative education is education that is specifically designed to stop something from happening, usually intended to prevent people from getting involved with elements that are harmful. In this case, preventative education intends to prevent young girls from getting involved with gangs, drugs, prostitution, violence, and unplanned pregnancy by building self-esteem and empowering girls to make healthy choices. Preventative education differs from intervention education in that it attempts to attend to an issue before it develops into a problem, whereas intervention attempts to intervene in some way once an issue has already become a problem. Both prevention and intervention are relevant and effective forms of education and they are often and necessarily utilized simultaneously. Girls Only is designed as a preventative education program, but can be employed to intervene in the lives of girls who are already in need of help.

Girls who are engaged in positive activities such as school or sports or prevention or intervention programs are more likely to complete school, attend college, positively serve their communities, and reach their potential for future success than their peers who get caught up and get into trouble.

## PREVENTION CAN LOOK LIKE MANY THINGS

10 strategies for working with girls, from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP):

- 1) staff training on adolescent development, risk and resiliency, and cultural sensitivity
- 2) **education that addresses girls' academic and social life**
- 3) skills training that helps girls discover their strengths and adopt pro-social skills, which may include self-defense training, self-esteem enhancement, empowerment training, and assertiveness training
- 4) culturally relevant activities such as cultural fairs and lessons on diversity
- 5) career opportunities that include not only exposure to role models from career fields women have not traditionally pursued, but also internship and job shadow opportunities
- 6) health services offered to girls through referrals to community
- 7) mentoring opportunities between students and positive female role models
- 8) recreational and peer activities
- 9) community involvement through service-learning experiences

Preventative education approaches that are able to address the particular needs of the participants served in a comprehensive, holistic manner are most sustainable and effective. The Prevention Institute states, **“successful violence prevention integrates an understanding of complex issues, policies and systems that affect children, families, and communities into an action plan that strategically coordinates, supports, and strengthens multiple efforts”** (Prevention Institute v). The National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families states, **“partnerships are crucial to this work, bringing knowledge, relationships and resources to the table and yielding broad community support for sustained efforts”** (National League 17). It is evidenced that education curriculums that engage students for 16 weeks have the highest success rates, although prevention education courses can range from short, one-time presentations to day-long workshops to a multiple week course.

Preventative education that is interactive, experiential, engaging, and relevant to the students is shown to be especially effective. In *Schooling Young Children: A Feminist Pedagogy for Liberatory Learning*, Jeanne Brady explains, **“curriculum must be made relevant so that it not only strengthens intellectual development, but makes the connection between knowledge and the everyday to expand our capacity to live more fully in the world”** (Brady 83). Talking with and listening to girls talk about their lives as they live them, then, is an especially valuable strategy

for preventing violence, drug use, unsafe sex, and delinquency. Recalling that she was often bored in class, bell hooks, in the introduction to *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, explains that a paradigm that shaped her ideas of radical pedagogy is the notion that the classroom should be and can be an exciting place. **She continues that the excitement can “co-exist with and even stimulate serious intellectual and/or academic engagement” (hooks 7). Experiential education that includes hands-on, creative, exploratory learning relevant to students’ own life experiences is a holistic approach to education and can be a stimulating way to engage and excite learners.**

Preventative education approaches that are comprehensive and holistic are most sustainable and effective.

### Why girls only:

Why is it useful for interactive, preventative education efforts to take place in single gender spaces? Education that attends to the specific needs of girls in a girls-only space can be powerful: single gender groups can function as safe spaces where girls feel they can say what they feel and what they want without judgment and where they can share life experiences with peers who have similar experiences. The single gender approach to girl groups has roots in the consciousness raising group tradition of the feminist movement, during which women met to talk about their lives as women (Baxandall and Gordon). Although this toolkit makes the case for gender specific education, co-ed preventative education is both necessary and effective;

*In girls-only spaces, girls can discover commonalities and celebrate differences.*

single gender groups ideally operate as components of comprehensive prevention programs. Gabriela Baeza, a girls education specialist with the San Diego County Office of Education, explains that it is important to have girls-only spaces so that girls can discover commonalities with each other, instead of

resorting to the cattiness and aggression often found amongst girls. In single gender spaces girls can appreciate their racial, cultural, religious, body size, and ability differences while also **celebrating their similarities. Girls Inc. research explains, “girls’ communities offer girls the opportunity to say what they really feel, to be listened to, to try new things, and to be leaders”** (Girls Inc). Baeza also notes that single gender spaces are especially helpful for girls who have experienced trauma since abuse is often at the hands of men and boys. Also, for girls ages 8 to 12, single gender education is useful as they begin feeling changes within their bodies, discovering sexuality, and constructing their sense of self. Girls Inc also reports that girls who **are current participants of girls’ communities are significantly more likely to expect to go to**

college than girls who have never participated. It is for these reasons that the Girls Only toolkit is intended to focus on the needs of girls in single gender spaces.

### Organizations of note:

A review of organizations with similar missions and structures as Girls Only demonstrates the validity of the proposed efforts and provides further rationality for the use of engaging preventative education for girls. The following organizations are nationally recognized as organizations working to empower girls through gender-specific education. Each of the programs highlighted local facilitators to operate groups in local communities. There are countless grassroots groups, programs, and classes that operate independently around the country. Although it is not in the scope of this research to highlight every grassroots effort, this research acknowledges the unending support of girls and girl groups by mentors, teachers, and activity facilitators. All efforts to empower girls serve as inspiration for Girls Only. For in-depth descriptions of these organizations, refer to the appendix.



Girls Circle is a nationally recognized, research-based curriculum **program for girl groups. The Girls Circle model is, “a structured support group for girls from 9 to 18 years, integrates relational theory, resiliency practices, and skills training in a specific format designed to increase positive connection, personal and collective strengths, and competence in girls. It aims to counteract social and interpersonal forces that impede girls’ growth and development by promoting an emotionally safe setting and structure within which girls can develop caring relationships and use authentic voices”** (Girls Circle).



Girls Inc. **develops “research-based informal education programs that encourage girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual and emotional challenges. Major programs address math and science education, pregnancy and drug abuse prevention, media literacy, economic literacy, adolescent health, violence prevention, and sports participation”** (Girls Inc).

The Girl Scouts of America is a national organization developed from the tradition of Boy Scouts of America. Girls can begin scouting at elementary school ages and continue through their teen years. Girl Scouting **aims to build “girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place through a myriad of enriching experiences, such as extraordinary**



field trips, sports skill-building clinics, community service projects, cultural exchanges, and **environmental stewardships” (Girl Scouts).**

## WHY SAN DIEGO?

General San Diego information:

San Diego is the southernmost county in the state of California and is bordered by Riverside County to the north, Imperial County to the east, and Mexico to the south. San Diego is home to approximately three million people, a quarter of whom are under 18. **San Diego’s population is** incredibly diverse, made up of native San Diegans, immigrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, and people from different regions and states who move to San Diego for the military, school, jobs, and climate. San Diego has a visible military presence and hosts bases and ports for many branches of the military. State, private, and community colleges educate thousands of students each year, and attractions such as the San Diego Zoo and world renowned beaches and surf make San Diego an international tourist destination. Forty-two public school districts educating students from kindergarten to 12th grade, 10 tribal gaming casinos, seven county jails, and a state prison serve the population of San Diego County.



San Diego statistics:

San Diego faces several historical and modern social challenges. Although San Diego is a large area made up of many boroughs, each that face various and different issues, several affect the **San Diego community as a whole. California’s border with Mexico is cause** for much debate about immigration, drug trafficking, labor relations, and environmental policy. San Diego is home to people of extreme wealth, with some residents qualifying as billionaires, and to people living in relative poverty, with 367,000 county residents living below the national poverty line in 2008 (CPI 1). San Diego is racially diverse and is home to over 20 ethnic groups, with over 60 languages spoken (SDUSD). There are over 100 gang sets in the City of San Diego and many more in the county. Border politics, racial divides, gangs and drug activity, high unemployment rates, prisoners returning to the community, and general community violence provide grounds for enhanced prevention efforts.

Filling a need:

Girls Only, a gender-specific, race-conscious, engaging preventative education program for girls ages 8 to 12, is a unique program and fills a need in San Diego. That being said, Girls Only is not

the only prevention program for girls in San Diego. Local approaches proven effective to prevent kids from getting into trouble include mentoring, tutoring, education-based, faith-based, and comprehensive wrap-around services. A review of programs in San Diego with the targeted mission of empowering girls demonstrates the validity of the proposed efforts and provides further rationality for the use of engaging preventative education for girls ages 8 to 12. Similarly, coed violence prevention and intervention programs in San Diego serve as models for Girls Only. Programs of local renown include the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF), From the Inside Out, Turning the Heart Center, Difference Makers/Blue Ribbons, Reality Changers, Inner City Youth (ICY), Mental Health Systems (MHS) Inc., STAR/PAL, Mid-City Community Action Network (Mid-City CAN), Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA programs, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, other organizations that have youth oriented prevention programming, and various programs within **the local schools. The following organizations, STAR/PAL's GirL-E program, Girls United to Succeed (GUTS), and the Jessie AfterCare Program, are programs in San Diego that seek to empower girls through gender-specific education. For in-depth descriptions of these organizations, refer to the appendix.**

STAR/PAL's GirL-E Program is a leadership and empowerment program for girls in juvenile detention facilities. The program's mission statement states, "GirL-E was created by STAR/PAL in response to a period of rising violence against and/or involving young females. The program offers a 6-week curriculum designed to empower participating teenage girls by developing their leadership and decision-making skills. GirL-E is a life-changing, educational program which focuses on building self-esteem and making healthy life choices. GirL-E strives to prevent young females from getting involved in substance abuse, eating disorders, early onset of sexual activity, a sedentary lifestyle with bad nutritional choices, **and other negative conduct...which often lead to depression, suicide attempts, violence, or becoming a part of the juvenile justice system. Lessons provide girls with the tools to make positive decisions and to avoid risky adolescent behaviors"** (STAR/PAL 1).



GUTS, or Girls United to Succeed, is a gender-specific intervention program for middle and high school girls ages 12 to 18 years run by the San Diego County Office of Education. The goals of the GUTS program are: 1) to outreach and build positive mentoring **relationships with girls, 2) to utilize girls' "real life" experiences to teach them alternative behaviors for positive results, 3) to affect personal change and emerge as peer facilitators (leaders) to future GUTS groups, 4) to positively connect with school and recognize academic achievement as a key to success and happiness"** (GUTS brochure).

The Jessie Aftercare Program is an intensive mentoring program for girls ages 15 to 17 to ensure successful transition (re-entry) to their homes, schools, and communities from the juvenile justice system. The mission statement reads: “The Jessie Program works to empower young women involved in the juvenile justice system by increasing their opportunity for a hopeful future through mentorship” (Jessie Program).



The **Young Women’s Studies Club**, YWSC, is a multi-tiered, feminist mentoring program for girls ages 15 to 19 at Hoover High School in San Diego. The YWSC is a joint effort between Hoover High School and the Women’s Studies Department at San Diego State University (SDSU), bridging the academy and the community. The club’s mission is to empower young women and to “encourage self-esteem, goal setting, pursuit of education, healthy relationships, and cultural competency” through “distinct activities, speakers, films, artistic creations and writing projects accomplish the goals stated above” (Cayleff).

Though every group could not be highlighted in this research, girl groups operating at San Diego schools, through local chapters of Girls Scouts and Girls Inc., and through community organizations empower girls every day and serve as models for Girls Only. Similarly, the local co-ed programs previously mentioned engage young people daily and are powerful inspirations for Girls Only.

### Girls Only:

The Girls Only program is designed as a preventative education program to inspire and promote self-love, self-esteem, and motivation, to develop life skills, to keep girls who are at risk out of the influence of gangs and drugs, to inspire girls to further their education, and to prevent unplanned pregnancy. Girls Only is specifically targeted towards girls ages 8 to 12. Girls Only began operating at the Boys and Girls Club in Encanto in the Southeast region of San Diego County in the summer of 2009. Girls Only is now a “highlighted program” at the Boys and Girls Club in Encanto. Under the facilitation of the Girls Only Committee, a collaborative group formed from dedicated representatives from several county agencies and community organizations, Girls Only has operated once a week for four, approximately 10-week



“It changed me a lot and I think I’m a very strong girl”

-Girls Only participant



sessions for a year and a half. The Girls Only Committee (GOC) met approximately once every two months during this time. Girls Only is projected to expand programming to young girls and organizations throughout the county. Because Girls Only is a new program, official data regarding the success of the program, that is, measuring whether girls who have been involved in the program have higher self-esteem, stay in school, and have lower rates of gang involvement, drug use, and unplanned pregnancy than their peers, is not available. Information based on assessments and evaluations from the past year of Girls Only, however, is available and encouraging.

The girls who attend Girls Only programming at the Boys and Girls Club in Encanto are predominantly African-American, some Latina and white, and have an average family income of under \$20,000 per year. All of the participants attend Boys and Girls Club programming during the after school hours. Some of the girls have family members who are incarcerated or involved with the criminal justice system. Many of the girls are in danger of being influenced by gangs and drugs and of engaging in risky sexual behavior solely because of the intersecting elements of their identity: their gender, race, age, nationality, and locality put them at risk for the negative issues discussed in the previous sections.

The girls who were part of the inaugural year of the program were positively impacted by the program. The participants did not immediately get along with each other and often hung out in exclusive cliques. Similarly, many of the girls were not interested in listening to the session facilitators. As the sessions continued and the girls got to know each other and the GOC, they hugged the facilitators and shared personal stories. Rahsaan Brown, a member of the GOC representing the San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention, cites teamwork exercises, positive reinforcement, and the dedication of the GOC as the most effective elements in reaching the girls. Girls and Boys Club staff have pointed out changes in Girls Only

**participants' behavior outside of Girls Only hours, including willingness to discuss issues with each other and with staff members and willingness to help others instead of fight. The kids in Girls Only are interested, talented, and creative!**

***"I learned that there are many different ways to be responsible and respectful"***

*-Girls Only*

When asked in the summer and fall sessions of 2010 what they learned overall at Girls Only, girls participating in the program said: **"I learned that when you get angry you could just calm down and take a few seconds to relax, "I learned that everyone should be nice and treat people right," "to respect others and stay safe," "everyone has a talent," "how to express feelings better," "I**

learned that there are many different ways to be responsible and respectful,” “I learned that you can be what you want when you are older,” “I learned a bunch of things but my favorite thing that I learned was to be respectful to each other.”

When asked how being in Girls Only has changed them, girls said: “to be nice,” “In Girls Only I have more self control and...have more confidence,” “I try to fight less,” “I started to do my laundry without being asked,” “it changed me a lot and I think I’m a very strong girl,” “it helped me choose better choices,” “if I feel upset or down I know how to calm myself down,” “I do not let people get to me, I do less crying,” “it helped me with my manners,” “it made me feel good about myself,” “I learned a bunch of things but my favorite thing was to be respectful to each other,” and “I changed a lot because we all girls worked together.”

When asked what their favorite Girls Only activities were the girls said: “the talent show was fun and people had a lot of talent...I learned to show respect,” “career day because it helped me learn new things,” “my most favorite Girls Only activity was [the] field trip...[I learned to] get along,” “the talent show was my favorite and I learned how to build up confidence,” “I learned in yoga class to be healthy,” “the talent show was my favorite thing because I got to show off my moves and I had the crowd cheering for me,” and “I think the talent show was my favorite because I learned that everyone has talent.”

**“It helped me choose better choices”**  
-Girls Only participant

### Conclusion:

The research cited provides a theoretical foundation for the creation of a gender specific, culturally specific, experiential, and relevant preventative education that attends to the practical needs of young girls. The serious issues that girls face, from physical violence to unrealistic body expectations, are acknowledged with a heavy heart; the strategies for prevention and the opportunities available for helping girls become their highest potential are identified with hope. The preceding research presents an overview of general issues girls face, **preventative education strategies, and San Diego’s potential to address these needs effectively.** This research should be taken as only a beginning examination, as each of these subjects warrant pages and hours more of research and discussion. The Girls Only toolkit is intended as a contribution to the efforts to empower and educate young girls. What follows is an overview of Girls Only, operational procedures for implementing and running a Girls Only program, and lesson plans for conducting Girls Only sessions.

## THIS PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW OF GIRLS ONLY

**What:** This toolkit is an interactive, fun, preventative education program for girls. Race, class, and cultural awareness are intentionally interwoven into the framework and lessons. Hands-on activities, art, and technology are employed as engaging teaching methods.

**Who:** Intended participants: girls ages 8 to 12 (can be modified to include both younger and older participants)

Intended service providers: teachers, counselors, and staff involved in existent youth organizations (ex: Boys and Girls Club); volunteers and staff from local community organizations and colleges/universities

**Where:** at youth organizations, after-school program facilities, school classrooms, churches, juvenile detention facilities

**When:** 6 to 16 week programs, ~1 day a week, ~1 hour/day, during existent program operating hours

**How to use this toolkit:** There is no right or wrong way to implement this toolkit! The Girls Only toolkit is a guideline for implementing a gender-specific, race and class conscious, interactive, critical education program for girls. The lessons and operational procedures of Girls Only are adaptable; it is imperative that modifications be made to the activities to best reflect the population served. You may follow the lesson plans verbatim or personalize the program for your area and change lessons to better suit the needs of your participants. This toolkit can be modified for 16, 12, 8, 6, and 4 week programs and according to the needs of your participants and organization. Also, if desired, each lesson can stand alone. The lesson plans are arranged by topic and will be effective in any order; the order given is only a suggested progression. There are 1 to 4 lesson plans to accompany each topic; lesson plans range from 15 minutes to 2 hours; each lesson plan can and should be appropriately modified for age levels, length of program, and length of Girls Only day. Several of the activities teach about more than one theme; you can mix and match or combine lessons according to your time constraints to best fit the needs of your participants.

# OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES OF GIRLS ONLY

## Materials:

- Lesson plans
- Forms (templates for useful forms are included at the back of this toolkit)
- Meeting space
- Staff or volunteers
- Basic office supplies (pencils, pens, large poster paper, folders/portfolios)
- Journals (one per participant)
- Computer with PowerPoint and internet capabilities, television, and stereo
- Additional materials are needed for some lessons; review needs prior to day of lesson

**Permission Slips:** A permission slip handed out at the initial session will communicate to parents and guardians the goals and schedule for the program. Provide incentives to ensure permission slips are returned at the next session! Permission slips are also recommended, if not legally required, for field trip participation. A sample permission slip is provided in the appendix; use it as is, or modify it to fit the specificities of your program. It is recommended to provide permission slips in the language spoken by the parents or guardians in the home.

**Sign-in:** Sign-in sheets are recommended for each session to keep track of attendance. A generic sign-in sheet is provided in the appendix; use it as is, or modify it to fit the specificities of your program.

**Assessments:** Pre-Assessments measure what participants already understand or feel before they begin the program; Mid-Assessments measure what participants understand or feel after having completed half of the activities; Post-Assessments measure what participants understand or feel after having completed all of the activities. Ideas for informal post-assessments to measure students' learning are included with each lesson plan. Assessments of individual participants' needs are also essential to address how best to work with that participant and determine if referrals for outside services are needed. Sample assessments are provided in the appendix.

**Evaluations:** Evaluations measure the effectiveness of the activities in the lesson plans. Are the participants learning what you want them to be learning? Are the topics you cover relevant for the participants in your program? Are the activities and strategies communicating the intended message of your lesson? Opportunities for formal and informal program evaluation, such as suggestion boxes and end-of-program questionnaires, should be offered to program participants throughout the session. Ideally, formal evaluation of all components of the program will be conducted by an outside agency to provide objective and constructive critiques. Sample evaluations are provided in the appendix.

**Rules:** Rules are important for the structure of class sessions. You can develop the rules or

allow program participants to help create the rules. Allowing the participants to create the rules conveys the expectation that the class will operate as a community and makes them more **willing to abide by the rules. Rules can be both general (“be respectful”) and specific (“raise your hand to speak in class”) and should be brief and positive (stay away from rules starting with “no...”)**. **Once established, post the rules where they are visible and go over them often** (Frey 15, 16). Here are some sample rules: 1) What is said in Girls Only, stays in Girls Only. 2) Be respectful. 3) Make eye contact when talking. 4) Clean up after yourself. 6) Keep your hands to yourself. 7) One person talks at a time.

**Safe Space:** It is imperative that Girls Only facilitators create physically and emotionally safe environments where the participants feel safe to share their feeling and ideas. Maintaining confidentiality, trust, and openness between participants and facilitators through dedication, consistency, and active listening will help establish this environment. Creating rules such as **“what happens in Girls Only stays in Girls Only” or “what is said in here stays in here”** can also help establish this safe space. Posters and room decorations including encouraging quotes, student produced art, and depicting women of various colors, sizes, and ability performing a variety of jobs help create an environment of possibility.

**Journals:** Journals provide a space for written reflection. Each lesson should conclude with time for the girls to write or draw in their journals. With permission or requests from the participants, the journals will be read only by Girls Only teachers. Journals should be distributed and discussed at Girls Only orientation, written in at each meeting, kept safely at the Girls Only meeting space throughout the session, and taken home by participants at the end of the session.

**Motto/Mantra:** A motto is a phrase or saying that is repeated as an affirmation or a reminder. A Girls Only motto can be a guiding principle for your group, a way to get the **participant’s attention during** a lesson, and an empowering affirmation for participants. Some examples of mottos or mantras include:

- I am strong. I am beautiful. I am perfect just the way I am.
- I believe in myself. I believe that I can do anything I put my mind to.
- I am powerful. I can change my life. I can change the world.

**Themes:** Having an overarching theme for Girls Only sessions can be a useful addition to the lesson plans. Themes that are carried through a 12 or 16 week session can help connect seemingly unrelated topics and can help incorporate creativity into the lessons. Themes can be **broad, such as “courage,” “compassion,” or “respect,” and facilitators can intentionally** connect lessons to the theme, ask participants to do so, or simply introduce the theme at the outset of the session and come back to it at the end.

**Interactive Lessons:** Experiential education that includes hands-on, creative, exploratory learning **relevant to students’ own life experiences is a holistic approach to education and** can be a stimulating way to engage and excite learners. This means reading, writing, and discussing

poetry and other arts, using educational videos throughout lessons, and getting participants up out of their seats and into their communities as often as possible. Though some suggestions for incorporating arts and technology are integrated into lesson plans, specific videos and online activities should be researched and included as necessary.

**Sister Bucks:** Sister Bucks are part of an incentive program designed to reward Girls Only participants for positive behavior. The protocol for Sister Bucks, how participants can earn Sister Bucks and what they can be used for, should be introduced at orientation. Sister Bucks can be earned through active participation during Girls Only sessions, for being helpful to others, earning certain grades in school, demonstrating progress in a personal goal, and for special occasions. Once participants have earned a specified number of Sister Bucks, they can **be used to “purchase” items from a Girls Only store (treats, clothes, books, movies, etc)**, donated to a friend, or donated to the facilitator to be traded for actual money that will be donated to a **charity that promotes women’s rights. Sister Bucks can be incorporated into lessons about financial literacy, teaching participants to save and spend money responsibly.**

**Guest speakers:** Guest speakers and guest activity leaders can be great additions to Girls Only. Guest speakers add expertise and new perspectives and are often engaging for students. Screen your guest speakers before they come to ensure their professionalism, age appropriateness, and relevance for your program. Find suggestions for guest speakers in the **“Related Activities” section included in some lesson plans.**

**Field Trips:** Field trips can be educationally and socially engaging additions to Girls Only; destinations and purposes should be aligned with goals of Girls Only. Field trips must be planned ahead of time, with attention to budget, transportation needs, and other logistics. Additional permission slips may be necessary for field trips. Find suggestions for field trips in the **“Related Activities” section included in some lesson plans.**

**Graduation:** The purpose of a graduation celebration or ceremony is to acknowledge the completion of a Girls Only session and the work put in by the participants throughout the session. A graduation ceremony should take place on the final day of the session and program participants should receive a graduation certificate. Graduation eligibility may be determined at your discretion; it is recommended that girls who have attended a majority of the Girls Only classes during that session should receive a certificate. A lesson plan for graduation and a template for a graduation certificate are included in the appendix.

**Participant’s Roles:** The participants are the girls who attend Girls Only. The activities in this toolkit are participant centered and should be representative of and tailored to the needs of **the participants. It is the participant’s role to attend Girls Only sessions, participate in sessions, follow rules, and have fun!** This toolkit is designed to serve groups of approximately 5 to 30 participants per group.

**Facilitator's Roles:** It is the facilitator's role to attend Girls Only sessions, prepare, lead, and participate in sessions, a safe space, act as a role model, mentor participants, maintain records, maintain relationships with parents/guardians, and make referrals to community organizations when necessary. Aligning with the goals of Girls Only, it is recommended that the majority of facilitators be women who can act as positive role models. It is at your discretion whether or not to have men as facilitators; male facilitators can act as much needed positive male role models in the lives of the participants. It is recommended that facilitators be passionate about social justice, trained to work with youth, and committed to continuing their own relevant education and training.

**Planning Committee:** The lessons in this toolkit are designed to be operated and facilitated by staff members/volunteers at an existing program facility or host agency. It may be useful to create a planning committee who will oversee prepping for lessons and organizing Girls Only logistics, such as field trips. This planning committee can include the Girls Only facilitator(s), host agency staff members, volunteers, and parents/guardians. The original Girls Only program was operated by a unique collaborative of representatives from government agencies, including **the San Diego County District Attorney's office, the City of San Diego's Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention, San Diego Police Department, the Boys and Girls Club in Encanto,** and representatives from community based organizations. It will be at your discretion how often to meet, how to best communicate, and how roles and responsibilities will be divided.

**Mentorship:** If Girls Only participants vary in age, it is beneficial for older participants to act as peer mentors for younger participants. Positive peer-to-peer mentorship helps build social and communication skills, empathy, and motivation in both mentor and mentee. Mentors and mentees should be paired based on assessments of each participant, noting compatibility and shared interests. Mentors should be volunteers who are trained and given clear expectations. Mentors can work with mentees for portions of lessons, on special projects, or outside of Girls Only. It is also beneficial to recruit volunteers from local high schools or colleges to act as mentors or assist facilitators.

**Parent/Guardian Involvement:** Involvement of and support from parents/guardians sets the tone for Girls Only as a holistic approach to prevention education. Having parents/guardians involved promotes healthy interaction between children and parents/guardians, provides insight into the home lives of participants, and provides opportunities to refer participants and parents/guardians to outside services if necessary. Having an open-door policy where parent/guardian contribution is welcomed and encouraged is beneficial to building a Girls Only community. Create opportunities for parents/guardians to volunteer at Girls Only functions, but do not require participation. A lesson plan for a parent/guardian orientation appears as the second lesson plan in this toolkit.

**Records:** Keeping a portfolio for each participant is a useful way to maintain records. Keep track of permission slips, assessments, work done during the Girls Only program, copies of

grades, evaluations, referrals, and disciplinary action. Records will be useful for getting to know your participants, measuring progress throughout the program, referring participants to outside services as necessary, and speaking with parents/guardians.

**Referrals:** It is beneficial to have partnerships with local organizations and service to refer Girls Only participants and their families to services as necessary. You will be working closely with the participants and assessing their needs (emotional, social, physical, mental, academic); although you may be able to address some of their needs, it is integral for you to refer them to social services such as free or low-cost meals, health care, or mental health counseling if the need arises. If your position designates you as a mandatory reporter, you are required by law to report any abuse or neglect you become aware of. Representatives from these community organizations can be invited to Girls Only as guest speakers. Find a template for a referral form in the appendix.

**Disciplinary Action:** Before beginning a Girls Only program, decide what will be cause for disciplinary action. How many absences will you allow? Will you tolerate participants talking out of turn? Will you tolerate fighting in the Girls Only space? How many chances will you give? As Girls Only is a unique space, it is recommended you retain structure while being flexible based on the needs of your participants and staying true to the goals of the program. In case there is a need for serious disciplinary action, follow the procedures of the host agency and remove the participant from Girls Only if necessary.


**Teaching Tips:** Be a role model. Use positive reinforcement. Be someone participants can talk to. Express enthusiasm for the topics presented. Demonstrate your care for each participant as an individual. Expect your participants to do well. Be prepared for lesson plans. Incorporate arts and technology into lesson plans. Ask open-ended questions.

**Money:** There are no specific costs for operating a Girls Only program. Girls Only is operated by volunteers and in-kind services. The host agency may incur regular programming costs for general supplies and staffing. Some lessons and activities require materials that may need to be purchased. Similarly, it may be useful to have money for field trips, transportation for field trips, and unforeseen expenses for celebrations and treats. Fundraising and applying for grants is recommended.

## The Activities: Lesson Plans

### Sample Girls Only day:

- ✓ Greetings, check-in
- ✓ Discussion (lesson)
- ✓ Activity (lesson)
- ✓ Debrief
- ✓ Journaling



Reminder! Lessons take planning. Read the plans ahead of time so you can prepare materials and make any necessary arrangements.

Lesson plans for a 16 week program: As previously noted, this toolkit can be modified for 16, 12, 8, 6, and 4 week programs according to the needs of your students and your organization. The lesson plans that follow are arranged by topic. The lessons will be effective in any order; the order given is only a suggested order. There are several lesson plans to accompany each topic; lesson plans range from 15 minutes to 2 hours. Each lesson plan can and should be appropriately modified for age levels, length of program, and length of Girls Only day. Several of the activities teach about more than one theme; you can mix and match or combine lessons according to your time constraints to best fit the needs of your students. Each lesson plan contains the following elements:

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):** The main theme or topic of the lesson.

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** What the students hopefully will be able to do or understand at the end of the lesson.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** A brief synopsis of the issue or history upon which the lesson is based **(for the facilitator's benefit).**

**MATERIALS:** Supplies or equipment needed for participation in the lesson.

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** The duration it takes to complete this activity.

**PROCEDURE:** The steps taken to conduct and participate in the lesson including teacher preparation, guiding questions, and closure for student reflection.

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** Ideas for what participants can write about following the lesson.

**EVALUATION:** **Methods for measuring students' learning and effectiveness of the lesson.**

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** **Suggestions for extending the lesson's theme or topic beyond the activity, connecting the lesson's theme or topic to other disciplines, and/or for field trips and guest speakers.**

**Welcome/Orientation:** Welcome and orientate participants to program.

Lesson Plans:

- 1) Orientation
- 2) Parent/Guardian Orientation

Lesson: Orientation

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is Girls Only?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Welcome participants to program; participants and teachers get to know each other; create or review rules; distribute journals; introduce motto, theme, Sister Bucks, and rewards system.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: An orientation sets the tone for all subsequent meetings. An orientation provides a space for participants to get to know each other and for facilitators to make expectations clear. This is the starting point—make it fun so the participants will want to come back!

MATERIALS:

- Permission slips
- Sign-in sheet
- Name tags
- Notebooks/journals
- Pens or pencils
- Several pieces of poster-sized paper
- Large pens
- Motto
- Rules (optional)

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Participants sign in as they enter the room and sit in a circle (or at tables according to their age group).
2. Staff members introduce themselves (name, something you like to do).
3. Participants introduce themselves (name, age, favorite color/food/thing to do/etc).
4. Getting-to-know-you/sponge activity #1—see attached lesson plans.
5. If creating rules, have a teacher or volunteer act as a recorder and have girls think of what rules they would like to have in their Girls Only program. Rules are important for the structure of class sessions. Allowing the participants to create the rules conveys the expectation that the class will operate as a community and makes them more willing to abide by the rules. Rules can **be both general (“be respectful”) and specific (“raise your hand to speak in class”) and should be brief and positive (stay away from rules starting with “no...”)**. Here are some sample rules: 1)

- What is said in Girls Only, stays in Girls Only. 2) Be respectful. 3) Make eye contact when talking. 4) Clean up after yourself. 6) Keep your hands to yourself. 7) One person talks at a time.
6. After rules have been agreed upon, have one person read one rule and then discuss that rule as a group. Go through all rules. Ask if there are any questions about the rules. Post the rules where everyone can see them.
7. If reviewing pre-made rules, have one person read one rule and then discuss that rule as a group. Go through all rules. Ask if there are any questions about the rules. Post the rules where everyone can see them.
8. Post the motto where everyone can see it. Have a teacher or volunteer read the motto out loud. Have all of the participants read the motto together. Ask them to discuss what the motto means, explain why that is the motto, and ask if there are any questions about the motto.
9. Getting-to-know-you/sponge activity #2—see attached lesson plans.
10. Explain and discuss the Sister Bucks program, discuss rewards system.
11. Distribute journals. Have participants write their names inside the journal. Have them write down the motto on the first page and, if they choose, draw a picture. Have them write two **words that describe how they're feeling about starting the Girls Only program**. Collect the journals and explain that the journals will stay at Girls Only and that they can take them home at the very end of the program.
12. Distribute permission slips—to be returned the following week.
13. Dismiss participants and invite them to come back the following week!

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is the motto? What does the motto mean to you? How are you feeling about starting Girls Only?

EVALUATION: Did the participants seem excited about the program? Were the participants engaged and participating during the various activities during the lesson? Did the journal responses indicate that the girls were looking forward to participating in the Girls Only program? Did the girls return the following week?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Participants can memorize the motto and teach it to a friend or family member. Participants can memorize one or two rules and teach them to a friend or a family member. Send a letter home with the participants welcoming them to the program.

### Lesson: Parent/Guardian Orientation

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is Girls Only?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: **Welcome participants' parents/guardians to program; parents/guardians and facilitators get to know each other; parents/guardians have opportunity to ask questions about the program.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Involvement of and support from parents/guardians sets the tone for Girls Only as a holistic approach to prevention education. Having parents/guardians involved promotes healthy interaction between children and parents/guardians, provides insight into the home lives of participants, and provides opportunities to refer participants and

parents/guardians to outside services if necessary. The parent/guardian orientation ideally happens immediately following the first session of Girls Only. It is at your discretion whether or not to have the participants at this event or not.

**MATERIALS:**

- Permission slips
- Sign-in sheet
- Pens or pencils
- Motto
- Rules
- Resource packets—directory of local community organizations and service agencies

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 20 to 30 minutes

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Participants sign in as they enter the room and sit in a circle.
2. Staff members introduce themselves.
3. Parents/guardians introduce themselves and say the name of their child.
4. Discuss the purpose and goals of Girls Only. Review rules, motto, themes, Sister Bucks, disciplinary policy, and referral process.
5. Share Girls Only schedule with parents/guardians, emphasizing field trip, talent show, and family day dates.
6. Discuss the open-door policy for parents/guardians. Explain that parent/guardian involvement is welcomed and encouraged: parents/guardians are welcome at all Girls Only sessions and activities.
7. Distribute and explain resource packets. These packets should be a directory of local community organizations and service agencies.
8. Open the floor for questions and comments. Let parents/guardians know you are available at anytime they may have questions or comments.
9. Distribute permission slips—to be returned the following week.
10. Dismiss parents/guardians and invite them to come back to subsequent sessions.

**EVALUATION:** Did the parents/guardians seem excited about the program? Were parents/guardians engaged with the purpose of the program? Were you able to answer parent/guardian questions? Is there any follow-up needed?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Parents/guardians may attend/help with Girls Only sessions. Parents/guardians may attend/help with field trips. Ask parents/guardians for resources or suggestions for lesson plans, guest speakers, or related activities.

**Getting-to-know-you/Sponge Activities:** These activities can be used as getting-to-know-you activities, as **in-between activities to redirect participant’s energy and attention, and to “soak up time” if necessary, as would a sponge. There are hundreds more of these kinds** of engaging activities for young people; find activities that will best suit your participants and the dynamics of your group.

Lesson Plans:

- 1) Getting-to-Know-You BINGO
- 2) **“If you were in my shoes...”**
- 3) Two Truths and a Lie
- 4) Question Ball

Lesson: Getting-to-Know-You BINGO

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How are we similar? How are we different?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by asking each other questions, **writing down each other’s names, and identifying similarities and differences.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: This exercise is a getting-to-know-you ice breaker that gets participants up and moving around and talking to each other. It is also a powerful way for participants to see they are not alone and others may share their life experiences. Knowing they **have an ally amongst their peers may save someone’s life as feeling isolated or outcast is a common cause for gang and drug involvement and suicide.**

MATERIALS:

- BINGO sheets
- Pens or pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Prepare a BINGO sheet for each participant.
2. Explain to participants that this is a way for them to learn about each other and find out what they have in common and how they differ.
3. Explain that for this game they will have 10 minutes to fill out their BINGO sheets with the names of their peers. Explain that they will walk around asking each other questions from the **BINGO box and then write their friend’s name down for that box. Give an example: “if the BINGO box says ‘brown eyes’ you might ask your friend ‘do you have brown eyes?’ or ‘what color eyes do you have?’ then you would write their name in the box. The goal is to get all of the BINGO boxes filled in, but it is not a race or competition.**
4. Pass out the BINGO sheets and pens or pencils. Direct the participants to write their own name for one box. Remind them they can only put their name in one box!

5. Direct the participants to stand up and begin mingling and filling in their BINGO sheets. Give participants 7 to 10 minutes for this activity.
6. Bring participants back to their seats. Remind them it is ok if they did not fill in the entire sheet.
7. Ask participants to stand up if the box you read fits them. Read a few boxes, pausing between each one to give participants time to sit back down.
8. Begin a discussion by asking: What did you notice? Did you know you were not the only one who...[something from a BINGO box]? **How did it make you feel to do this activity?**

JOURNAL PROMPT: Write a few sentences about the box you put your name in. What is something surprising you learned about someone else?

EVALUATION: Did participants fill in a box with their own name? Did participants mingle as they got names for each box? Were participants able to analyze the information in the boxes, finding commonalities and differences amongst themselves?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create their own BINGO sheets with creative ideas for each box.

### Sample BINGO boxes (create a BINGO sheet that best suits your participants!)

- Brown eyes
- Green eyes
- Blue eyes
- Is an only child
- Has an older sibling
- Has a younger sibling
- Babysits for siblings
- Knows how to swim
- Was born in another country
- Parents do not speak English
- Speaks two languages
- Has bullied someone
- Has been bullied
- Has a family member in jail
- Has heard gun shots
- Lives with only one parent
- Lives with grandparents or aunts or uncles
- Adopted/foster care
- Has traveled out of the state
- Has lived in another state
- Has traveled out of the country
- Has been in a fight
- Knows somebody who has died from violence
- Has been to 2 or more schools
- Can cook food from their culture
- Is afraid of flying
- Wants to be an artist

# BI N GO

Has brown eyes	Has been in a fight	Plays sports	Babysits for siblings	Wears glasses
Wants to go to college	Has an older sibling	Wants to be an artist	African-American	White
Has four letters in her first name	Is afraid of flying	Knows how to swim	Parents do not speak English	Has a family member in jail
Has been bullied	Likes to read	Has gotten at least 3 <b>A's</b> in school	Knows somebody who has died from violence	Has travelled to another country
Has no brothers and sisters	Can cook food from their culture	Speaks two languages	Likes scary movies	Has blue eyes

## **Lesson: “If You Were In My Shoes...”**

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How are we similar? How are we different?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by sharing what life is like “in their shoes;” participants build empathy by identifying similarities and differences.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: This activity is a way for participants to share what their life is like **and to learn about what other’s life is like. It is also** a powerful way for participants to see that they are not alone and that others may share their life experiences. Knowing they have an ally amongst their peers will help the girls feel accepted and understood.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils, crayons

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 to 20 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Pass out paper and pens. Have participants sit at desk or table. Explain that today they will **have a chance to share what life is like “in their shoes.” Share the idea that no one really knows what someone else’s life is like unless they “walk a mile in their shoes.” This means that everyone’s life experiences are unique and that no one can know exactly what their life is like unless they tell them.** Considering this, it also means that they should try to understand someone else before judging them or criticizing them.
2. Direct the participants to draw a shoe on their paper. Then have them write or draw what it is like to live in their shoes. They should finish the sentence, “If you were in my shoes...” several times. They might write: “...you would have to walk through a gang neighborhood to get to school,” “...your mom would yell at you to make breakfast every day,” “...you would see your sister do drugs.” Participants can work together. Assist as necessary.
3. Participants clean up their work stations as they finish their shoes. Arrange chairs in a circle.
4. Invite participants to stand up and share what life is like in their shoes, displaying their shoe pictures as they speak. Ask the group to notice any similarities amongst their lives. Ask follow-up questions in private as necessary.
5. Explain that as our feet grow or our shoes get worn out, we may need new shoes. Explain that this means that as we grow and get older and mature, we change. Explain that this means that we can always change our lives; we can always get a new pair of shoes.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is life like in your shoes? What do you like about living in your shoes? **What is something you’d like to change about life in your shoes?**

EVALUATION: Did the participants share aspects of their life on their shoe pictures? Did participants seem interested in learning about the lives of their peers? Did participants understand that everyone has different experiences?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Organize a shoe drive and have participants donate their gently used shoes to other children. Have a company donate shoes to Girls Only.

\*Activity adapted from multiple sources.

### Lesson: Two Truths and a Lie

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How well do we know each other?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by sharing facts (and fictions) about their lives.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Explain that this ice breaker will be a fun way for everyone to get to know each other. Tell participants that in this game they will each share three things about themselves: two things that are true and one that is not. After they share their three things, the rest of the group will guess which one is not true.
2. Explain that the truths can be anything about themselves that they want to share. Give **examples such as, “I have a dog” or “My parents are divorced” or “My favorite ice cream flavor is chocolate”**. Now explain that the lie can be creative and outrageous or can be something that the others might actually think is true to try to trick them. Give examples such as, **“I have a cat” (you don’t have a cat) or “I traveled to France this summer” (you didn’t, but you hope to go someday!)**. Do a sample by sharing two truths and a lie and having participants guess which one is your lie.
3. Give participants a few minutes to think of their three things. Have them write all three things on paper.
4. Have one participant say their three things out loud and allow the others to guess which thing is not true. Continue having each participant share and having the others guess. Allow discussion to follow based on what each **participant shares (example: “Oh wow, I didn’t know you had a dog! What is her name? What kind of dog is she? Do you walk her?”)**
5. When everyone has shared, remind participants that this was a game and that you are not promoting lying.

EVALUATION: Did participants share information about themselves? Were participants creative **with the fictions they told about themselves?** Did participants express interest in each others' lives?

JOURNAL PROMPT: What were your two truths? What is something that is true about you that **you didn't share out loud? Have you ever told a lie? Why did you tell it?**

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Change the game to be two lies and a truth. Engage participants in a longer discussion about honesty and lying.

### Lesson: Question Ball

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can we get to know each other quickly?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by answering questions chosen randomly.

MATERIALS:

- One, two, or three small beach balls
- Collection of questions

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Preparation: write questions or short comments on the beach balls in permanent ink. Samples: favorite movie, favorite food, what grade are you in? favorite color, everyone do jumping jacks, favorite subject in school, run in place for 10 seconds, show a dance move.
2. As the facilitator, start by introducing yourself (Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_) and then tossing the ball in the air and catching it. Read whatever question or comment your right thumb lands on out loud and answer it.
3. After the question is answered, toss the ball to someone in the group. Whoever catches it stands up, introduces themselves, reads the question or comment out loud, then answers or performs the answer.
4. Continue tossing the ball until everyone in the group has had a chance to introduce themselves.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What was your favorite question ball question to answer? Why?

EVALUATION: Did participants answer the questions? Were participants engaged as they got to know each other?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create their own question balls to learn more about their peers.

**Self-esteem:** Participants develop ways to build their self-esteem; participants discuss obstacles to high self-esteem. While these lessons specifically address the topic of self-esteem, most lessons in the Girls Only toolkit help build self-esteem.

Lesson plans:

- 1) "I am..." poem
- 2) Qualities I Love
- 3) Compliments
- 4) Silhouette
- 5) Beauty

**Lesson: "I am..." poem**

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How do you identify yourself? How do you see yourself?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: **Participants describe themselves using "I am..." statements; participants practice saying positive things about themselves; participants build empathy by learning about each other and observing commonalities.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: According to cultural scholars, our identities are not static, but rather ever-changing based on our experiences as we move through the world. Describing elements of your identity can help you engage in self-reflection and focus on aspects of yourself you are proud of or aspects of yourself or your life you would like to change. When young women **"know who they are," that is, when they are confident in their identity and with the fact that some parts of who they are will change, they are less likely to give in to peer-pressure and be involved in risky behavior such as drugs, violence, and early sexual interactions. This exercise allows participants to identify who they are and how they feel at this moment in their life (ex: "I am a student" or "I am scared that I will not graduate from high school").**

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils, markers, crayons
- Small mirrors
- Picture frames
- Craft supplies: stickers, colored paper, special pens

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 hour-1 and a half hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Set up craft supplies and a frame for each participant.
2. Explain that in this activity participants will get to describe themselves in a poem. They will get to share how they feel, how they see themselves, what they like to do, what they are good

at, and what they wish for. There are no rules except that each statement should begin with “I am...” Statements can be positive, negative, or neutral, but they should be true. The poems will be about 10 lines and each stanza will begin or end with “I am “participant’s name””

3. Give an example of your own “I am...” poem.

*I am a teacher.*

*I am a woman.*

*I am a dancer.*

*I am Gabriela.*

*I am a child of divorce.*

*I am worried sometimes.*

*I am happy when I am cooking.*

*I am Gabriela.*

*I am a volunteer.*

*I am hopeful.*

*I am grateful for my friends.*

*I am Gabriela.*

4. Give each participant paper and a pen or pencil. Direct them to write 10 to 15 “I am...” statements on their paper. If they need help thinking of statements, provide them with suggestions of adjectives, feelings, or descriptions of themselves based on what you know about them. Give participants 10 to 15 minutes to write their statements.

5. When each participant has written 10 to 15 “I am...” statements, direct them to get into pairs. Have participants choose which partner will go first. This partner will read their “I am...” statements first.

6. Pass out a mirror to each pair.

7. Have one partner be the listener and hold up the mirror so that the partner who is reading can see themselves in the mirror. When you say to begin, have all of the readers read their poems out loud while looking directly at themselves in the mirror. When everyone is finished, have them read their poem again, this time looking directly at their partner, not at themselves in the mirror. Remind the participants who are listening that it is ok to look into someone’s eyes; it shows that you are interested in what they are saying, even if it feels a little uncomfortable.

8. Switch partners and repeat the activity.

9. When all participants have read their poems aloud, collect the mirrors. Ask participants to quickly share: How did it feel to read your poem while looking at yourself in the mirror? How did it feel to read it while looking at your partner?

10. Have participants return to their seats.

11. Direct participants to choose their favorite “I am...” statements to include in their finished “I am...” poem. They can choose them all or only a few. Their poem should be about 3 stanzas. Have them write out a draft of their poem, including the “I am “participant’s name”” lines.

12. Give participants time to write out a final copy of their poem on paper that will fit into the frames. Allow them to decorate their poems and their frames creatively! Clean up supplies when finished.

13. **Display the “I am...” poems throughout the Girls Only space. Have participants walk around to look at each other’s poems and creativity or give time to do this another day. Allow participants to take their poems home at the end of the Girls Only session.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: How did it make you feel to describe yourself? Do you like who you are? What would you not change about who you are? What do you want to change?

EVALUATION: **Did participants write “I am...” poems? Were participants engaged in describing themselves? Did you observe participants gaining confidence as they described themselves in the mirror and to their partners?**

RELATED ACTIVITIES: **Have participants create “You are...” poems where they practice giving and receiving compliments by describing positive aspects about their peers.**

Lesson: Qualities I Love (adapted from TKF)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What characteristics do you love about yourself?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants identify qualities about themselves they like and are proud of; participants create a craft project representing those qualities.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Self-esteem is defined as how you see yourself, how much you value yourself, how important you think you are, and how you feel about your accomplishments. Recognizing and being proud of your strengths is different from bragging or believing you are perfect. Having self-esteem means knowing you are worthy of being loved and accepted. Even if there are many things you may want to change about yourself, focusing on your positive **qualities or those that you don’t want to change is a powerful exercise in building confidence.** Teaching young people to love themselves and value their bodies, especially as they mature through puberty, helps them navigate pressures and difficulties they face as they enter adulthood.

MATERIALS:

- Colored paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Stickers or other decorative craft supplies
- Pens, pencils, crayons

LENGTH OF LESSON: 25 to 30 minutes

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be thinking about themselves and all the qualities they are proud of or love about themselves. These qualities can be physical (ex: I love my hair, eyes, strong arms, feet that allow me to walk and dance) or otherwise (ex: I love that I am loyal to my friends, I love that I try hard in school, I love that I treat people with respect).
2. Remind participants this project is not about bragging, we are not trying to make anyone feel bad if they do not have the same quality. Tell them this project is about being proud your own strengths and loving yourself. Tell them that even though there may be some things we want to change about ourselves, it is also very important to recognize the things we would not want to change.
3. Direct participants to write 5 to 10 qualities they possess in their journals. Assist as necessary. Give 5 to 10 minutes for them to brainstorm.
4. When participants have finished writing in their journals, pass out the scissors, paper, glue, pens, pencils, and crayons, and other craft supplies.
5. Explain that they will be making flowers out of paper. On each petal of the flower, they will write a quality they love about themselves.
6. Demonstrate cutting out flower petals and remind participants their petals can look however they want them to. Participants should cut out 5 to 7 petals. Demonstrate cutting out one small/medium sized circle to be the center of the flower. Participants can use any color paper they wish.
7. Direct participants to write their top qualities from their journal onto each flower petal. They can write their name in the center.
8. When participants have finished writing their qualities on the petals, demonstrate putting glue on the back of center piece and gluing each petal to the back. Direct participants to glue their petals to the back of the center piece. Assist as necessary.
9. When participants have completed their craft, invite them to share the qualities they love about themselves with the group.
10. **Hang the “Qualities I Love” flowers around the Girls Only space or allow participants to take them home.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is a quality you **like about yourself you don’t often show others?** How can you show it more? What is a quality you like about yourself that you do often show others? How can you show it more?

EVALUATION: Were participants able to identify positive qualities about themselves? Did **participants create a “Qualities I Possess” flower craft?**

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Participants can practice giving and receiving compliments by making similar flowers identifying qualities they admire in their friends. This activity can be expanded to teach participants about types of flowers, flower parts, and plant life.

## Lesson: Compliments

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How do you give a compliment? Why do you give a compliment? How do you receive a compliment? How do compliments make you feel?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants practice giving and receiving compliments verbally; participants gain confidence by identifying personal talents and practice being respectful by identifying admirable qualities in others.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Think about how good it feels to hear someone say something nice **about you, about how you look, about something you did, or something you created. That's the power of compliments!** Young women sometimes have trouble giving compliments to each other for fear that the object of their admiration will find them jealous or insincere. Similarly young women sometimes have trouble accepting compliments, often thinking the giver of the compliment is making fun of them, is jealous or insincere. Teaching young women not to be afraid to give a compliment and how to accept a compliment can help them maintain healthy friendships and be proud of their own strengths, thereby resisting peer pressure, avoiding friends **who don't treat them with respect** and helping build self-esteem.

LENGTH OF LESSON: 20 minutes

### PROCEDURE:

1. Have participants sit comfortably in a circle in chairs or on the floor. Sit in the circle with participants.
2. Explain that today they will be giving each other compliments or saying nice things about each other. Explain that telling someone something nice about how they look, something they did, or something they created makes them feel good. Just think about the last time someone **gave you a compliment and how it made you feel! Compliments can make someone's day! Tell them that it also makes you feel good to give a compliment because it makes someone else feel good!** Explain that they will be getting and giving compliments today.
3. Explain how the pattern will go. Someone will start by giving a compliment to their neighbor. **That neighbor will say "thank you" and then give a compliment in return. Then they will turn to their other neighbor and repeat the pattern.**
4. Give an example as the facilitator by turning to your neighbor and giving them a compliment **followed by their name: "Your hair looks beautiful today, Sarah" or "I like that you are always helpful, Sarah."** Direct that participant to accept the compliment graciously by saying thank you and then the giver's name: **"Thank you, Ms. Lopez."** Then direct the participant to give a compliment in return: **"Your outfit is nice today, Ms. Lopez."** Accept the compliment graciously: **"Thank you, Sarah."** Direct the participant to turn to the neighbor on their other side and give them a compliment.
4. Continue around the circle until everyone has received a compliment from each of their neighbors, graciously received each compliment, and given a compliment in return
5. When compliments have been given and received all around the circle, ask participants to share how it felt to get compliments. Ask participants to share how it felt to give compliments.

6. Remind participants they might not always get a compliment back or get a satisfying response as they did in this practice, but it will feel good to make someone else feel good anyways. Remind participants they have nothing to lose by giving compliments and they should give them freely!

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is the best compliment you ever received? How did it make you feel? What is the best compliment you ever gave? How did it make you feel to give it?

EVALUATION: Did participants practice giving compliments? Did participants practice receiving compliments? Did participants share how it felt to give and receive compliments?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants practice giving compliments to their parents, siblings, and friends and to report back.

### Lesson: Silhouette Reflection

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What do you admire about your friends?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants identify positive attributes in each other; participants create likenesses of each other decorated with positive descriptions.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Girls ages 8 to 12 are physically and developmentally changing as they mature and go through puberty. As young people begin to form their sense of self and their own opinions during their impressionable pre-teen years, they are bombarded with messages from numerous cultural and social influences, including their parents, family, siblings, friends, peers, teachers, extra-curricular activity leaders, and the media. Teaching young women to recognize admirable qualities in others, give compliments, and accept compliments helps them maintain healthy friendships and can help them be proud of their own strengths, **thereby resisting peer pressure, avoiding friends who don't treat them with respect, and helping build self-esteem.** Recognizing and being proud of your strengths is different from bragging or believing you are perfect. Even if there are many things you may want to change **about yourself, focusing on your positive qualities or those you don't want to change is a** powerful exercise in building confidence. Teaching young people to love themselves and value their bodies, especially as they mature through puberty, helps them navigate pressures and difficulties they face as they enter adulthood.

MATERIALS:

- Large pieces of butcher paper
- Crayons or markers

LENGTH OF LESSON: 20 to 30 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Prepare large pieces of butcher paper long enough to fit participant's bodies.

2. Begin by explaining that today participants will be thinking about all the good things they think and see about each other. Remind them that sometimes it is difficult to remember all the great things about yourself, especially if people sometimes say mean things to you or about you. But sometimes other people can see positive things about you even if you have trouble seeing them or remembering them. Give an example: **“Theresa may not know it, but I think she is brave and smart for asking questions during Girls Only.”** Explain that today they will be giving each other compliments or saying nice things about each other. Remind them that telling someone something nice about how they look, something they did, or something they created makes them feel good. Just think about the last time someone gave you a compliment and how it made you feel! Tell them it also makes you feel good to give a compliment because it makes someone else feel good! Explain they will be getting and giving compliments today; they will **see how they look reflected in someone else’s eyes.**
3. Explain the activity. Participants will trace an outline, or a silhouette, of each other and then write positive words about each other on the silhouette.
4. Divide participants into pairs or small groups. Pass out butcher paper, crayons, and markers.
5. Direct participants to have the first model lie on the floor on top of the butcher paper. Have the other partner **trace an outline of their partner’s body using a crayon or marker. After the person is traced, have all members of the group decorate the silhouette to look like the person and write positive words about that person (examples: kind, helpful, funny, smart, enthusiastic, etc).**
6. Repeat until all participants have been traced and have positive words written about them.
7. When everyone has been traced, ask participants to share: How did it feel to describe your friend? How did it feel to hear the positive things your friend said about you?
8. Participants can take their silhouettes home and hang them up to remind them of all the wonderful things other people see in them.

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you made a silhouette reflection of yourself, what would you write on it? How did it feel to describe your friend? How did it feel to hear the positive things your friend said about you?

EVALUATION: Did participants trace a silhouette of their partner? Did participants identify positive characteristics in each other?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create a silhouette reflection of themselves as if they were looking into a mirror.

## Lesson: Beauty (adapted from SDCOE)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is beauty?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants create their own definitions of beauty; participants identify beautiful elements of themselves; participants deconstruct popular ideals of beauty.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: **Unrealistic and unhealthy body expectations, including “ideal” sizes, weights, abilities, and physical attributes, influence girls’ understandings of what is beautiful. Body image, or how one views one’s own body, is an essential element of self-esteem:** in general, those who view their bodies positively have higher self-esteem than those who view their bodies negatively. Girls ages 8 to 12 are at an age in which their minds and bodies are changing and developing: body hair begins to grow, menstrual cycles begin to flow, and **hormones influence emotions. Standards of “normal” and “beautiful” put forward by the media, parents, peers, and society at large (i.e. thin body, small clothing size, large breasts, no hair except on your head) mean that girls at this age often feel pressured to look a certain way.** This pressure sadly manifests as low self-esteem, eating disorders, desire for plastic surgery, self-mutilation, and bullying or aggression. The average age at which girls begin dieting, Baeza notes, is nine-years-old (Baeza 1). Although beauty is ultimately subjective, escape from the pressure to attempt to conform to these bodily expectations is challenging. Encouraging girls to accept and appreciate their bodies as they are, expanding the definition of beauty and recognizing beauty everywhere, providing opportunities for a variety of physical activities, discussing healthy eating habits, providing healthy snacks and meals, teaching girls how to give and receive compliments, deconstructing media images, and presenting positive role models who embody a variety of sizes, weights, abilities, and appearances are effective strategies for promoting self-esteem and positive body-image.

### MATERIALS:

- Pens and pencils
- Small pieces of paper, 3 per participant
- Small bowl
- Pictures of plastic surgery
- Videos or online videos about women and beauty

LENGTH OF LESSON: 30 minutes to 45 minutes

### PROCEDURE:

1. Pass out three small pieces of paper to each participant. Ask participants, without discussing, to write down their answer to this question: what do you see or feel about your body when you look in the mirror? Tell them their answers are anonymous.
2. Have them fold their papers in half and drop them in the bowl.
3. Explain that you will draw each paper out of the bowl, read it out loud, and then they will have to decide if the comment on the paper is positive, negative, or somewhere in the middle.

For example, if a paper says, “fat thighs” or “ugly face” you would put it in the negative pile. If a paper says, “strong arms” or “pretty face” you would put it in the positive pile. If a paper says, “tall” or “long hair” you would put it in the neutral pile.

4. When all the papers are sorted, ask participants to check and see which pile is the biggest. Was it the negative pile? Ask participants why they are so critical of themselves and where they think that comes from.

5. Now ask participants to name things that are beautiful. Ask them to explain what makes that thing or person beautiful. Examples include: sunset, [name of celebrity], my mom, the clouds in the sky, a necklace, the ocean, someone being kind to someone else, someone singing.

6. Remind participants of the variety of things they just identified as beautiful. Lead a discussion based on the following questions: What makes someone or something beautiful? Who decides what or who is beautiful? Does everyone see the same things as beautiful (is beauty objective or subjective)? Ask them why they might not have included themselves on that list of things that are beautiful. Do you really believe you are not beautiful? Is beauty on the inside or the outside or both? Is there a difference between bragging and being proud of yourself? Is looking “perfect” the same as being beautiful? **Ask for examples of ways people can be beautiful. Ask them to expand their definition of beauty beyond how something looks and if it is popular.**

7. After the discussion, show videos and photos about women and beauty, the fashion and cosmetic industry, plastic surgery, and eating disorders. Continue the previous discussion, asking participants to reflect on what they see. Prompt them with further questions such as: Why might someone get plastic surgery? Why might someone hurt themselves in order to look thin? What would you say to a friend if they are unhappy with how their body looks? What can you do to remind yourself how beautiful you are?

8. After the discussion, have participants turn to a neighbor and say three things they think are beautiful about themselves. Then have them turn to another neighbor and tell that neighbor three things they think are beautiful about that person. They can say elements of inner beauty or outer beauty or a combination of both.

9. Finish the lesson by telling all participants that they are beautiful! Remind them that you see how smart, unique, and creative they all are and that that makes them beautiful to you. Remind them to be confident in themselves and that loving yourself for exactly who you are at this moment is what is beautiful.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What makes you beautiful? Describe something beautiful you saw. What made it beautiful?

EVALUATION: Did participants define beauty? Did participants identify beautiful elements of themselves? Did participants deconstruct ideals of beauty?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants keep a beauty log, keeping track of everything, everyone, and every event they find throughout the week that is beautiful.

**Emotions/Feelings:** Participants identify emotions; participants examine the role emotions and feelings play in their lives; participants practice healthy coping skills.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Emotions
- 2) Crinkle Heart
- 3) Stress balloon

Lesson: Emotions (adapted from Vangie Akridge and My Community Huddle, Inc.)

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What is a feeling or emotion?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants identify emotions; participants describe their own feelings; participants act out emotions.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Emotions or feelings are complex psychological and physiological **reactions involving a person's state of mind and their surrounding environment.** Emotions include feeling angry, jealous, happy, sad, scared, guilty, grief, joy, trust, nervous, annoyed, shy, envious, desirous, disappointed, worried, furious, proud, regretful. People often feel more than **one emotion at a time and there are often multiple causes for someone's emotional state.** Emotions, feeling them, expressing them, or not expressing them, influence behaviors and actions; it is imperative to learn how to cope with emotions and how to express emotions in productive and positive ways so our actions can be aligned with how we wish to behave.

**MATERIALS:**

- Tables or areas labeled according to age group
- Journals
- Pens or pencils
- Large posted list of emotions

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Participants sign in as they enter the room and sit at tables according to their age group. Have a volunteer or teacher sit at each table.
2. Introduce the topic by saying that today we will be talking about things that go on inside of our bodies, some things we can see and some things we cannot see.
3. Ask the group to think about their bodies. Ask the group to raise their hands and say some body parts that can move (examples: arms, legs, eyes, mouth).
4. Explain there are some things that go on in our bodies that make us human that we cannot move or see. Ask for examples from the group (ex: problems, feelings, emotions).
5. Ask the group, **“what is a feeling or an emotion?” Ask the group to give some definitions.** Explain what a feeling or an emotion is and give some examples.
6. Within the small groups at their table, have each student describe one feeling they had today. The volunteer or teacher at the table can further guide the students to describe another

feeling they had that day, a feeling they had on another day, or ask why they felt that way (this is where it is suitable to direct the conversation based on age appropriateness).

7. After having shared at their small groups, have the students share with the whole group some feelings that came up in their small group.

8. Have the girls volunteer to silently act out an emotion one at a time in front of the whole group. Have the group guess what emotion is being acted out.

9. Have the girl stand in a line from shortest to tallest, facing the back of the person who is standing in front of them. Have the participants put their right hand on the shoulder of the person in front of them. Have them keep their hand on the shoulder and stretch out the line so that their arm is almost straight so that they have enough room to move.

10. Explain that for this activity, when a scenario is described that makes you feel good, stay **standing up**. **When a scenario is described that doesn't make you feel good, squat down**.

Explain that there is an in between, that they can squat slightly if they don't **feel all the way** good or all the way not good, as emotions are rarely completely good or completely bad. State various scenarios and have the girls react. Do about 10 scenarios. Sample scenarios: How do you feel when you get a good grade on a test and the teacher tells you that you did a good job? **How do you feel when you don't get a good grade on a test? How do you feel when your best friend doesn't want to play with you at recess? How do you feel when you don't get to spend the night at a friend's house?** How do you feel when you get to eat your favorite meal for dinner? How do you feel when your sister or brother gets to go somewhere that you want to go **and you don't get to go? How do you feel when you win the talent show? How do you feel when you don't win the talent show?** How do you feel when you get to pick what movie you and your friends will watch?

11. Explain that as they could see from this activity, we all have ups and downs and that we should treat each other as sisters.

12. Have participants turn to a neighbor in the line and tell them how they are feeling right now. Direct participants to say the motto of Girls Only to their neighbor.

13. Remind participants that emotions are an important part of life and are what make us human! Ask the participants to think about their emotions throughout the next week and notice what different emotions they have.

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** What is your favorite feeling to have? When was the last time you had that feeling and what made you feel like that? What is your least favorite feeling to have? When has how you felt about something influenced how you acted?

**EVALUATION:** Were the participants able to identify various emotions? Were the participants engaged and participating in the discussion and activities in the lesson?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Participants can keep a "feelings journal" and track their emotions throughout the week.

Lesson: Crinkle Heart (adapted from Youthlight Inc. training, "Mean Girls- Strategies and Resources in Identifying and Helping Relationally Aggressive Girls and Empowering Their Victims")

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How powerful are words?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants build empathy and demonstrate the power of words (both positive and negative).

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Words are powerful. Teasing, bullying, cattiness, name calling, gossiping, and discriminatory language can lead to depression, low self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, and even suicide. Similarly, compliments and kind language can build self-esteem and boost confidence. Teaching young people to use alternatives to language that hurts others and use language they are proud of helps facilitate effective communication and can help them avoid conflict.

MATERIALS:

- Large paper cut-out of a heart
- Paper heart cut-outs for each participant

LENGTH OF LESSON: 20 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. **Begin by asking the participants to raise their hands if they've** ever had their feelings hurt by something someone said. Notice that most of us have had our feelings hurt by words.
2. **Ask them to raise their hands if they have ever hurt someone's feelings using words.**
3. Explain that this activity is going to show how powerful words are—they can make someone feel really great or really terrible.
4. Show the large paper cut-out heart. Pass out a paper heart cut-out for each participant. Explain that this is a symbol of our own heart.
5. **Explain that we're going to talk** about words and actions that hurt us and make our hearts hurt. Give direction that for each word or action that makes us feel bad, crumple the heart a little bit.
6. Ask for examples of words or actions that hurt (ex: someone calls you stupid, ugly, other **examples of calling names, someone tells you that you aren't good at something, someone leaves you out, silent treatment, etc**). For each negative thing, crumple up the shape a little more.
7. Ask the participants to explain what they notice about the heart. What effect did all of those mean words have on your heart? Remind them no one likes to feel sad or angry or hurt, just like **they don't**.
8. **Now explain we're going to talk about words and actions that make us feel nice and make** our hearts feel better. Give direction that for each word or action that makes us feel good, un-crumple the heart a little bit.

9. Ask for examples of words or actions that feel nice (ex: someone tells you they like you, someone tells you they think you look nice today, kind words, compliments, making new friends, being included with others, working out problems kindly, etc). For each positive thing, smooth out the shape a little more.
10. Ask the participants to explain what they notice about the heart now. What effect did the kind words have on your heart? Remind them everyone deserves to feel happy, confident and good about themselves, just like they do.
11. Show that when the shape is unfolded, there are still wrinkles. Cruel words and acts remain inside a person for a long time. Ask the participants to remember the power of their words **before they say something that might hurt someone else's feelings or the next time they hear a mean name being called.**
12. **Ask the participants to go around the room and say one thing they'll remember from this activity.**
13. Students can tape or glue their crinkled hearts into their journals or take them home to remember the lasting power of words. The large heart can be hung in the front of the room as a visual reminder of the power of words.

JOURNAL PROMPT: Have you ever heard a joke that made someone else feel bad because of the words used? Write down the joke and explain why it would hurt their feelings. Is there a word you use that makes someone or a group of people feel bad? What is the word and what word or words could you use instead?

EVALUATION: Did the participants identify words that cause hurt feelings? Did they identify words that make them feel good? Did they crinkle the heart and un-crinkle it at appropriate times? Did the girls respond to the heart as a visual reminder of the power of words?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: If the large heart is hung in the front of the room, the facilitator can crinkle the heart if they overhear a negative comment.

Lesson: Stress Balloon (adapted from TKF)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What causes stress? What are some consequences of stress? How can stress be managed?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants brainstorm healthy ways to deal with and manage stress.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Stress is necessary, often helping us escape danger, perform under pressure, and motivating us to do our best. But too much stress, that feeling of being overloaded with too many things to do and not enough time to do them, can cause us to feel angry or agitated, withdrawn or depressed. Stress is both a mental and physical condition, commonly leading to a headache, heart beating fast, tense muscles, stomachache or indigestion, and sweaty palms. Along with their rapidly changing bodies, minds, and emotions, young people deal with stress due to school, friendships, parents/guardians, siblings, home life,

relationships, money, extracurricular activities, and uncertainty about the future. Noting the range of stressors acting upon them, it is important to teach young people how to manage stress in healthy ways. Teaching stress relief skills can help them avoid conflicts with others, self-harming behaviors, and violence.

#### MATERIALS:

- Balloons, at least one per participant
- “Joleen’s day” story

LENGTH OF LESSON: 25 minutes

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Explain that stress is a normal emotion and is part of being human. Tell participants that we may feel stressed if we are tired, have a test coming up, have a lot of things to do, or if we are having an argument with a friend. Stress can make us feel worried, nervous, angry, sad, or a combination of emotions. Being stressed out can cause us to be unfocused, out of control, or can lead us to make decisions such as giving up, ditching responsibility, or doing something dangerous like taking drugs or acting violent. Tell participants that everyone has different things that make them feel stressed, these are called stressors.
2. Have each participant say one thing that makes them stressed.
3. Explain that many things in life are stressful and that it is OK to be stressed. What matters is how we deal with our stress or anger or frustration.
4. Explain that the balloons represent their hearts and all the pain, hurt, anger, and stress that can be found inside of them. Explain that when we feel stressed our hearts are filling up like this balloon. Demonstrate by blowing into the balloon a little bit.
5. Each added stressor, or thing that stresses us out, is more air into our balloon. Blow into the balloon again.
6. Ask: as things happen to us that are difficult for us or make us feel bad (blow into the balloon a little more), what is happening to the balloon? (it is getting bigger)
7. Ask: what happens when our balloon is full and we try to add more air? (it pops)
8. **Explain that we need to release some stress or anger from our lives so we don’t pop or respond in an unhealthy way. Release air from the balloon.**
9. **Tell students: Listen to the story about Joleen’s day. Joleen’s day is full of stress; however she has found ways to relieve her stress so she does not “pop.” As you listen to the story, blow air into your balloon when Joleen feels stress and release air as Joleen relieves her stress.”**
10. **Hand out a balloon to each student. Read “Joleen’s Day.”**
11. **Ask students to discuss: What kinds of things filled Joleen’s balloon? What did Joleen do to release air out of her a balloon? What else could Joleen could have done to release air out of her balloon? What do you do to release air out of your balloon?**
12. Have students do the balloon activity with their own stress. This can be done one at a time with the whole group, in pairs, or in small groups.
13. Ask students to discuss: What kinds of things did you put inside your balloon? How did it feel to put those in your balloon? How are you affected by the feelings you keep inside? What

kinds of things helped you release your balloon? How did it feel to release your balloon? How can you better take care of yourself so you will have less stress?

14. Explain that sometimes our stress is too difficult to manage by ourselves. Ask: “who can we go to that can help us to relieve our stress? (ex: teacher, counselor, parent). Remind students this should be someone they can trust with their feelings and emotions.

15. Ask the students to give their balloon to someone they can trust, like giving their heart to someone, in exchange for that person being there for them when they need them.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What new way did you learn to relieve stress that you can try? Make a list of 7 positive things you can do to relieve stress next time you feel stressed, angry, or frustrated.

EVALUATION: Were participants able to identify stressors in the story and in their own lives? Were participants able to brainstorm ways to relieve stress in their own lives?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Ask participants to share positive ways they relieved stress over the past week. Ask participants to share a negative way they tried to relieve stress over the past week and what they could have done differently.

### **Stress balloon: “JOLEEN’S DAY”**

Joleen woke up in the morning to her mother yelling at her\* to get out of bed. She was very tired and not ready to get up, so she ignored her and stayed in bed. Her mother came into the room and pulled her covers off. She felt **very angry\***. **When Joleen’s mother left the room, she sat up and took three slow, deep breaths~. The she got** dressed and headed to the kitchen for breakfast. Her little brother was eating the last of her favorite cereal\*. She saw a box of a new kind of cereal she had never tried. She decided to try it and really liked it~. Now she had a new favorite cereal. After breakfast, Joleen finished getting ready for school and started to walk to school. Her friends had already left and she had to walk with the new girl in school that she did not know very well\*. Then Joleen began to talk to the girl and she was nice~. Joleen got to school early so she got to play before school~. But then a mean boy came up to Joleen and began to tease her and laugh at her\*. Once again, Joleen took three deep breaths~. She then asked the boy to leave her alone, but the boy would not \*. So Joleen walked away and found some other kids to play with~. Then the bell rang and school started. In class, Joleen realized she forgot to do her homework\*. She had to stay in at recess to finish her work\*. Then the teacher gave her a snack for being good and finishing everything~. **After school, Joleen’s mom was late to pick her up\***. **Then when they got home she had lots** of chores to do before she was allowed to play\*. Then her mom was yelling at her because she did not finish her homework from earlier\*. She was feeling frustrated so she went outside when she was allowed and went for a walk around her block~. Once she was calmer, she came in and finished her homework. She felt good that she completed it~. Then Joleen had a very good dinner~. After dinner, she got ready for bed and went to sleep, ready for her next day.

\*Stressful situations (blow air into the balloon)

~Coping skills used/positive things (let air out of the balloon)

Communication: Participants practice effective communication skills.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Ways to Communicate
- 2) Conflict Resolution
- 3) Online communication: Internet safety
- 4) Human knot
- 5) Forgiveness

Lesson: Ways to Communicate

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What are some ways humans communicate?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants learn about different forms of communication; participants practice different forms of communication.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Communication is what we do to give and get understanding; it is the process of sending and receiving messages. Successful communication occurs when there is understanding. Communication can be verbal, using oral language to convey a message, or non-verbal, including facial expressions, body language, text or written based language. Sometimes **a message's original meaning gets lost in the translation between thought** and the act of communicating it. Teaching young people how to communicate effectively helps them maintain healthy relationships, resolve conflicts peacefully, excel in school, and eventually get and keep jobs.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 30 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. **Begin by playing the game "Telephone."** Have participants sit in a circle. Ask one participant to think of a phrase or sentence. Direct them to whisper it in the ear of the person sitting next to them. Each participant whispers what they think they heard to the next participant next to them. The last participant says the phrase or sentence out loud. Ask the first participant if that was their phrase. Did anything change? Did the message get lost or changed in translation? This is an example of verbal communication.
2. **Now play the game "Charades."** Have participants get up one at a time to act out a phrase or sentence without using any words or sounds while the others guess the phrase or sentence. Ask participants to explain what they did to communicate their message when they were unable to use words (ex: facial expressions, body language, gestures). Were others able to guess the

phrase or sentence? Was the message delivered effectively? This is an example of non-verbal communication. Explain that we all communicate all day long, whether or not we are using words. Explain that others pick up messages from our facial expressions, body language, gestures, and general demeanor.

3. Have partners get in pairs. Direct them **to communicate “hello” to their partner three different ways**. If they need help, remind them that they can use verbal words, written text, their body or a gesture, or even do something creative.

4. Next have them communicate a feeling to their partner. Give examples of feelings: sad, angry, happy, excited, jealous, confused, or worried. The other partner will guess what feeling **they are portraying. For example if their feeling was “sad” they could say or write “I feel sad”, make a facial expression, or show with their body how they feel)**

5. **Give examples from “telephone” and “charades” to demonstrate that what you want to communicate is not always what others understand.** Explain this is how rumors and gossip spread: someone tells someone a secret and it gets passed on and it gets changed and distorted **along the way, just as the message did in “telephone.”**

6. Remind participants that being clear and concise in their verbal and non-verbal communication is an important life skill that needs to be practiced.

7. Finish by using non-verbal communication to ask participants to take out their journals or **that you’ll see them later or that you love them! Have participants guess your message and then do the action.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: How do you communicate most often? How would you get people to **understand you if you couldn’t communicate that way anymore?**

EVALUATION: Did participants practice communicating in multiple ways?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants tell a story about themselves without using words. Or using only words!

## Lesson: Conflict Resolution

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can conflicts be resolved peacefully?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants use scenarios and role playing to learn ways to resolve conflicts peacefully; participants examine choices and consequences involved in settling disagreements or tension.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Conflict resolution means working out a problem or disagreement without fighting, running away or going against your feelings. Knowing how to handle conflicts in a positive way can help people stay safe from violence, feel good about themselves, and learn to respect others. Physical violence, name-calling, threats, bullying, teasing, and other forms of negative communication often escalate conflicts and leads to serious consequences, including physical injury, lowered self-esteem, and punishment. Good communication involves being a good listener, **considering and respecting the other person’s point of view, working**

together to think of solutions, and learning to relax the body and calm the mind during high-tension situations. Practicing these positive communication skills can help people make responsible choices during high-tension situations and avoid violence and further problems.

**MATERIALS:**

- Role playing scenarios
- Large paper or board to write feelings and ideas

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 30 to 45 minutes

**PROCEDURE:**

1. **Begin by asking the participants to raise their hands if they've ever been involved in a conflict** (ex: a disagreement or a fight with someone). Brainstorm what might cause a conflict (ex: bullying, teasing, gossip, jealousy, prejudice, broken friendships, broken romances, possessions, different points of view, wanting a different outcome to a problem).
2. Ask them to brainstorm some feelings that might go along with being in a conflict (ex: angry, jealous, lonely, scared, confused, disappointed, worried, sad). Write these feelings on the board or large paper as the students say them.
3. Explain that when we are involved in a disagreement or any conflict, there are choices we can make; every choice we make has a consequence. Explain that learning about conflict resolution, or learning about how to work things out peacefully without fighting, running away, or going against your own beliefs, can keep you safe from violence, make you feel good about yourself, and help you learn to respect others.
4. Explain the role playing activity. For every scenario, watch the set-up scene, have a volunteer come and help resolve the conflict, and then brainstorm ideas together about what choices can be made and what the consequences are of those choices. Demonstrate a scenario and the conflict resolution. Ask if there are any questions.
5. Ask for volunteers or choose participants to be the actors.
6. Read the scenario and then have participants act out the scenario (see sample scenarios below, or come up with your own). Have someone come in to help resolve the conflict. Step in as needed to give suggestions. Have the participants actually say the words of the peaceful conflict resolution to practice.
7. Have the group identify the problem, the feelings that may be involved, and then have the group come up with a list of choices and their corresponding consequences. Ask: What choices can be made to escalate this incident or make it worse? What choices can be made to resolve this conflict peacefully or make it better? What choices could have been made to avoid this incident altogether? When is it helpful to ask someone (a teacher, a friend, a parent, a trusted adult) to mediate/step in and help solve a conflict?
8. Finish by asking the participants if they have an example of a positive conflict resolution situation they were part of and would like to share.

Scenarios with scripting:

**Scenario #1: “I was sitting here first” (problem: stealing)**—Sarah was sitting in a chair. She got up to use the bathroom. When she came back, Dana was sitting in that seat. The person who **was sitting there first wants their seat back and the other person doesn’t want to give the seat up.** (Choices: hit each other and get into a fight → someone gets hurt, they both get in trouble, no one gets the chair. OR Discuss and explain calmly, both people compromise, get another chair → everyone has a chair, no one gets hurt OR Ask a teacher for help → the teacher assists them discussing and explaining calmly, everyone gets a chair, no one gets hurt.)

**Scenario #2: “That’s mine” (problem: stealing)**—Jolie and Carrie are sitting next to each other eating a snack. **When Jolie turns to talk to another friend, Carrie grabs Jolie’s snack and hides it in her lap.** Jolie turns back and notices her snack is gone and suspects that Carrie stole it. (Choices: call names, yell to give back the snack, threaten to slap her if she doesn’t give it back, grab the snack back out of her lap → someone gets hurt, both get in trouble, they stay mad at each other OR discuss and explain calmly or get a teacher, Jolie gives the snack back and apologizes, Carrie accepts the apology → they both get to eat the snack, no one gets hurt or in trouble, they stay friends)

**Scenario #3: “I heard you said you didn’t like me” (problem: gossiping, teasing, bullying)**—Amina overhears a group of girls making fun of the outfit she is wearing today. She notices that Lauren, a girl who has teased her about her clothes before, is part of that group. Amina feels like crying. (Choices: go yell at the group, punch Lauren, run away and hope it doesn’t happen again → someone gets hurt, everyone gets in trouble, Lauren continues to tease and bully Amina, Amina continues to feel sad OR Amina walk up to the group and tells them how their comments make her feel → Lauren and the group apologize, Lauren and the group continue to tease Amina OR Amina gets a teacher to help her confront the group)

**Scenario #4: “I thought we were friends” (problem: ditching, silent treatment, leaving out)** Camille and Stephanie are good friends. They have sleepovers and hang out together at recess every day. **Over the summer Camille’s cousin Breanne from Los Angeles moved into Camille’s family’s home. Since the school year started, Camille and her cousin have been hanging out at recess together every day and Stephanie has not been invited to any sleepovers.** One day at recess Stephanie walks over to Camille and Breanne to say hi and the two girls run away from her. The next day at recess Stephanie walks over to try to say hi again and hang out with her best friend. This time instead of running away Camille and Breanne look at each other, cross their arms, and give Stephanie the silent treatment. (Choices? Consequences?)

JOURNAL PROMPT: Describe a situation you were in recently that was not solved peacefully. How would you go back and change it if you could?

EVALUATION: Were the scenarios representative of real-life situations the girls might encounter? Did the girls participate in the scenarios and the conflict resolution? Were ideas brainstormed for resolving conflict without violence or escalating the conflict?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Start a conflict managers club where students act as mediators for their peers.

## Lesson: Online Communication—Internet Safety

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can you stay safe on the internet?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants learn about potential dangers of the internet; participants plan how they will stay safe when using the internet.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: The internet has created new ways for people to communicate and be connected. Through the internet and other computer technology, young people have the opportunity to gain media literacy, become technically savvy, construct identities, socialize, and be connected to people all over the world. Despite the benefits of computer innovation, cyber-bullying and the spread of rumors and gossip on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, as well as through chat room, instant messaging, and email, are growing problems. The FBI reports that by the age of 14, 77% of teens have been contacted by a predator online, 12% of teenage girls admitted to eventually meeting strangers they first met online in person, and chat room strangers are implicated in nearly 20% of cases of missing teens aged 15 to 17 each year (Baeza 6). Teaching young people about online safety is as important as teaching them about the benefits of computer technology.

### MATERIALS:

- Computer with internet access
- Videos or online videos about online safety
- Paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin a discussion about internet use. Ask participants: Have you ever used the internet before? What do YOU use the internet for? What CAN the internet be used for? (ex: research/learn about things, get/share news, chat with friends, look up the bus/train/airplane schedule, watch movies/TV shows, play computer games, listen to music, look up books at the library, check the weather, look up sports scores, find a job, etc)
2. Explain that although the internet can be used for all of these amazing purposes, sometimes it is used to hurt others. Explain it is important to learn about the potential dangers of the internet so you can use it for all its benefits while staying safe.
3. Show videos or online videos about online safety. Show public service announcements about cyber-bullying, stories of spreading gossip or photos that have led to suicide, and stories about kidnapping or someone getting hurt that happened as a result of meeting someone online.
4. Ask participants to think about the videos they saw and answer: What do you need to be careful about on the internet? Explain they need to be careful about: Predators—**people aren't** always who they say they are, people might lie to you, people might try to entice you with something they know you like and then trick you into meeting them; Bullying—**if you wouldn't**

say it out loud, why say it online?; Website content—if you see something that makes you uncomfortable, report it to a trusted adult.

5. Help participants understand the Internet is forever: everything they post online is tracked and stored and will follow them to future job interviews and college entrance interviews. Also, explain that victims/targets of bullying should not respond to the messages, but should print out the messages or pictures as evidence and report it to a trusted adult.

6. Ask if there are any questions about anything they have heard or seen today.

7. Pass out paper and pens. Have participants create a rule sheet about internet safety to post by a computer. Assist as necessary. Have participants write 5 to 10 rules to remind them how to **be safe when using the internet. Use the “Online Safety Rules for Kids” by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and ikeepsafe.org as examples:**

- I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone numbers, **parent’s work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school to anyone online.**
- I will tell my parent/guardian right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will **never agree to get together with someone I “meet” online. If my parents/guardians agree to a meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my parent/guardian along.**
- I will never send someone my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents/guardians.
- I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way makes me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will print out the messages or pictures as evidence and report it to a trusted adult.
- I will talk with my parents/guardians so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon a time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

8. Have participants post their rules next to computers in the Girls Only space, at school, or at home.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What would you like to look up on the internet? If you had a pen-pal from another country that you communicated with over the internet, what would you tell them about yourself? If you created your own website, what would it be about?

EVALUATION: Did participants learn about potential dangers regarding the internet? Did participants brainstorm ways to stay safe on the internet? Did participants create a paper to post by their computer reminding them about internet safety?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Help the participants set up their own email account. Engage participants in weekly internet searches on various topics related to Girls Only.

## Lesson: Human knot

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How are we all connected? What does it mean to work as a team?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Students work together to untangle their human knot to form a connected circle without letting go of their hands.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: This is a fun, physical and visual way for students to see that we are all connected and practice various communication and problem solving skills.

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

### PROCEDURE:

1. Clear a space so there is enough room for groups of 10 to stand comfortably in a circle.
2. Have participants stand shoulder to shoulder facing each other in the circle.
3. Explain that this game is about working together and seeing how we can communicate to untangle ourselves. Remind participants they will try to untangle themselves without letting go of their hands.
4. Direct participants to reach across the circle with one hand and shake hands with another participant. If this is used as an ice breaker, have participants introduce themselves and then continue holding hands.
5. Now direct participants to reach their other hand across and hold hands with someone else.
6. Explain that you'd like them to untangle themselves, without letting go of hands, into a circle.
7. Have group work for 10 minutes.
8. Remind students that by making small adjustments with their hands, arms, legs, feet, and whole bodies, as well as by maintaining a positive attitude (ex: **“we can untangle ourselves”**), they can make a big difference for their team.
9. If there is too much of a struggle, offer the group one unclasp and reclasp of hands. The group must discuss and decide which unclasp and reclasp would be most useful.
10. If a group untangles into a circle quickly, have them try the exercise again. It is okay if some group members are facing backwards when the circle is finished.
11. Congratulate a group when it untangles itself, though it is unnecessary to make this into a race or competition since the process of untangling is the focus of this exercise.

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** What did you like about the “human knot” activity? What did you learn about yourself by doing this activity?

EVALUATION: Were students able to cooperate with each other as they worked to untangle their bodies? What lessons were learned about communication throughout the activity?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Try this in larger or smaller groups and see how the activity varies. Use this as a sponge activity to get the group moving between activities or as a getting to know you activity.

## Lesson: Forgiveness

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is forgiveness? What can forgiveness look like?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants discuss what forgiveness means; participants discuss the benefits of forgiveness; participants strategize how to practice forgiveness.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Forgiveness is letting go of anger and resentment you feel towards somebody who has done something to you. Forgiving someone for something they have done to you, no matter how big or small, requires compassion, empathy, and courage. Recognizing the power of forgiveness helps young people maintain healthy relationships, build strong friendships, and think before they act.

MATERIALS:

- Board or large paper
- Videos or online videos
- Stories of forgiveness
- Writing paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Ask participants what forgiveness means. Record their ideas as they give them.
2. Explain that forgiveness is letting go of anger and resentment you feel towards somebody who has done something to you. You may forgive someone for something minor like bumping into you or taking your seat at Girls Only. You may forgive someone for something like leaving you out at recess or forgetting to call you on your birthday. You may forgive someone for something major like breaking up with you or physically hurting someone in your family. Forgiveness is not easy and it might take a long time to forgive someone or for someone to forgive you.
3. Show videos, online videos, and stories of examples of forgiveness. Share stories such as:
  - Elizabeth Eckford was a 15-year old African-American student who attended Little Rock High School in Arkansas in 1957. She is known as one of the Little Rock Nine because she is one of the nine young African-American students who went to the all-white high school after the Brown vs. Board of education decision in 1954. This law made segregation, or separation, of blacks and whites illegal in education; before this, black children and white children could not attend the same school. Many white students were not supportive of this decision and did not treat the black students as equals. On her very first day of high school, Elizabeth had to walk through a mob of white students and grown-ups who were yelling and threatening to hurt her. She was brave but very afraid. During her time at Little Rock High, Elizabeth was threatened and harassed and even had to have the National Guard come to protect her and the other black students.

Elizabeth suffered from nightmares and paranoia for a long time because of her experience at Little Rock High. There is a famous picture of Elizabeth walking to school bravely while the white mob follows her. 34 years after the picture was taken, Hazel Massery, one of the white women shown in the picture yelling, apologized to Elizabeth. They started talking more and Elizabeth forgave her and they are now friends.



- Tariq Khamisa was 20-years-old when he was killed while delivering a pizza. His assailant was 14-year-old Tony Hicks who shot him on orders from an 18-year-old gang leader. **After his son's murder, Tariq's dad, Azim Khamisa, didn't seek revenge, but saw two children lost, one forever and one to the state prison system.** Azim established the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF) to honor his son and to "stop kids from killing kids." He reached out to Ples Felix, Tony Hicks' grandfather and guardian. Together, they have spoken to thousands of children about the "power of forgiveness" in order to break the cycle of youth violence. Tony Hicks pled guilty to murder in 1996 and delivered a remorseful speech at his sentencing, accepting responsibility for his actions and praying for Tariq's dad's forgiveness. Tony was sentenced to prison for 25 years to life. The foundation continues to change the lives of young people by empowering them to make positive and nonviolent choices (TKF).



4. Ask participants what they would have done in each situation. Could they have forgiven the person? Why or why not? There is no right or wrong answer!
5. Begin a discussion about forgiveness by asking: Why might you want to forgive someone? (ex: they asked for forgiveness; they said they were sorry; they made it up to me; I think they paid enough; I wanted to let go of my own anger; I was over it; it made me feel good to forgive them) Why might you want someone to forgive you? (ex: you know what you did hurt them; you said you were sorry; you have changed) **Who are you hurting if you don't forgive someone?**

(ex: yourself because the anger and resentment live inside of you) Who benefits from forgiveness? (if it is genuine, everyone!)

6. Explain that forgiveness is a process. Forgiving someone for something they have done which hurt you and made you angry or sad is difficult. It requires compassion, empathy, and courage.

7. Continue the discussion about forgiveness by asking: How could you tell someone that you forgive them? (ex: **I forgive you; it's ok; thank you for telling me you're sorry**) How could you show them? (ex: give them a hug) How could you ask for forgiveness? (ex: I am sorry; please forgive me) Is forgiving the same as forgetting? If you forgive someone, does it mean you have to forget what they did to you? Do you have to forgive someone? If you ask for forgiveness and **you don't get it, what will you do? (respect their decision; leave them alone; be patient; live with the consequences)** There is no right or wrong answer!

8. Pass out paper, pens and pencils. Explain they will now have a chance to ask someone for forgiveness or to give someone forgiveness by writing a letter. They do not have to send the letters!

9. Ask participants to think about the following questions: Is there something you would like to be forgiven for? Why do you deserve forgiveness for that? Is there someone you would like to forgive for something? What would you like to say to them?

10. Have participants write their forgiveness letters. If they are asking for forgiveness they **should begin their letter with: "Please forgive me for..."** If they are giving forgiveness they **should begin their letter with: "I forgive you for..."** Assist as necessary.

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** What do you like about forgiveness? What don't you like about forgiveness?

**EVALUATION:** Did participants define forgiveness? Were participants exposed to examples of forgiveness? Did participants brainstorm ideas for practicing forgiveness? Did participants write a letter asking for or giving forgiveness?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Invite a guest speaker to Girls Only to share a story of forgiveness and compassion.

**Violence:** Participants articulate choices and consequences related to different kinds of violence.

Lesson plans:

- 1) **Violence is...**
- 2) Cross the Line
- 3) Bullying
- 4) Gangs
- 5) Relationship Violence—Take a Stand

**Lesson: Violence is...**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** What is violence? What are the causes and effects of violence? How can we practice being nonviolent towards ourselves and others? How can we keep ourselves safe?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants discuss definitions and examples of types of violence; participants discuss consequences of violence; participants strategize how to avoid violence.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Violence can range from extreme physical violence such as murder and rape to verbal or emotional abuse such as name calling and constant criticism to institutional violence such as racism and homophobia. All types of violence are used to exert power and control and have profound effects on personal health and well-being. Girls and women are directly or indirectly affected by sexual violence and abuse, physical violence and abuse, and/or emotional abuse sometime in their lives. **The OJJDP says, “sexual assault is a risk factor for both boys and girls, but the rate of exposure to this risk factor is greater for girls”** (Slowikowski 3). Children, girls and boys, who grow up in communities that face poverty, widespread drug use, and gang presence are also often exposed to general community violence. Community violence—defined by Mental Health Systems, Inc. of San Diego as frequent and continual exposure to the use of guns, knives, and drugs, and random violence—often leads to feelings of anxiety, low-self-esteem, fear, aggression, PTSD, depression, anger, distrust, alienation, betrayal, and impaired body image. These feelings often manifest as behaviors such as learning difficulties, difficulty paying attention, acting out or risk taking behaviors, suicide attempts, fighting, inappropriate sexual activities, involvement in prostitution, and involvement in drugs, making community violence a tragically cyclical problem (Hamblen 1). It is no surprise, then, that girls in the juvenile justice system have higher rates of histories of abuse than girls who are not involved in the system (Slowikowski 3), pointing to the lasting, negative effects of violence. Much abuse of young women especially at the hands of parents or random violence is tragically unavoidable. However, if girls are able to build confidence, learn to respect themselves and their bodies, and make responsible choices at a young age, some violence against them can be prevented. Girls are increasingly becoming perpetrators of violence themselves and must be taught healthy coping skills for anger and other emotions. It is important to teach young people that acting violent is always a choice and

it always has consequences. It is also important to teach young people that if they are victims of violence, it is not their fault.

#### MATERIALS:

- White board or chalk board
- “Very Violent or Very Peaceful?” Statements
- Poster paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today you will be talking about different kinds of violence.
2. **Write “very violent” on one end of the board and “very peaceful” on the other end. Draw a long line in between the two statements.** Explain that you will read statements and the participants will move to whichever side they think goes with the statement. There is not a right or wrong answer and participants can stand anywhere in between the two extremes.
3. Read 5 to 10 examples and have participants move to either side or anywhere in between. Allow participants to discuss as issues come up. Prompt them with questions: Why do you think that is very violent? Why are you not sure? Why do you think that is very peaceful? Does it depend on the situation? Do you need more information? Why would someone act that way?

#### Very Violent or Very Peaceful?

- A boy hits a girl
- A girl hits a boy
- You get spanked
- Your friend gives you a hug when you feel sad
- A family lives in poverty
- Parents yelling at each other
- Someone spreads a rumor about you
- **Someone calls you “stupid”**
- The teacher tells the whole class you **got an “F” on your test**
- **Someone kisses you when you don’t want them to**
- Your mentor helps you with your homework
- Someone touches your hair after you have asked them not to
- A friend shares their lunch with you
- Your brother steals all the money **you’ve saved in your piggy bank**
- **Your brother calls you “fat”**
- A boy shows you his butt and it makes you feel uncomfortable
- Murder
- Your mom tells you she will leave you unless you behave
- **Someone you don’t know follows you home every day**
- A group of girls give you the silent treatment
- Your sister breaks your favorite necklace
- Someone threatens to choke you if **you don’t let them cheat off your homework**
- Your brother or sister locks you in the closet

- You lock the dog out of the house without dinner
- Your friend gives you a birthday present
- Your teacher tells you that you **aren't going to succeed**
- You wish your friend good luck at their basketball game

4. After discussing 5 to 10 circumstances, have participants return to their seats.

5. Explain that there are many different types of violence. Physical violence occurs when someone uses their body or a weapon to hurt your body. Verbal or emotional abuse occurs when someone uses words (written or said out loud) to hurt your feelings or scare you. **Sexual violence occurs when someone makes you do some kind of sexual activity when you don't want to.** Neglect is when someone who is supposed to be taking care of you does not take care of you. Institutional violence occurs when organizations or institutions discriminate against a group of people because of their skin color, gender, or how much money they have. All of these kinds of violence affect our health in many ways.

6. Explain that participants will make a poster showing different kinds of violence, the consequences of the violence, and how to challenge the violence.

7. Divide participants into pairs or small groups. Pass out poster paper, pens, and pencils.

8. Direct participants to draw a picture of at least three different examples of violence. They can use words too. For each example of violence (ex: 1) teasing, 2) pushing, 3) silent treatment) they should draw a representation of the consequences of that violence (ex: 1) hurt feelings, 2) broken arm, 3) hurt feelings), and what can be done to challenge that violence (ex: 1) tell them how it makes you feel, 2) run away, 3) tell a teacher or counselor).

9. Have participants share their posters and ideas for avoiding violence.

10. Remind participants you are there to talk to in case they ever experience violence or need help avoiding violence.

JOURNAL PROMPT: Do you think violence is ever necessary? When do you think violence is necessary? Have you experienced or seen violence? Have you challenged or seen a challenge to violence?

EVALUATION: Did participants describe different types of violence? Did participants discuss consequences of violence? Did participants create a poster depicting different types of violence? Did participants strategize ways to avoid violence?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite an age-appropriate survivor of domestic violence, sexual violence, torture, or other violence to speak to Girls Only about their experience. Have participants create and sign a nonviolence pact, vowing to be non-violent and challenge violence in their lives.

## Lesson: Cross the Line

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How are we similar? How are we different?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: **Students build empathy by learning about other's** life experiences; students feel less alone in their life experiences.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: This exercise is a visually powerful way for participants to see they are not alone and that others may share their life experiences. Knowing they have an ally **amongst their peers may save someone's life as feeling isolated** or outcast is a common cause for gang and drug involvement and suicide.

MATERIALS:

- "Cross the line if..." questions
- Tape or string to make a line on the floor

LENGTH OF LESSON: 60-90 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Create a line on the floor.
2. **Have all participants stand on one side of "the line."**
3. **Explain that you will read a question starting with, "Cross the line if..." and that if it applies to them, they should step to the other side of the line.** Remind the students to be as honest as they are comfortable with and that the space is non-judgmental and safe. Explain there should be no talking during the game, except for the person asking the question and that there will be a discussion afterwards. Ask if there are any questions.
4. **Begin the game. Read a question beginning with, "Cross the line if...(you have brown hair; you have blue eyes; you have a brother)."** **Participants step across the line if it applies to them** and remain on the starting side of the line if it does not. Pause and ask the students to silently look around to see who is standing with them. Then ask them to go back to the starting side of the line.
5. The following is a list of sample questions. The questions should be tailored to the needs of the age and populations you are working with.

### **"Cross the line if..."**

- You have brown hair.
- Your favorite color is purple
- You have a sister.
- You have a brother.
- You have a lot of chores to do at home.
- You are African American.
- Your parents speak another language.
- You speak another language.
- Your parents do not speak English.
- You are Mexican-American.
- You are Asian.
- You are Jewish.
- You are Muslim.
- You have ever been discriminated against/put down because of your race or ethnicity.

- You have ever been told that you were ugly.
- You have ever been teased.
- You have ever made fun of someone because of how they look.
- You have ever been bullied.
- You have ever been put down by another girl.
- You have ever travelled outside of California.
- You have to help raise your younger siblings.
- You live with your grandparents.
- You live with your aunt or uncle.
- One parent does not live with you.
- You live with both of your parents.
- You are in foster care.
- You wish you could change something about your body.
- You have ever been told you **couldn't** do something because you are a girl.
- You are expected to succeed at everything you do.
- You have ever been told that you were not going to make it in life.
- You know anyone who has been to jail.
- You have ever seen a fight.
- You ever heard gunshots.
- You never got to be a kid.
- You made a bad decision because of peer pressure or fear.
- You have any regrets.
- You have ever had someone you did not know help you.
- You have ever helped someone you did not know.
- You have ever been mean to someone you care about.
- Someone you care about has been mean to you.
- **You don't get the attention you need.**

6. **Continue asking questions. Pause briefly before saying "next question."** After each question the students return to the starting side of the line.

7. After asking several questions, ask if anyone else has a question they would like to ask. Have volunteers ask their questions.

8. After several rounds of questions and crossing the line, have participants sit comfortably. Debrief/discuss. Ask the participants to share: How did it feel to cross the line? How did it feel **when you didn't cross the line? What surprised you the most during this game? What did you learn? What lessons can you take away from this game?**

JOURNAL PROMPT: How did it feel to cross the line? How did it **feel when you didn't cross the line? What surprised you the most during this game? What lessons can you take away from this game?**

EVALUATION: Did students participate by crossing the line? Did the debriefing confirm that students made connections amongst each other? Did students take the game seriously? Are there any students you need to follow up with regarding their response to the game?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: **Have participants write or tell a story based on one of the "cross the line" prompts.**

## Lesson: Bullying

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is bullying? What are the causes and effects of bullying? How can bullying be avoided or stopped?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants define bullying; participants discuss how it feels to be bullied; participants discuss choices and consequences related to bullying; participants discuss causes and effects of bullying; participants practice being assertive.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health, "bullying is when one person or a group of people repeatedly hurts someone else." Bullying can include hitting, gossiping, name calling, teasing, spreading gossip or rumors, telling lies, excluding, threatening, telling secrets, giving the silent treatment, betrayal, or harassment. Bullying is often done on purpose and happens "at school, in the park, on a sports team, or even at home." Though boys and girls bully each other, bullying amongst girls is uniquely nasty. Bullying hurts both the victim and the bully and leads to depression, low self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, and even suicide. Teaching girls that other girls are not enemies, to be assertive but not aggressive, to resist peer pressure, to report bullying, and to stand up to bullying can save their lives.

### MATERIALS:

- Board or large paper
- Videos or online videos about bullying

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today you will be talking about bullying. Ask participants to raise their hands if they have ever been bullied.
2. **Now ask participants, "What is bullying?" Record their ideas as they give them. Explain that bullying is when one person or a group of people repeatedly hurt someone else. Explain there are four kinds of bullying: physical, verbal, social, and intimidation.**
3. Write each kind of bullying on the board. Going through each one, ask participants to think about what that kind of bullying looks like, feels like, sounds like, and why someone might bully someone that way. Examples include:

- Physical bullying
  - Looks like: shoving, hitting, pinching, punching, kicking, slapping, bruises, scratches
  - Feels like: pain, hurt, injury, sadness, anger, fear
  - Sounds like: yelling, slapping, broken bones
- Verbal bullying
  - Looks like: name calling, teasing, gossiping, spreading rumors, telling lies, telling secrets, sexual harassment, threats

- Feels like: pain, hurt, sadness, anger, fear
  - Sounds like: “bitch, slut, ho, whore, fag, cunt” (remind participants that saying “just kidding” after calling someone a name is still bullying)
- Social bullying
  - Looks like: verbal or physical bullying in front of others, betrayal, silent treatment, spreading rumors, excluding, ditching
  - Feels like: pain, hurt, sadness, anger, fear
  - Sounds like: silent treatment, “She’s a...bitch, slut, ho, whore, fag, cunt”
- Intimidation
  - Looks like: a look, gesture, physical bullying, threats
  - Feels like: pain, hurt, sadness, anger, fear
  - Sounds like: verbal bullying, “I’m going to get you;” “you better watch out”

4. Ask participants to think about why someone might bully someone else. Some reasons include: to get attention, insecurity, they feel bad about themselves, jealousy, to look tough, or because they are being bullied themselves.

5. Remind participants that different kinds of bullying often happen at the same time (calling someone a name while hitting them) and bullying often gets worse if it is not stopped right away (ex: a look or gesture could turn into shoving or hitting). Point out that all bullying causes pain, hurt, and fear. Explain that being bullied can play a role in sadness, loneliness, feeling bad about your body, skipping school, getting bad grades, headaches, stomach aches, trouble sleeping, and thinking about or trying to kill yourself. Explain that choosing to be a bully can play a role in the same things, as well as fighting, using and abusing drugs and alcohol, and **being a bully when you’re an adult.**

6. Ask participants to think about what they can do if they are being bullied. Examples include: **tell a trusted adult, tell the bully to stop and calmly walk away, don’t blame yourself, be strong** and believe in yourself.

7. Explain that learning to be assertive and not be a bystander can help stop bullying. Explain that being assertive means saying something with confidence, but without anger in your voice, **with steady breathing, and with sentences that start with “I.”** Remind participants that **by being** assertive you are not being passive or letting someone walk all over you, but you are also not being aggressive or starting to be violent or a bully too. Explain that a bystander is someone who watches an event like someone being bullied or someone getting hurt and **doesn’t do** anything to try to help.

8. Explain that participants will now have a chance to practice standing up to a bully. Have participants get into pairs. Have one participant play the role of the bully and the other play the role of the person being bullied. Have them switch roles so they both practice being assertive.

9. Have participants get into groups of three or four. Have one participant play the role of the bully, one play the role of the person being bullied, and the others practice being assertive bystanders who stick up for the bully. Remind participants they are not to be aggressive, as that could make the situation worse.

10. Have a debrief discussion about bullying. Ask participants: What did you learn from the role playing activity? What choices can you make if you are being a bully? What are some consequences to bullying? What choices can you make if you are being bullied? Remind participants that putting someone else down is not the way to build yourself up.

11. Ask participants to share stories of bullying if they want to.

12. Remind participants they always have choices and to think before they call someone a name, tease someone, or spread a rumor.

JOURNAL PROMPT: Have you ever been bullied? How did it feel? Have you ever been a bully? Why were you a bully? Have you ever stood up to someone being bullied? How did it feel?

EVALUATION: Did participants discuss the causes and effects of bullying? Did participants brainstorm ideas to stop bullying?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants make and sign pledges not to bully anyone.

Lesson: Gangs (adapted from SDCOE and TKF)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How can you stay safe and happy as you grow up? What are the choices and consequences related to gang involvement?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants discuss the consequences of gang involvement; participants brainstorm ways to stay safe from gang involvement.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Girls as young as ages 8 to 12 are vulnerable to the influences of direct and indirect gang involvement. Girls who live in low-income neighborhoods and have family members or friends involved in gang activity are most susceptible to the consequences of gang related activity. Gang involvement for females can include being a full member of a **female gang or an integrated gang, being a “homegirl” associated with a gang, or being an alibi for crimes committed by gang members.** The OJJDP reports, “though most females join gangs for friendship and self-affirmation, recent research has begun to shed some light on economic and family pressures motivating many young women to join gangs” (Moore 2). “Drug offenses [are] the most frequent cause for arrest” for female gang members and for women associated with gangs. It appears that more females are dealing drugs, often those drugs to which they are addicted (Moore 5). Girls are being recruited by gangs or involved younger than before; the pimping out of young girls as sex workers by male gang members is a growing problem. The **National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families states, “prevention efforts are particularly important given the young age at which many gang members join”:** most gang affiliated youth join between ages 12 and 14 (National League 1). Providing girls with support, mentorship, and consistent care is essential in preventing gang involvement, as many seek the love of a family in the familial structure a gang. Similarly, teaching young people about making responsible choices and motivating them to work towards their goals diverts them from potential gang activity. Educating girls about the negative consequences of being associated

with gangs and gang members, such as serious physical harm or death, jail and prison time, and drug abuse, also hinders participation in gang activity.

**MATERIALS:**

- Board or large paper
- Videos or online videos about choices and/or gang involvement
- Fact sheets about gang involvement
- **“My Most Important Values” worksheet**
- **“Road of Life” handout**
- Scissors
- Pens and pencils

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be talking about values, choices, and consequences. Ask participants to define each word. Record their ideas as they give them. Explain that values are our beliefs and they help us make decisions according to what we think is right. An example might be that a person values honesty or always telling the truth. We learn values from our families, religion, and our experiences. Explain that choices are decisions we make based on our values. An example might be someone who values honesty chooses to tell the truth instead of lie about something. Explain that every choice has a consequence or something that happens because of something else, which means something good could happen or something bad could happen depending on what choice you choose.
2. **Pass out the “My Most Important Values” worksheet, scissors, and pens and pencils.**
3. Explain that for this activity participants will think about the things most important to them. Explain that when you know what is important to you, you can make better choices. Read the values listed around the worksheet.
4. Ask participants to think really hard about what is important to them. Direct participants to begin cutting out the values listed until they only have three left. Allow them to work together and give time for this—it is difficult to prioritize values! Remind participants that maybe everything on the sheet is important to them but for this activity they are deciding what is most important. Assist as necessary.
5. When they have cut out the values, have them write their three most important values in the center. Ask each participant to share their three most important values with the group.
6. Collect the scissors and clean up paper scraps.
7. Show videos or online videos about choices and/or gang life.
8. Begin a discussion about gangs. Prompt participants with questions: What are gangs? Explain a gang is a group of people; a criminal gang, which is often called a gang, is a group of people who use the same symbol, wear the same colored clothing, and get together to break the law, do and sell drugs, or hurt others. What are some pros of gang involvement? Some pros include: money, partying, friends, back-up, sense of family, people respect you. What are the cons of gang involvement? Some cons include: jail, criminal record, death, permanent physical injury,

**people don't respect gang members**—they fear them, loss of time, missed opportunities, loss of friends, in trouble with family.

9. **Pass out the “Road of Life” handout.** Have participants read the choices and consequences listed on the handout. Remind participants that life will always have challenges, or bumps in the road, but how and what they choose will determine the roads they take on their journey.

Remind them they can always choose to change their lives!

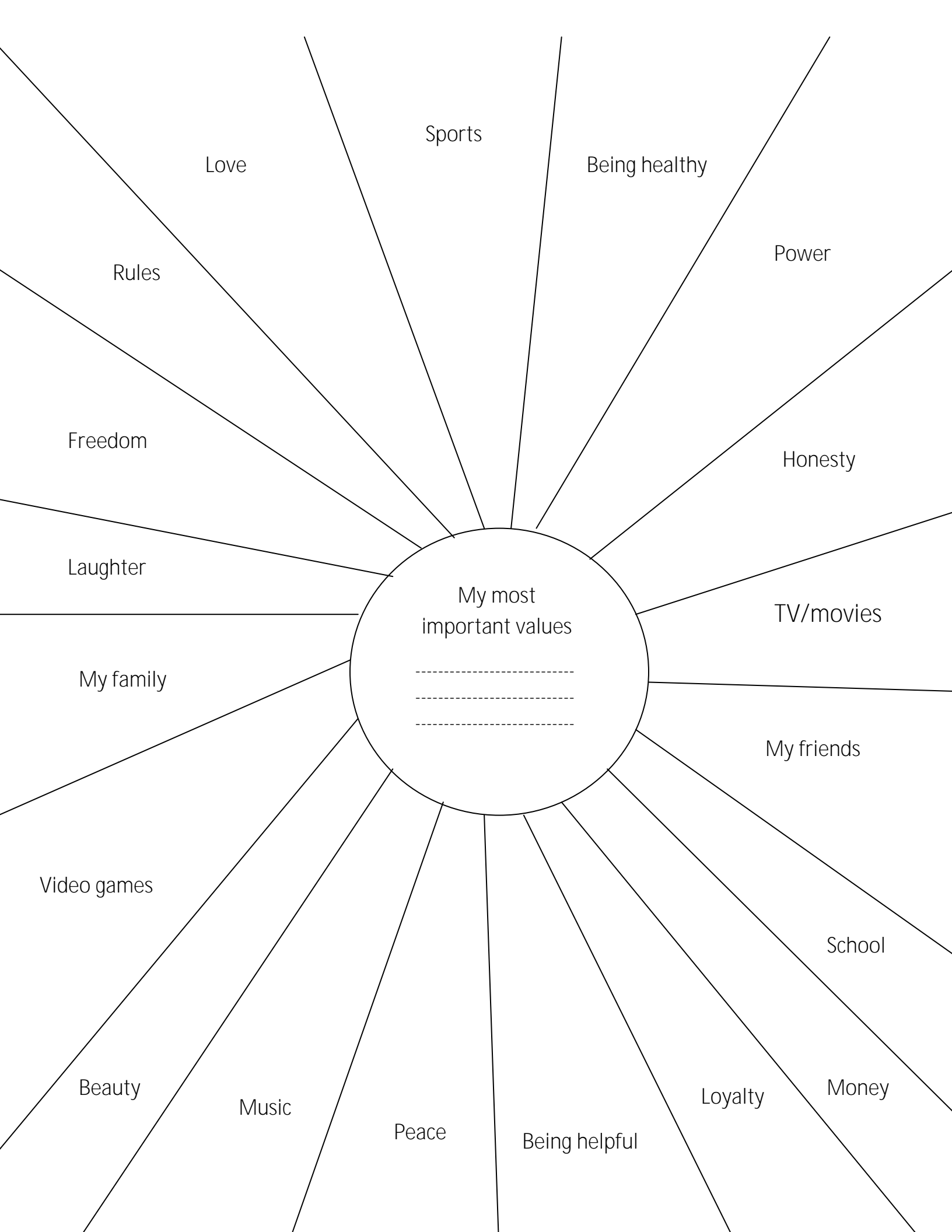
10. Have participants discuss how the values they chose as the most important to them relate **to the choices and consequences on the “Road of Life” handout.**

11. Based on needs assessments and information shared during this lesson, meet with individual participants about gang involvement. Make referrals as necessary.

JOURNAL PROMPT: Are you part of a gang? Do you know anyone who is in a gang or associated with a gang? Where will life in a gang lead you?

EVALUATION: Did participants discuss choices and consequences related to gang involvement?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Bring in a guest speaker who is a former gang member or who has personal experience with gangs and has turned their life around (NOTE: this person should be screened prior to speaking with the participants—it is important this person is age appropriate and they are truthful but do not glamorize gang life). Bring in a guest speaker who is a law enforcement officer who has experience working with gang members. Arrange for a field trip to a juvenile detention center. Arrange for a field trip to a morgue or hospital.





**It's your life.  
Only YOU have the  
power to decide  
your life.**

**Success, happiness**

Owning your  
Own Home

Career/Job

College

Graduation  
Prom

**You always have  
the option to choose  
to change your life.**

**Choose Wisely.  
It could cost you  
your life.**



**Death**

Jail  
Physical Injury

Drop out of school

Juvenile Hall  
Low Paying Jobs,  
Unemployed

On Probation

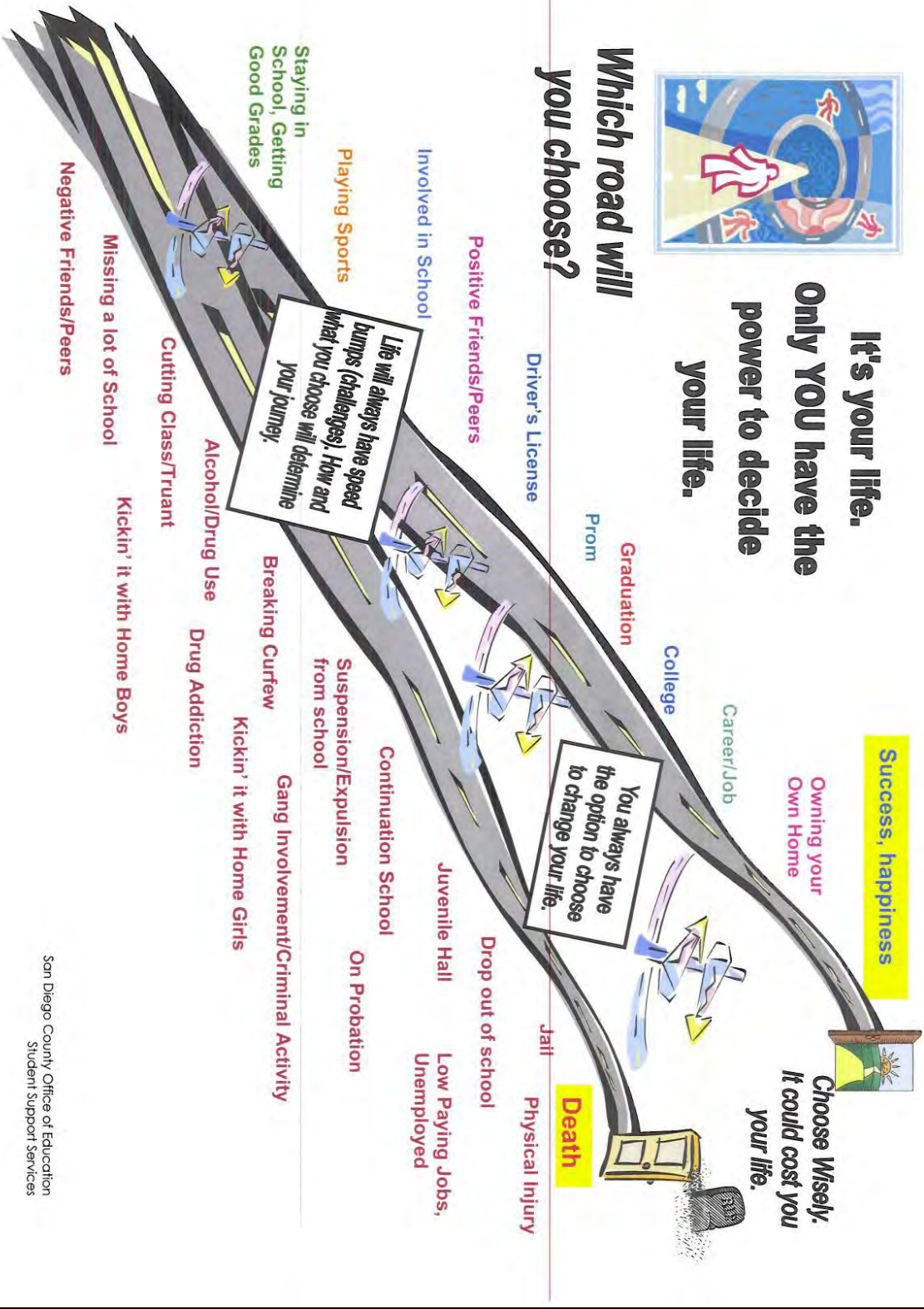
Gang Involvement/Criminal Activity

Kickin' it with Home Girls

Drug Addiction

Kickin' it with Home Boys

Negative Friends/Peers



**Which road will  
you choose?**

## Lesson: Relationship Violence—Take a Stand (adapted from multiple sources)

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** What is relationship violence? What are the causes and effects of relationship violence? How can relationship violence be avoided? How can relationship violence be ended? What is a healthy relationship?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants define relationship violence; participants define a healthy relationship; participants set boundaries for themselves in relationships.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Relationships are connections between parents and children, friends, and people who choose to be romantic with each other. Relationship violence occurs when power, control, and abuse are at the center of a relationship. Violent relationships are characterized by emotional/verbal abuse, sexual coercion, financial/economic abuse, sexism, blaming or shaming, isolation and extreme jealousy, and intimidation and threats. Relationship violence prevention is particularly important for girls ages 8 to 12 because they may already be having romantic relationships and because they will be having them as they enter their teen years. Teaching girls about healthy relationships, characterized by equality, trust and support, non-threatening behavior, sexual safety, financial/economic independence, negotiation and fairness, honesty and accountability, and continuing connections with others, empowers them to make choices that keep them safe and happy.

**MATERIALS:**

- **“Take a stand” statements**
- **“YES” and “NO” signs**

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

**PROCEDURE:**

1. **Set up the sign that says “YES” on one side of the room and the sign that says “NO” on the other.**
2. **Explain that in this exercise, participants must “take a stand” or choose an opinion about statements you read. In each case, they must choose “yes” or “no,” there is no “in between” or “it depends.”**
3. **Read a statement and pause as participants move to the “yes” or “no” side.** After they are in place, call on a few participants from each side to defend their stance. Remind participants not to pass judgment but to allow them to explain their thinking. Participants can move to the other side if they decide to.
4. **The following is a list of sample “Take a Stand!” statements.**
  - It is ok for a boy to hit a girl.
  - It is ok for a girl to hit a boy.
  - It is ok for a girl to hit a girl.
  - It is ok for a boy to hit a boy.

- Sometimes a girl deserves to be hit.
- It is ok to be jealous.
- It is ok to start rumors because you are jealous.
- **It is ok for someone to make you do something you don't want to do.**
- **If someone you are dating "accidentally" slaps you during an argument, you should forgive them—no one is perfect.**
- If you love someone, it is ok to say "no."
- If someone loves you, it is ok for them to ask you to do something that makes you uncomfortable.

5. Direct participants to return to their seats and ask if there are any questions about any of the issues that came up during the game.

6. Lead a discussion about healthy relationships. Ask participants to brainstorm elements of a healthy relationship. Remind them this includes relationships with parents, friends, and romantic partners. Prompt them by asking: How would you like to feel in a relationship? (Examples: excited, safe, happy, equal, smart, beautiful, not afraid) What kind of boundaries will you set to protect yourself in a relationship? (Examples: I will not tolerate being called names, I will not tolerate physical abuse, I will not tolerate feeling afraid, I will only stay in the relationship if I feel happy and safe, I will differentiate between cute behavior and obsessive/jealous behavior, I will talk to a teacher or a counselor if I feel afraid in my relationship)

7. Remind participants you are someone they can talk to if they ever have a problem in a relationship. As the facilitator, if someone comes to talk to you, remember to thank them for trusting you, to ask questions, to validate their feelings, to remind them it is not their fault, and remind them there is help.

**JOURNAL PROMPT: Did you change your mind about something after hearing your friends "take a stand"? Will you stand for violence of any kind in your relationships?**

**EVALUATION: Did participants "take a stand" regarding relationship violence? Did participants engage in a discussion about relationship violence? Did participants engage in a discussion about healthy relationships?**

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Invite an educator from a local domestic violence shelter to lead a workshop on healthy relationships at Girls Only. Invite a domestic violence survivor to speak at Girls Only.

Gender: Participants define gender and discuss ways it influences their lives.

Lesson Plans:

1. “Just Because…”--Stereotypes
2. Gender

**Lesson: “Just Because”—Stereotypes** (adapted from TKF)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How do others perceive you? What is it like to be you?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: **Participants define “stereotype;” participants identify stereotypes and expectations that others place on them; participants break down stereotypes and expectations, and define themselves outside of stereotypes.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Stereotypes are commonly held beliefs, assumptions, or oversimplifications about groups or types of people. We all learn stereotypes about gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and age from the media, our peers, and families. Stereotypes, whether supported by evidence or not, make it difficult to see people as individuals. Some stereotypes, both positive and negative, get translated into expectations from parents/guardians, teachers, friends, and society as a whole: if, for example, you believe that blondes are not smart, you may not recognize the abilities of a blonde student or push her to succeed since you **already believe she won’t**. **Some stereotypes also get internalized: if a blonde student is constantly teased that blondes are not smart, she may begin to believe it and be less motivated in school.** Teaching participants about the historical origins of stereotypes, how to think critically, and the importance of seeing people as individuals will help them challenge stereotypes.

MATERIALS:

- Pens or pencils
- Pictures or videos promoting common stereotypes
- **“Just Because” worksheet**

LENGTH OF LESSON: 30 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by asking participants to brainstorm things people think about them based on how they look or because they are part of a certain group, especially things that are not necessarily true. **Give examples: “people think I am a trouble-maker because I skateboard” or “people think I am good at math because I am Asian” or “people think I like pink because I am a girl.”** If participants say what people think about them without attaching it to a reason, ask them why they think people think that (to get them to say the group it is associated with). Ask participants to share how it makes them feel that people may think that about them if it is not true or even if it is.

2. Explain that the ideas they just brainstormed are stereotypes. Explain that stereotypes are beliefs or oversimplifications about groups or types of people. Give examples of common stereotypes: “blondes are not smart,” “Muslims are terrorists,” “African-Americans like chicken,” “people who are fat are lazy,” “girls can’t throw balls,” “people who are gay try to hurt children.” Explain some stereotypes may have evidence to support them, but that does not mean they should be applied to the whole group—it is not true, for example, that ALL blondes are not smart. Remind participants of how they felt when others projected stereotypes onto them—even though they may be part of that group, they are not how some people assume they are.
3. Explain we learn stereotypes from our families, friends, and the media. Show pictures or videos depicting common stereotypes.
4. Tell participants they will write a poem based on stereotypes about their own identities. In the poem, they will also get to debunk the stereotypes by stating positive traits about themselves.
5. **Read example “Just Because” poems.**
6. Pass out the “Just Because” worksheets. Give participants ~15 minutes to work on their poems. Assist as necessary.
7. When participants have completed their poems, have them read them aloud. Remind them to practice being confident as they claim their identities.
8. Ask participants what they learned today. Ask them to tell you what they know about stereotypes.
9. Participants can take home their poems or they can be posted in the Girls Only space.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What stereotypes do you play into, on purpose or not? Do you think some stereotypes are true? What assumptions do people make about you that aren’t true? What assumptions do people make about you that *are* true?

EVALUATION: Did participants identify common stereotypes? Did participants identify stereotypes people have about them? Did participants write a “Just Because” poem? Did participants challenge stereotypes?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants brainstorm practical ways to challenge stereotypes. Have participants put their ideas into practice and report back on how they challenged stereotypes.

# Just Because

Just because I am \_\_\_\_\_,

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_.

Just because I am \_\_\_\_\_,

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_.

Just because I am \_\_\_\_\_,

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_.

Just because I am \_\_\_\_\_,

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am not \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_.

# Just Because

Anonymous teen girl, San Diego CA

Just because I am Mexican,

Doesn't mean I speak Spanish

Doesn't mean I am "illegal"

Doesn't mean I'm illiterate

*I am a good reader.*

Just because I am a girl,

Doesn't mean I like to shop

Doesn't mean I am boy crazy

Doesn't mean I can't play sports

*I am a loyal friend.*

Just because I'm Catholic,

Doesn't mean I go to church

Doesn't mean I read the bible

Doesn't mean I am better than you

*I am a nice person.*

Just because I am young,

Doesn't mean I am naïve

Doesn't mean I don't care

Doesn't mean I will "understand someday"

*I am a human being.*

## Lesson: Gender

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How does being a girl influence your life?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants deconstruct how being classified as a girl influences their lives; participants explore the difference between biological sex, gender roles, and personal assumptions; participants think critically about the limitations and effects of gender roles.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: **Gender expectations play a significant role in defining young people's** lives and their aspirations for the future. Girls today live in a world where rape and physical abuse instill fear, women often do not receive equal pay for equal work as men, and women are not represented equally in government,. Teaching young people to deconstruct gender roles, expectations, and stereotypes helps them think critically, challenge sexism and homophobia, and helps them make decisions on how to look, act, and be based on their individual thoughts and feelings rather than on societal expectations.

### MATERIALS:

- Board or large paper
- Paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be thinking about what it means to be a girl or boy in our world today.
2. Explain the difference between biological sex and gender roles. Explain biological sex is the physical characteristics that make someone male and female. For example, a female is typically born with a vagina and ovaries and a male is typically born with a penis and testicles. Explain a gender role is the way a person behaves (or the way our society says a person should behave) as either a boy or a girl. Explain the main difference is that biological sex is something people are born with and a gender role is ideas and behaviors people learn, not ideas they are born with.
3. Divide participants into two groups.
4. Pass out paper and pencils to each group. Direct one group to brainstorm: What is expected of girls in our world today? Direct the other group to brainstorm: What is expected of boys in our world today? Ask both groups to think about how the world expects girls and boys to be, act and look. Remind them to think about what the media (ex: TV, movies, magazines) expects boys and girls to be like.
5. Have each group share with the whole group. Some examples include: boys play sports, boys do not cry, boys ask people out, girls wear makeup, girls wear skirts, girls have babies. **Post the lists on the board or copy them onto the board. Draw a box around the "boy" list and a box around the "girl" list.**

7. Explain that some things in each list are based on biology, like women having babies, and that even though women can have children and are expected to have children, not all women want to have children.

8. **If participants bring up the idea that someone may be called gay or lesbian for “stepping out of his/her box,” ask participants what gay or lesbian means. Explain that sexual orientation is different than gender roles— heterosexual means you are attracted to the opposite sex, gay/lesbian means you are attracted to the same sex, bisexual means you are attracted to both sexes. Remind participants that people can also be unsure about or questioning their sexual orientation and that is okay.**

9. Begin a discussion about gender roles. Ask participants:

- How do you feel when you see this is what is expected of boys and girls?
- Is there anything in the girl box that boys are not able to do? (No. Boys have the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_). If we look at the boy box, is there anything that girls are not able to do? (No, girls have the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_). (Remind participants **these boxes include things that boys and girls are “supposed” to do or be like, not what they might actually be like**).
- Do you think it might be hard for a boy to do things outside of the boy box? Why? Do you think it is hard for a girl to do things outside of the girl box? Why?
- Do you think the pressure to stay inside the box is just as strong for girls as it is for boys? (There is pressure on both boys and girls to behave a certain way).
- **What might happen if someone steps outside of his/her box or doesn't fit in his/her box?** (He/she might feel afraid, judged, or be made fun of. Or, he/she may feel freer, happier, and more well-rounded)
- Do you think people who do not fit into these boxes deserve to be treated badly? (All people deserve to be treated with respect and as an equal).
- Do you think it is fair that boys and girls feel pressured to behave according to gender roles? Why?
- Are these ideas people are born with?
- Is wearing makeup something a girl is born with? (No, girls are not born with that. It is something people learn. Some girls choose to wear makeup and some do not. Physically or biologically, anybody – a girl or a boy – can wear makeup).
- Are boys born so that they cry less? (No, they are not born less able to cry than girls. Physically or biologically, males and females can cry).
- **Where did these beliefs of how boys and girls are “supposed” to be come from? (People may have learned these beliefs from television, movies, friends, religion, family, etc.).**

10. After the general discussion, ask participants to share how being a girl affects their life. Ask: Does being a girl limit you? Does it have to limit you? What do you like about being a girl? What **don't you like about being a girl? Do you ever wish you were a different gender? Why or why not?**

11. Erase the boxes to demonstrate equality. Explain that all boys and girls have the right to be who they are. Explain that sometimes gender roles can make limitations and unrealistic expectations for ourselves and the people around us. Explain that the more we are aware of

what is biological fact and what are beliefs about gender roles, the more each of us is able to make our own decisions about how to look, act, and be.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What do you like about being **a girl**? **What don't you like about being a girl**? Do you ever wish you were a different gender? Why or why not?

EVALUATION: Did participants discuss how being a girl impacts their lives? Did participants discuss gender?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants think of creative ways to challenge gender roles and report back about their experience. Invite someone who identifies as transgender to visit Girls Only to talk about gender expectations and their experience.

**Healthy bodies:** Participants identify elements that make a healthy body (ex: food, exercise, safety, sleep, healthy mind); participants think of ways to make their own bodies healthy.

Lesson Plans:

- 1) Exercise Ideas
- 2) Exercise: Yoga Class
- 3) Nutrition and Food
- 4) Alcohol and Drugs
- 5) Puberty and Sex Education

Lesson: Exercise Ideas

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** How can exercise help maintain a healthy body? What can our bodies do?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants participate in a physical activity such as a dance class, an outdoor physical activity, or circuit training exercise.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Physical activity promotes healthy bodies and minds, building **strength and producing endorphins, which make you naturally feel good. Additionally, “the sports environment provides girls with experiences of teamwork, goal-setting, positive adult mentoring and leadership training, as well as a ready-made social support system (Women’s Sports Foundation i).** Ideas for physical exercise activities include: walking, dance, gymnastics, karate, hiking, Frisbee, basketball, softball/baseball, kickball, football, soccer, volleyball, badminton, weight lifting, bike riding, kayaking, surfing, canoeing, running, tennis, swimming, horseback riding, yoga, golf, boxing/kick-boxing, wrestling, roller skating, ice-skating, skiing/snowboarding, jump-roping, or anything you can think of that gets the body moving! Make proper arrangements to include all participants in all physical activities, being especially attentive to the needs of participants with disabilities.

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** What did you learn about yourself today? What connection do you feel between your mind and your body? How does physical activity help you through emotional times in your life?

**EVALUATION:** Did participants participate in a dance class, an outdoor physical activity, or circuit training exercise? Did the physical activity promote the goals of Girls Only?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Invite a dance instructor to come to Girls Only to teach a ballet, tap, jazz, modern, hip-hop, or ethnic dance class. Invite an outdoor experience leader to come to Girls Only to lead an outdoor adventure. Invite a trainer or weightlifter to Girls Only to lead a circuit-training workout. Start a Girls Only sports team, outdoor adventure club, or dance group.

## Lesson: Yoga Class

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can yoga help maintain a healthy body?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants participate in a yoga class.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Yoga is an ancient practice that helps create a sense of union in the body, mind and spirit. The physical practice of yoga creates a toned and strong body, increases flexibility in the spine which ensures good nerve supply to all parts of the body, improves the respiratory system, energy and vitality, helps to maintain a balanced metabolism, promotes cardio and circulatory health, relieves pain, prevents illness, improves sleep and decreases blood pressure. Yoga helps you release and handle stressful situations more easily, encourages positive thoughts and self-acceptance, improves learning efficiency, increases well-being, decreases and/or eliminates depression, improves mood and memory, builds awareness of your body, your emotions, the world around you and the needs of others, promotes interdependence between mind and body. Yoga is an especially beneficial activity for young people and can be a fun, engaging way to exercise.

MATERIALS:

- Towels or yoga mats, one per person
- Clothes for stretching
- Soothing music
- Stereo

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Participants sign in as they enter the room and set up their towels or mats facing the **teacher's mat or in a circle. Have participants change into their comfortable exercise clothes**, take off their shoes, and sit in a comfortable position on their towels or mats.
2. **Introduce the participants to yoga. Explain that yoga means unity which means that we're all doing it together.** Ask them to turn and greet their neighbors with a smile. Explain that yoga is a mixture of stretching, balancing and breathing and it is about relaxing and being strong at the **same time. Explain that everyone has different bodies and everyone's bodies can do different things**; one of the best things about yoga is that it is not about competition so remind **participants they don't have to worry about** doing the yoga poses exactly like their neighbor or the teacher. Remind them that if something hurts, they should stop!
3. Introduce the participants to breathing. Have the students rest their hands on their knees. Explain that breathing is something we **all do, all day long, everyday, to be alive and we don't** really have to think about it. Explain if we do think about breathing, sometimes it can help us relax and feel calmer. Explain that if during the class there is a stretch or a pose that is tricky, they can remember to breathe and it might help with the pose. Have participants take a big breath in and blow it out. Have participants take an even bigger second breath in, hold it in, and then blow it out. Have participants take a third breath in, trying to make noise as they breathe

in, and then blow it out, trying to make noise as they breathe out. Have the students take three more breaths lifting their shoulders up with each breath in.

4. Conduct a yoga class. Some suggestions for poses include: mountain pose, side stretches, **bending forward, warrior pose, tree pose, plank pose, upward facing dog, bow pose, child's pose**, cat and cow stretch, butterfly, leg twists, arm stretches. Make adjustments to participants throughout the class. Remind them to breathe and have fun!

5. At the end of the yoga class have all participants lie on their backs on their towels or mats. Have them shake out their whole bodies to release all the muscles they just worked. To help release the muscles in their faces, direct the **participants to start laughing, even if they don't** feel like laughing, until they hear the signal of a bell or a hand clap to stop. Once settled, have **the participants rest on their backs. Explain that they don't have to think about anything except** what strong, awesome yoginis they are or that they can think about anything they want to. Have them rest with their eyes closed in silence for a few minutes. Gently awake the participants. Have them wiggle their toes and fingers and stretch like they are waking up in the morning. Have them sit up in a comfortable position just like they started.

6. **Explain that "namaste" is a way to say thank you and honor the other people you have** practiced yoga with. Have the participants put their hands together and touch their hands to their forehead as you wish them happy thoughts, have them touch their hands to their lips as you ask them to only say things that are true, and have them touch their hands to their hearts as you wish them love in their hearts. Finish the class by **saying "namaste" and bowing forward.**

7. Ask the participants how they feel and discuss any issues or questions that come up.

8. Remind participants to drink lots of water, and that if their muscles are sore the next day it just means they worked hard in yoga!

JOURNAL PROMPT: What was your favorite thing about the yoga class today? Describe a time when the lessons from yoga (such as: not being competitive, thinking about breathing during something difficult, trying again if you fall down) can be used in your life.

EVALUATION: Did the participants attempt the yoga poses presented? Did they appear to be enjoying the yoga? Did the journal responses indicate the participants appreciated the benefits of yoga?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Participants can practice yoga poses at home. Participants can teach a friend or family member a yoga pose they learned. Arrange for participants to attend a yoga class in the community.

## Lesson: Nutrition and Food

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What foods can help maintain a healthy body and mind?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get exposed to various foods; participants analyze the ingredients in common foods; participants practice reading food nutrition labels; participants brainstorm healthy food options.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Food is necessary to keep the human body functioning. What you eat affects how your body functions, looks, and feels. Healthy foods, or food rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients, help the body grow and maintain well-being. Healthy food choices are essential components of human health and can prevent unwanted weight gain, diabetes, heart disease, and other health problems, which are becoming increasingly common in youth. Facilitating a relationship between young people and their food is an elemental necessity especially when access to fresh food is limited and reliance on processed foods and fast foods is increasing. Also, teaching young girls to have healthy eating habits can help them maintain self-esteem, positive body image, and bodies they are proud of as they confront the challenges of peer judgment and media advertising as they grow up.

### MATERIALS:

- Variety of food: fruits, vegetables, breads/grains, nuts, dairy, meat, drinks, desserts, junk food, processed foods (or pictures of a variety of food)
- Food packages: cereal boxes, frozen food bags and boxes, chip bags, drink cartons
- Diagrams of the human body
- Videos or online videos about nutrition and food production
- Paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by asking participants what they need to stay alive (ex: breath, sleep, food, water). Record their ideas as they give them. Explain your body needs all of these things to stay alive and grow just as a plant or flower needs water, sunlight, and nutrient rich soil to grow.
2. Explain today you will be talking about food. Ask participants to raise their hands if they like food (all hands should be raised!). Explain our bodies need food and the right combination of nutrients to work properly, grow, and have energy. Put simply, putting food into your body is like putting gas into a car. Explain that today you will especially be thinking about how what you eat affects how your body works and feels.
3. Show diagrams of the human body, pointing out or asking participants to identify muscle, bones, blood, organs, and other body parts. Explain each part of your body is made up of small units called cells; the cells in your body can do their jobs when you give them the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients they need. The food you put into your body affects your hair and nail growth, teeth, breath, how well your brain works, and your bones and muscles. Food gives

you energy to run, play, dance, go to school, talk with your friends, and do all the things you like to do.

4. Remind participants this lesson is not about dieting or making your body look a certain way, but that you are thinking about what kinds of foods will help your body grow and feel strong.

5. Begin a discussion about healthy foods. Hold up a food (or picture of food) and ask participants to tell you if it is healthy or not. Make three piles: healthy, unhealthy, not sure. For example if you held up an avocado or an apple or a loaf of bread, it would go into the healthy pile. **If you held up a MacDonald's burger or a Twinkie or a soda, it would go into the unhealthy pile. If you held up an oatmeal cookie or a burrito or tortilla chips, it might go in the "not sure" pile since it has both healthy and unhealthy qualities. Allow discussion if participants don't agree on which pile a food should go in.**

6. Ask participants to look at the piles. Point out there are lots of healthy foods, lots of unhealthy foods, and lots of food that is somewhere in between. Remind participants you are not simply saying that some foods are good and some foods are bad, but you are thinking about what foods will help your body grow and feel strong. Explain that different foods affect your body differently. If you put fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and nuts, or food filled with lots of vitamins and nutrients into your body, your body will grow, thrive, and feel strong. If you put in fast food and food that is highly processed, or changed so it looks a certain way or so it can stay on the shelf in the store longer, your body will feel sick and weak, even if you feel full. Remind participants this does not mean you should ONLY eat fruits and vegetables and you should NEVER eat junk food, it just means that you should pick healthy options when you can and try to avoid foods that are highly processed and contain hardly any nutrients for your body.

7. Teach participants to read food package labels. Pass around some food packages and have participants find the nutrition label. Explain that the nutrition label gives you information about what nutrients are in the food. Examples of nutrients are vitamins, fat, protein, carbohydrates, and fiber.

8. **Ask: "what does the nutrition label tell you?" Have participants read from the labels and discuss what each element means.** Most labels gives information about serving size, servings per container, percent daily value, and a list of nutrients. Explain that looking at a nutrition label can help you figure out if the food is healthy or not. Explain that if a food is whole and fresh, like a piece of fruit, it probably **won't have a nutrition label.**

9. Show videos or online videos about nutrition and food production. Discuss as necessary.

10. Pass out paper and pens and pencils. Have participants brainstorm and make lists of a variety of healthy snack options. Ideas include: water, beans, nuts, seeds, fresh veggies like carrots or celery sticks, pretzels, low-fat yogurt, crackers, bagels, granola bars, juice, trail mix, fresh fruits like apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, and berries, or dried fruit.

11. Participants can take their lists home to post on the refrigerator or near a food cabinet.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is your favorite food or meal? Why? Describe this food using creative words.

EVALUATION: Were participants exposed to various healthy foods? Did participants analyze the ingredients in common foods? Did participants learn how to read food package labels? Did participants learn about healthy food options?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Arrange a field trip to the supermarket. Arrange a field trip to a **farmer's** market. Invite a nutritionist or biologist chef to come speak at Girls Only. Invite a chef to prepare a healthy meal for Girls Only participants. Have participants bring in their favorite foods or recipes to share.

### Lesson: Alcohol and Drugs

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How do alcohol and drugs affect our bodies? How can you keep your mind and body safe from alcohol and drugs?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants learn about the physical and psychological effects of alcohol and drugs; participants practice resisting peer pressure; participants learn about positive coping skills and ways to stay sober.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: According to several studies, young people begin experimenting with drugs at ages 12 to 17; considering this reality, drug and alcohol prevention efforts must target **younger children to prevent them from ever using drugs in the first place**. **“A number of findings have shown that adolescent females display unique vulnerabilities that can lead to substance abuse. Furthermore, research reveals that drug abuse has a profound impact on teen girls, both physically and psychologically” (Girls and Drugs 2). Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) reports that key risk factors for substance abuse, such as stress, depression, anxiety, physical or sexual abuse, and excessive concerns about weight and appearance, are also key elements by which girls and young women are affected (Girls and Drugs 4).** Drug prevention strategies that are effective include education about the harmful physiological, emotional, and social effects of drugs, engaging young people in school and positive extra-curricular activities, teaching young people healthy coping skills, how to resist peer pressure, to care for their bodies, to value their safety, and to make healthy choices for their future.

#### MATERIALS:

- Fact sheets about alcohol and drugs
- Photos, videos, and other visuals showing the effects of alcohol and drugs
- Role playing scenarios

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Prepare fact sheets about the effects of alcohol and drugs. These fact sheets should include specific effects of specific drugs (examples: alcohol depresses the central nervous system and affects memory ability; tobacco turns the lungs black and causes cancerous cells to grow). Facts and statistics on various drugs are available from many sources and websites.

2. Prepare photos, videos, and other visuals showing the effects of alcohol and drugs. This can include **“The Downward Spiral,” photos of lungs before and after tobacco use**, and videos describing the consequences of drug use. These visual aids are available from many sources and websites. You may want to show a bottle of alcohol, a package of cigarettes, and some prescription drugs.
3. Explain to participants that there are many different kinds of drugs and they can hurt their mind and body. Pass out the fact sheets about the drugs. Lead a discussion about the physical and emotional effects of each drug. Tell participants that both short-term use (trying a drug one time) and long-term use (using a drug a lot of times or becoming addicted) are harmful. Show visuals as aids. Remind participants that their bodies are the only one they get and it is their job to take special care of them.
4. After discussing the negative physiological effects of alcohol and drugs, discuss some social effects. Remind participants that most drugs are illegal and therefore using them, selling them, or making them will lead them to jail or prison. Tell them that even drugs that are not illegal, like tobacco, alcohol, or prescription drugs, have harmful effects. Using and abusing any kind of **substance that alters your mind or your bodily functions can change your behavior so you don’t have control over yourself and your body, you don’t care about things you used to care about** (ex: family, friends, school, sports), and you may do regretful things you know you would not do if you were not on drugs (ex: hit someone, hurt yourself, hang out with people you know are dangerous, lose friends, stop doing your homework).
5. Now explain that even though they know these negative effects of drugs, some people will try to get them to try drugs or get hooked on drugs. Tell participants that when your friends try to persuade you to do something, even something you feel uncomfortable with, it is called peer pressure. Ask participants to share a time when they have been peer pressured.
6. **Tell them that sometimes it is hard to say “no,” even when you know doing drugs will hurt you or get you in trouble. Some reasons it is difficult to say “no”: you want to “be cool” like your friends, your parents, siblings, or cousins do drugs so it must be okay, you feel sad or mad and you want to cover up those feelings, or you think it will be fun.** Tell them that today they **will practice resisting peer pressure so they won’t be as likely to fall into the traps, especially now that they know how harmful drugs are to their health.**
7. Explain the role playing activity. For every scenario (see sample scenarios below, or come up with your own) have some people peer pressuring someone and others being pressured. Have the whole group brainstorm ideas about what choices can be made and the consequences of those choices. Step in as needed to give suggestions. Have the participants actually say the words to resist the peer pressure to practice. Explain every choice has a consequence (something that happens because of something else), which means that something good could happen or something bad could happen depending on what choice you choose. Ask if there are any questions.
8. Ask for volunteers or choose participants to be the actors.
9. After role-playing, have participants brainstorm alternative activities to doing drugs. Ideas include: play sports, write a story, read a book, listen to music, make music, dance, talk on the phone, talk on the internet, learn a new hobby, spend time with your family, do your homework, play a board game, take a walk, do work in your community, draw or do an art

project, go see a movie, clean your room, learn how to cook your favorite meal, and tons more!  
**Record participants' ideas as they brainstorm.**

Scenarios with scripting:

Scenario #1: "be cool"—Joseph and Sam offer you a cigarette. They tell you it will make you look cool and it will make Jeremy, the boy you have a crush on, like you. (Choices: take the cigarette→you feel sick, you feel scared, you get in trouble because it is illegal to smoke if you are under 18 years old, your friends get in trouble, you forget to do your homework OR you say **"no thank you, I know cigarettes will make me smell bad and will give me a bad cough. If Jeremy doesn't like me because I don't smoke then I don't want to hang out with him anyways"** →you go hang with different friends and have a good time, you finish your homework and get a good grade, you eat dinner with your family, you feel healthy and you don't get in trouble)

Scenario #2: "it will help you forget"—Your sister offers you a beer and tells you it will help you forget how sad you feel that dad called you a mean name. (Choices: drink the beer →you feel sick, you don't forget how sad you feel, you get in trouble because it is illegal to drink if you are under 21, you forget to do your homework, you get in a fight with your sister because you are both not thinking straight OR you say **"no thank you, I know alcohol will not help me feel better"** →you write in your journal about your feelings, you go for a walk outside, you talk to someone about how you feel, you don't feel sick, you don't get in trouble, you and your sister hang out together)

Scenario #3: "it will be fun"—You are hanging out with your soccer team after a game. The team captain offers everyone in the group some pills that will help the team relax after the big game. The team captain says that everyone should take the pill so they can all have fun together. (Choices: take the pill→you feel sick, you fall asleep and forget to call your parents to pick you up, you get in trouble because the pills were stolen from someone's parent's medicine cabinet, you don't have fun OR you say **"no thank you, I don't know what that pill will do to me, maybe we can all get some ice cream or watch a movie to relax as a team"** →you feel proud of how you played in the game, you call your parents to pick you up and you have a delicious family meal, you don't feel sick, you don't get in trouble)

JOURNAL PROMPT: Have you ever been around alcohol or drugs? Have you ever tried alcohol or drugs? Why did you try them? What are five things you can do instead of alcohol or drugs?

EVALUATION: Were participants exposed to the health risks of alcohol and drugs? Did participants practice resisting peer pressure? Were participants given alternatives to alcohol and drugs?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a nurse, doctor, or trained alcohol and drug counselor to speak to Girls Only about alcohol or drug use or abuse. Arrange for a field trip to a morgue or hospital to see the negative effects of alcohol and drugs abuse first hand.

## Lesson: Puberty and Human Sexuality

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How do our bodies change as we grow up? How will you keep your body and mind safe as you grow up?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants learn about puberty, menstruation, hygiene, and human sexuality.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Comprehensive sex education is a key strategy to lowering rates of teen pregnancy and STDs, as well as providing girls with positive, pro-social alternatives to sexual activity. It is imperative this education is presented to girls even as young as 8 to 12, which is ideally prior to their becoming sexually active. For girls ages 8 to 12, knowing what is going on in their bodies can help them face the challenges of puberty and help them retain self-esteem, lowering the risk of drug use, gang involvement, and unsafe sex practices. Remember, young people learn about it from their peers and the media and what they learn may not be accurate. Although rates of teen pregnancy are going down overall, the number of pregnancies **among young women is still too high. The National Latino Research Center (NLRC) reports, “the incidence of pregnancy among teenage girls is considered a serious societal problem in the United States due to the economic and health issues associated with early parenting” (NLRC 1).** Although rates of pregnancy among girls ages 8 to 12 are low in general, preventing girls from becoming pregnant as teenagers requires that preventative education efforts target younger girls. Girls who have children as teenagers are less likely to complete high school or further their education and are more likely to live in poverty than their peers. Similarly, children of teen mothers have an increased risk of health complications and are more likely to live in poverty than other children (NLRC 1). Even if a young girl plans to become pregnant—as opposed to becoming pregnant by accident or as a result of being raped—a girl who becomes pregnant at a young age may do so to get attention, to please an abusive partner, or to feel loved by someone; considering the lifelong consequences of having a child, these are not encouraging rationales to risk the economic and health issues associated with early parenting. Also, pimping and commercial sexual exploitation are continuing problems and can be prevented with education. For this lesson, age appropriateness is key. NOTE: For this lesson, it may be necessary to supply additional permission slips. Divide participants according to age to best address their maturity level and tailor the lesson to be age appropriate. Invite parents/guardians to join Girls Only for this lesson.

### MATERIALS:

- White board or large paper
- Charts, diagrams, and models about puberty, hygiene, and menstruation
- Pads, tampons, panty liners, and other menstruation products
- Diagrams and models of human sexual organs

- Small pieces of paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 2 sessions, 1 to 2 hours

PROCEDURE:

Day 1

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be learning about their bodies and how their bodies and minds change as they grow up. Have participants sit in a circle.
2. Set some ground rules. Remind participants to respect each other so everyone feels comfortable. Explain that participants should not share personal stories or questions in class, but they can always ask questions after class. Explain that they are not in class to discuss how to have sex; if a participant wants to ask a question about how to put on a condom or how people get STDs that is okay. Explain that this lesson will be about human sexual behavior, not animal behavior and they should not ask about animals. Tell participants that they will have a chance to ask questions and if they have questions about anything you have talked about to ask their parents/guardians, teachers, or a school nurse.
3. Begin a discussion about puberty by asking participants: Have you noticed anything different about your body? How are you different than when you were 5 years old? Do you feel any **different? Explain that puberty is the time in a person's life when a child develops into an adult.** Explain that maturing takes many years and although everyone goes through puberty, some people can begin the process early and some can begin later. Ask for examples of what takes place during puberty. Record ideas as participants give them. Some examples include: growth spurts, increase in sweat and oil glands sometimes causing pimples and body odor, breast development, hips widen, more body fat, voice deepens, and more body hair grows, including underarms and pubic hair. Show charts, diagrams, and models as appropriate.
4. Begin a discussion about hygiene by asking participants: What does hygiene mean? How do we practice good hygiene? Record ideas as participants give them. Some examples include: shower or bathe, brush teeth, wash hair, change pad/tampon regularly, remove sweaty or wet clothing promptly, wear clean clothes, change underwear and socks daily, wear deodorant, and wash face. Ask participants: why is it important to practice good hygiene? Stress the importance of understanding what your body feels and looks like when it is healthy, so you can know what unhealthy might feel or look like. Show charts, diagrams, and models as appropriate.
5. Begin a discussion about menstruation by asking participants: What is menstruation? What are other terms you have heard for menstruation (ex: period, flow, etc)? Explain that a female gets her first period about two to two-and-a-half years after breasts begin to develop; this can happen as early as 9 or 10 but usually around 12 or 13. About six months before a girl gets her period she might notice a clear discharge. Show charts, diagrams, and models as appropriate to explain menstruation. Explain that usually once a month, a female releases an egg from one of her ovaries. This is called ovulation. Ovulation happens about 2 weeks before a woman gets her period (if a sperm does not fertilize the egg). The egg will release into the fallopian tube. If sperm is present, it could fertilize the egg, and the fertilized egg could implant in the uterus and

continue into a pregnancy. If the egg is not fertilized, it is absorbed into the body and the body **will shed (release) the lining of the uterus; this is menstruation or “getting a period.”** The lining of the uterus was building up in case a fertilized egg was going to implant there, but since it is not needed, the body releases the fluid and tissue. Sometimes this looks like blood, and sometimes it can just look like discharge, fluids, and tissue. This is normal. The uterus contracts like a muscle to release the lining, which is why females can experience cramps or pain in the abdomen. Cramps may feel like a stomachache, but the uterus and the stomach are completely **separate organs. Remind participants that it’s very important to know how their body and fluids smell and look on a regular basis so if something seems strange or out of the ordinary, they can get it checked at a health center or doctor’s office. Explain that a complete cycle is 21 to 36 days but that for the first few years it may be irregular and usually skip in the beginning. A period can last from two to seven days and there will be four to six tablespoons of flow over the two to seven day span. Describe some other elements that may come along with the period. Women may experience cramps, or dull, achy, sometimes sharp pain in lower abdomen, back, or thighs; PMS, or feeling irritated, sad, or emotional during the days before your period starts; and pimples due to an increase in sweat and oil glands and hormone changes.**

6. Give a demonstration of pads, tampons, panty liners, and other menstrual products, explaining that once you begin menstruating you will need something to absorb the blood. Remind participants that periods do not make them gross or weird and that periods should not get in the way of enjoying life and having fun.
7. If parents/guardians are present, ask them to share their experience having their period for the first time.
8. Hand out small pieces of paper. Give time for participants to write anonymous questions about anything related to what they learned today. Read the questions aloud and respond the best you can.
9. Remind participants that growing up is an exciting time but it can be confusing. Remind participants you are there to answer any questions they may have.

## PROCEDURE

### Day 2

10. Begin by explaining that today you **will be talking about sexuality. Write “sexuality” on the board.** Ask participants what they know about sexuality. Elicit responses from the class before giving the definition below. Explain that sexuality is a natural, lifelong part of every human. Explain that all people have sexuality and express it differently throughout their lives. Human sexuality includes the way people express their gender and sexual orientation and the physical and emotional ways that people express love and affection.
11. Explain there are four parts of sexuality: bodies, feelings, values, and behaviors. Write each part on the board.
12. Explain that one part of sexuality involves our bodies. Our biological sex includes the physical characteristics that make someone male and female. For example, a female is typically born with a vagina and ovaries and a male is typically born with a penis and testicles. Show diagrams and models of sexual organs.

13. Explain that another part of sexuality includes our feelings. Explain that we have feelings towards ourselves, such as our self-esteem, which means having pride in yourself, and our body image, which means how you feel about your body. Explain that we also might have feelings toward other people.

14. **Ask participants: “What are some reasons why people like other people?”** Examples include: the person is funny, cute, smart, etc. Explain that sexual orientation means which sex a person is attracted to: heterosexual means you are attracted to the opposite sex, gay/lesbian means you are attracted to the same sex, bisexual means you are attracted to both sexes. Remind participants that people can also be unsure about or questioning their sexuality and that is okay.

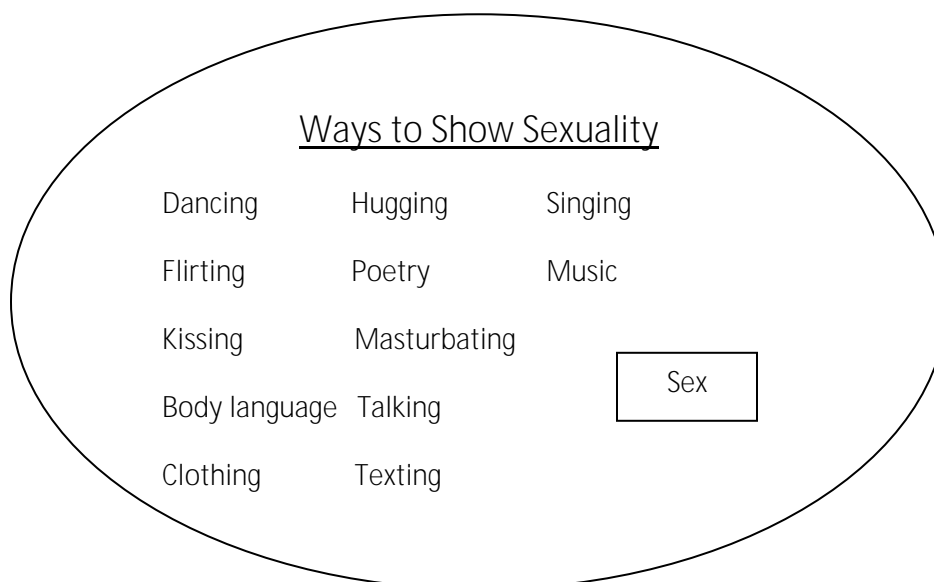
15. Explain that another part of sexuality includes our values. Explain that values are our beliefs and they help us make decisions according to what we think is right. An example might be a person values honesty, or always telling the truth. Explain that like the rest of our life, how we express sexuality is influenced by our values.

16. **Ask participants: “Where do people get their values?”** People get their values from family, religion, and personal experiences.

17. Explain that the fourth part of sexuality involves behaviors. On the board, draw an arrow from “Bodies,” “Feelings,” and “Values” to “Behaviors.” Explain that a person’s values, body, and feelings influence his/her behavior. Behaviors are actions and decisions. For example, if a person values honesty, they will behave by trying to be honest with others in their relationships. Explain there are actions and decisions we make to express our sexuality.

18. Begin a discussion about ways to express sexuality. Record responses as participants give them. Answer questions as necessary.

- How might people choose to show romantic feelings for someone?
- What are some ways people can express their sexuality?
- If two people like each other, how might they show it?
- How do people express how they feel about their bodies?
- How do people know they are attracted to someone?



19. Define masturbation as “touching one’s body for sexual pleasure.” If a participant mentions “sexting,” define it as “when a person sends a nude or semi-nude photo over a phone or instant message.” When “sex” is mentioned as a way of expressing sexuality, separate it from the list, and wait to discuss it. After listing the many ways a person can express their sexuality, draw a large circle around the entire brainstorm and a smaller circle around “sex.” Explain that sex is one way to express sexuality. Ask: “Do people have to have sex to express their sexuality?” Remind participants there are many different ways to express sexuality, that sexuality is something that every person has all their life, and that having sex is just one way to express sexuality.

JOURNAL PROMPT: Who is someone you trust and can you talk with about puberty and sexuality as you grow up? Why do you feel comfortable talking with this person?

EVALUATION: Did participants learn about puberty, menstruation, hygiene, and human sexuality? Were participants given time to ask questions?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a trained health professional to speak at Girls Only about pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, safe sex practices, and abstinence.

**Creative Arts:** Participants explore various creative endeavors; participants discuss how art can be used as a form of communication, as a means to express thoughts and feelings, and as a medium for social change. While these lessons specifically address the topic of arts and creativity, arts and creativity can be integrated into most lessons in the Girls Only toolkit.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Talent Show
- 2) Creative Arts Ideas

Lesson: Talent Show

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** How can demonstrating personal talents and receiving positive feedback strengthen self-esteem?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Promote community amongst Girls Only participants; identify personal talents; practice performing for a group; practice giving and receiving encouraging and positive feedback; practice skills learned in previous lessons.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Talent shows provide arenas for people of all ages to demonstrate a skill or talent of their choice. Although talent shows are often competitive and the winner sometimes receives a prize, the goals of this talent show are solely to practice performing, have fun, and encourage positive feedback and therefore it should not be a competition. Young people who receive regular praise and encouragement feel better about themselves and are generally motivated to succeed; a talent show is a fun, engaging way for participants to show off something they are good at and to receive praise for their efforts.

**MATERIALS:**

- Flyers to promote the talent show
- Microphone
- Stereo for music
- Table for judges
- Stage area
- Chairs or seating area for audience
- Positive feedback posters

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 2 lesson periods, 45 minutes to 1 hour each

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Prepare by introducing the idea to participants. Explain that the talent show will be a showcase of talents including dancing, singing, poetry, music, and anything else they can think of. The talent show will not be competitive, it will not be about winning or losing, but about showing off something you are proud of. Remind participants they will practice being supportive of each other and encouraging each other.
2. Give participants time to brainstorm about their acts. Advise as necessary. Performing in the talent show should not be required. Provide an alternative for those who do not wish to

perform, such as being in charge of music, being the MC/announcer, making programs, or welcoming guests. Performers can work alone, in pairs, or in groups and can be in more than one act.

3. Have participants sign up for their acts and begin to rehearse. Give ample time for participants to rehearse. Suggest that they rehearse outside of Girls Only if possible. Assist as necessary. Prepare music and props as necessary. Set rules regarding appropriate costumes as necessary.

4. Have participants make posters with positive encouragement for the talent show. Sign suggestions: **“Great job!” “Awesome!” “You rock!” “Excellent performance!” “You’ve got talent!”**

5. Invite parents/guardians and other community members, as appropriate, to come watch the performance. **Give at least a week’s notice.**

6. On the day of the performance, set up chairs or a seating area for the audience. Set up music and staging area. **Have performers sit in a “reserved for performers” area of the audience.**

7. Have audience members and performers hold the posters up during the show.

8. After everyone is seated, welcome the audience to the show. Tell them that every performer has worked very hard on their act and to show how much you enjoy their hard work through applause. Remind them to be a respectful audience and practice giving positive feedback and support.

9. Introduce each act and the performers by name before they come onto the stage. If there is a student acting as the announcer, assist them as necessary.

10. Enjoy the talent show! Support the participants! Remember how scary it is to perform in front of people.

11. At the end of the show, invite all performers to the stage to take a final bow. Dismiss the audience.

12. Prepare for a follow up discussion with participants at the next meeting: How did it feel to perform? What went well? What could have been better? What about the talent show made you feel good? What did not make you feel good? What would you do differently next time? Would you perform again?

JOURNAL PROMPT: What was your favorite part about performing in the talent show? What did you learn from being part of the talent show?

EVALUATION: Did the participants give each other positive feedback? During rehearsals were the participants able to work out disagreements within or amongst groups? Did the talent show go smoothly?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Give each performer a flower following the performance!

## Lesson: Creative Arts Ideas

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How can I use creativity and art to have fun, challenge my imagination, communicate a message, or change the world?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants participate in or create a creative activity such as poetry, theater, song, music, dance, painting, collages, paper arts, public art, photography, multi-media arts, and various crafts using multiple mediums.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Art is a site of creative expression, self-definition and identification. Art can be broadly defined as expressions of feelings, ideas, values, and perception. Art can include poetry, theater, song, music, dance, painting, collages, paper arts, public art, photography, multi-media arts, and various crafts using multiple mediums. Participation in arts **activities enhances girls' lives emotionally, socially, and creativity.** *SchoolArts* magazine asserts that through the arts, young people have the chance to express themselves and, **"fostering creativity in the arts--or anything else--means encouraging students to think for themselves...as they link arts to their own personal experience"** (Adams and Hamm 24). The magazine further lists the following as benefits of arts education: the arts empower children to communicate **ideas that words and numbers cannot always adequately express...the arts encourage multiple responses...the arts teach flexibility in thinking, a mandate for success in a global society...[and]** the arts teach students to continue searching for meaning and understanding (Stephens 65).

The arts have also been used as sites for social change and can send messages to audiences that raise awareness and consciousness, challenge norms, and incite action. Art has been an integral part of feminist activism since the inception of the movement and feminists have notably used film, poetry, performance art, music, paintings, comedy, and, recently, zines, web-based art, and comics, to express politics, making it especially significant for young girls to learn about the arts. Using arts in the classroom is a hands-on approach to instruction and caters to a variety of learning styles including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. Young people become engaged and excited about learning when they participate in crafts projects and music activities. Ideas for creative art activities include: writing poetry, writing fictional stories, drawing a comic strip, learning to play an instrument, singing a song, choreographing a dance, sewing, making a collage from magazine cutouts, painting a picture, painting a mural, sketching a portrait, making a handmade paper card, folding origami, making friendship bracelets, acting in a skit, decorating a shirt or bag, making a photo exhibit, shooting a film, delivering a spoken word performance, or anything you can think of that gets the creativity flowing! Make proper arrangements to include all participants in all creative activities, being especially attentive to the needs of participants with disabilities.

### MATERIALS:

- Poems by diverse women
- Writings and books by diverse women
- Paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, and multimedia work by diverse women

- Music, films, and performances by diverse women
- Stereo
- Television and DVD or VHS player
- Computer with internet access
- Paper, glue, glitter, yarn, stamps, stickers, scissors, and other general craft supplies
- Pens and pencils
- Paint, paintbrushes
- Camera
- Fabric
- Magazines

JOURNAL PROMPT: What did you learn about yourself today? How can you use creative arts to express yourself? How can creative arts help you through emotional times in your life?

EVALUATION: Did participants participate in or create a creative art? Did the creative activity promote the goals of Girls Only?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a dance instructor to come to Girls Only to teach a ballet, tap, jazz, modern, hip-hop, or ethnic dance class. Invite a painter, sculptor, or artist of any kind to visit Girls Only to discuss, demonstrate, and lead an art class. Invite a poet, singer, actor, or performer to Girls Only to perform and lead a workshop. Arrange a field trip to an art museum or theater performance. **Have participants create a “vision board” on which they creatively express what they would like to see for their lives.**

**Community:** Participants articulate a conception of community including various family structures, habitation, and acceptance and inclusion of differences and commonalities within a group; participants discuss ways to value all roles and voices of individuals in a group, responsibly help others and each other, and share resources.

Lesson plans:

- 1) **Community is...**
- 2) Spider-Web

### **Lesson: Community is...**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** What is community? What can community look like?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants define community; participants brainstorm ways to value all roles and voices in a group, responsibly help others and each other, and share resources.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Communities can be thought of as physical spaces (ex: neighborhoods, cities, states) and as groups of people. Communities are made up of individuals, familial units, services, organizations, and institutions. The various communities to which we belong influence who we are socially and psychologically. A social-justice oriented teaching of community aims to build a community that values all members equally, listens to all voices, acknowledges differences among community members and nonmembers, recognizes commonalities among community members and nonmembers, shares resources equally, members of a community help each other, and collectively seeks to remedy injustices. Teaching young people to value, build, and actively participate in community connects them with others, helps them build and maintain friendships, and empowers them to be responsible and contributing citizens.

**MATERIALS:**

- Board or large paper
- Seed packages—1 per participant
- Food items—1 per participant
- Bottles of water—1 per participant
- Blankets—1 per participant
- Band-Aids—1 per participant
- Nametags with job titles on them—1 per participant
- Money or paper money—\$5 per participant
- Paper representing laws

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Have participants sit in a circle. Begin a discussion of the idea of community. Explain that communities are groups of people who live in the same place and/or share similar beliefs. Explain to participants that their community is in a certain neighborhood, city/town, state, country, and planet. Explain that there are various versions of communities (ex: classroom, school, neighborhood, city, online community, global community).

2. Begin a discussion about elements of a community. Explain that communities are made up of individuals, families, resources, services, and institutions. Write the five elements on the board. Have participants contribute to the descriptions of the elements of community by asking questions such as: What organizations/establishments are parts of your life (ex: school, recreation, sports teams, church, etc)? Who is important in your life (ex: family, friends, etc)? What kinds of jobs do these people have (ex: teacher, truck driver, waiter, etc)? What kinds of things do your family, your friends, and you need to live (ex: water, food, shelter, health, etc)? **Record participant's** ideas as they give them. How do you think all of the elements of a community should interact (ex: share things, work together, fight)?

3. Participants will now have a chance to create their own community and decide how it will operate. Explain that participants can use experiences from their own lives, they can think of new ways of doing things, or they can organize their community how they wish a community would operate.

4. Place all the seed packages (representing food), food items (representing food), water, money, blankets (representing shelter), Band-Aids (representing health care), nametags with job titles (representing community roles and jobs), and laws (representing laws that protect everyone) on the floor or on a table in the center of the circle. Explain each element or what it represents. Job titles include:

- Teacher
- Spiritual leader
- Law enforcement
- Student
- Waiter
- Entertainer
- Mayor
- Lawyer
- Doctor
- Librarian
- Scientist
- Athlete
- Computer tech
- Mechanic
- Accountant
- Cook/chef
- Farmer
- Firefighter
- Musician
- News reporter
- Custodian

5. Explain that the circle is now a community and participants will need to decide how to operate the community. Prompt them with questions such as: What would be your role(s) in the community? What would your community look like? What would it feel like? How will you distribute these resources? How will you come to a consensus on how the community will be organized? What are characteristics that community members should have (ex: responsibility, helping others, sharing, being kind, etc)?

6. Allow participants time to work out their community. Assist as necessary. Ideally participants will choose to be inclusive of all members of the community and distribute resources equally.

7. After the community has been established and resources distributed, lead a debrief discussion. Ask participants to think about: How did you distribute the resources? How did you decide to do it that way? Did everyone agree? What did you do when there was disagreement?

8. Congratulate participants on their hard work building community. Remind them that building community is difficult and takes work. Remind them that successful communities share resources and services equally, value all members, and work together. Remind participants they each play an important role in each community they are part of and they should work towards building communities everywhere they go.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What communities do you belong to? Why is each community important to you?

EVALUATION: Did participants discuss elements of a community? Did participants share resources and services during the activity?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a community leader or local government representative to speak to Girls Only. Arrange a neighborhood walk where participants can identify elements of the community and institutions such schools, churches, government buildings. Arrange for field **trips to community farms, farmer's markets, colleges, museums, and theater performances** to expose participants to various parts of their community, to facilitate connections between participants and others, and help participants understand themselves as members of their local community.

### Lesson: Spider Web

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How are we all connected?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants work together to create a spider web out of string; participants get a visual reminder of how we are all connected.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: A simple and creative way to help participants recognize that everyone contributes something valuable as individuals to a community.

MATERIALS:

- Thick string (at least a yard long per participant)
- Scissors

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining this activity will help us see that we are all connected. Individuals make up a community and everyone plays a unique role in that community. Remind participants that even though we are all different, when we appreciate those differences, recognize our similarities, and work together, we can make something beautiful. Give examples of ways individuals contribute to communities: sharing resources, respecting others, helping others, sharing their expertise, challenging inequality and injustice, and working together.
2. Have participants sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs.

3. Explain the activity. In this activity participants will create a spider-web out of string. When the ball of string is passed to them, they will pinch a piece of the string and hold onto it. As the facilitator, start the activity by pinching the end of the string, stating your name, stating how you contribute to the Girls Only community, and how you contribute to your family, **neighborhood, or world. For example: "My name is Miss Gonzalez. I contribute to the Girls Only community by preparing activities for you all because you are so special to me. I contribute to my family by helping to cook dinner on special occasions." Then continue to hold onto the end of the string and pass the ball of string to a participant across from you.**
4. When someone has the ball of string in their hands they will state 1) their name, 2) how they contribute to/play a part in the Girls Only community, 3) how they contribute to/play a part in **their family, school, neighborhood, or world. For example: "My name is Gina. I contribute to the Girls Only community by sharing my experiences with the group. I contribute to my neighborhood community by picking up trash on the sidewalk" or "My name is Rose. I contribute to the Girls Only community by helping the teacher pass out papers. I contribute to my school community by volunteering as a reading tutor to younger students."**
5. After they have shared, the participant will keep pinching their section of string and pass the roll of string to someone across from them. As the spider-web gets formed, participants will have to throw the ball of string, walk it over or under other parts of the web. It is ok if the web gets tangled, allow participants to figure out the best way to communicate to create the web. Assist as necessary.
6. After all participants have shared, pass the ball of string back to the facilitator.
7. Each participant should be holding a piece of string and the effect should look like a spider-web. Encourage participants to look at the beautiful piece of art they have created by working together. They each played a part as individuals to create a communal piece of art.
8. Ask participants to share what they learned from the spider-web activity.
9. To finish the activity, have each participant place their piece of the spider-web gently down so that the shape remains even as it is set on the floor.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What are three ways you can be an active member of the community in your school, neighborhood, or world?

EVALUATION: Did participants work together to create the spider-web? Did participants create a spider-web?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have each participant wrap a small section of string around their wrist as an intention bracelet. Have each participant set an intention such as "I will always tell the truth," "I will keep myself safe," "I will help others when I can," "I will think before I speak," and explain that they can look at their bracelets and be reminded of their intention. Use this activity as a starting point for a lesson about respecting spiders and other animals.

**Field trip:** Field trips can be educationally and socially engaging additions to Girls Only. Field trips must be planned ahead of time, with attention to budget, transportation needs, and other logistics. Additional permission slips may be necessary for field trips. The objective of all field trips is to expose participants to various parts of their community, facilitate connections between participants and others, and help participants understand themselves as members of their local community. The lessons that follow are general ideas; research specific destinations and activities in or near your community. Social field trips are also beneficial to building camaraderie amongst participants and for having fun!

Lesson plans:

- 1) College Visit
- 2) Nature Visit
- 3) Community Garden and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- 4) **Farmer's Market**
- 5) Museum
- 6) Theater Performance
- 7) Service Learning Volunteer Project

Field Trip: College visit

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is it like to be on a college campus?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants visit a college campus; participants learn about life as a college student; participants learn the benefits of staying in school and continuing their education.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: In the United States, quantity and quality of education help **determine a person's ability to contribute as a citizen and earn enough money to make a living.** Higher education is a space in which people gain critical thinking skills, discover their personal potential, and become life-long learners. Exposing young people to college life helps build motivation and interest in continuing their education. Visiting a college campus, including taking a tour, observing a class, and visiting a sports center, bookstore, and library, exposes young people to college life. Arrange for a tour of a community college or four-year university in your community and give participants a chance to talk to college students and ask questions.

MATERIALS:

- College brochures
- Local college campus
- Tour guide and students at college

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

JOURNAL PROMPT: Do you want to go to college? Why or why not? What would you like to learn in college? Where do you want to go to college? What do you need to do to make sure you go to college?

EVALUATION: Did participants visit a college campus? Did participants engage with college students and student life? Did participants express interest in going to college?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create a personal plan for preparing and going to college. Invite a college student to speak at Girls Only.

### Field Trip: Nature Visit

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What can you learn from spending time in nature?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants spend time outdoors in nature.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Spending time with nature stimulates the senses and creates awareness. Nature is where young people develop their senses through experimentation and experience, connecting the physical world—the world they observe with their touch, smell, taste, eyes and ears—to their mental world; this mental-physical connection promotes self-confidence. Developing a relationship with nature has mental health benefits in the same ways art and music do, helping young people develop motor skills and spatial awareness. Also, urban environments are increasingly polluted with smog and trash—making a trip outdoors provides an opportunity to breathe fresh air. Ideas for a nature visit: have a picnic at the park, have a beach day, go for a hike, take a camping trip, go swimming, kayaking, canoeing, or for a sail on a sailboat.

MATERIALS:

- Transportation
- Picnic supplies
- Additional materials depending on the nature of the nature visit

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

JOURNAL PROMPT: What was your favorite part of your nature adventure? What was your favorite thing you saw? What was your favorite thing you smelled? What was your favorite thing you felt? What are some things you can do in your everyday life to make the world a little cleaner?

EVALUATION: Did participants spend time in nature?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Connect your nature visit to lessons about plants, animals, water, land, and various cultural traditions around the world.

## Field Trip: Community Garden or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is a community garden? How do I grow food and plants?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants visit a community garden or farm; participants learn basic gardening techniques.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: A Community Garden is a public piece of land gardened by multiple people; community gardens are diverse plots as some members grow flowers and other grow **edibles. Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA's, are a combination of consumers** (individual community members) and growers (farming operations) who share the risks and benefits of food production; CSA growers provide weekly or bi-weekly boxes of seasonal **produce for a fee; many CSA's take volunteers to** plant, weed, sort, wash, and pack. Visiting community gardens and farms creates a relationship between young people, the natural environment, and their food. Teaching young people about humans' role in ecology and food production (how food is grown, where it comes from, how much it costs, how it affects our health and the health of land and waters, what it means for the lives of the people working with the food, and how to prepare it) directly connects them with nature. By participating in community gardens and farms, young people also have the potential to beautify neighborhoods, create green spaces for migratory birds and insects, reduce crime by increasing neighbor community and vigilance, and get outside. Working in a garden, shoveling, watering, planting, and weeding, is a social, communal process, teaching young people the benefits of teamwork. Arrange for participants to work in a garden or on a farm and arrange for a tour of the garden or farm.

MATERIALS:

- Gardening gloves
- Gardening tools
- Seeds or small plants

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you had a garden all of your own, what would you grow? Do you think everyone should learn how to grow a garden and their own food? Why or why not?

EVALUATION: Did participants visit a community garden? Did participants work in the garden? Did participants engage with community members in the garden?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Secure a plot in an established community garden or start a Girls Only garden. Buy pots and seeds and plants for each participant to take home. Arrange for a local farmer to speak to the group. Join a CSA for Girls Only and make a meal together. Set up a composting bin for recycling food products.

## **Field Trip: Farmer's Market**

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: **What is a farmer's market? How can I participate in the buying and selling of local produce?**

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: **Participants visit a farmer's market; participants get exposure to a variety of foods; participants engage with local farmers; participants learn the benefits of shopping locally; participants practice spending money conscientiously.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: **Farmer's markets showcase locally grown, mostly organic, and often sustainably grown foods. Visiting farmers' markets creates a relationship between young people and their food, an elemental necessity especially when access to fresh food is limited and reliance on processed foods and fast foods is increasing. Healthy food choices are essential components of human health and can prevent unwanted weight gain, diabetes, heart disease, and other health problems, which are becoming increasingly common in youth. Farmer's markets also provide an opportunity to meet farmers and food producers face to face and personally judge their integrity. Developing a respectful relationship to food allows people to make healthy choices for themselves, their communities, and the Earth. Design a scavenger hunt for participants to find certain foods throughout the market, give participants a few dollars to buy fresh foods at the market, and encourage them to talk to or interview farmers.**

MATERIALS:

- \$1-\$2 per participant to buy something at the market
- Reusable grocery bags

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

JOURNAL PROMPT: **What was your favorite thing at the market? What did you buy and why? If you had a garden all of your own, what would you grow? Do you think everyone should learn how to grow their own food? Why or why not?**

EVALUATION: **Did participants visit a farmer's market? Did participants learn about a variety of foods? Did participants learn how foods are grown? Did participants practice spending their money wisely? Did the farmer's market field trip promote the goals of Girls Only?**

RELATED ACTIVITIES: **Give out vouchers for free produce at a local farmer's market. Have participants creatively decorate cloth bags they can use to shop for groceries. Invite a local farmer to speak at Girls Only. Arrange for Girls Only to receive a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) box.**

## Field Trip: Museum

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What can you learn from visiting a museum?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants visit a museum; participants get exposure to a variety of art and cultural artifacts.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Museums house relics of social and historical importance for public enjoyment and education. Museum exhibits expose young people to new experiences, artifacts from different time periods, and items from around the world. Visiting a museum engages young people outside of the classroom in an interactive way, intriguing them with relics from places they may not have the chance to visit. Decide what kind of museum you will take the participants to for the field trip: an art museum (painting, sculpture, photography, contemporary, historical), a science museum (natural history, archeological, cultural, exploratory), or an outdoor museum (arboretum, aquarium, zoo). Arrange a field trip to a museum hosting an exhibit related to a general Girls Only theme or topic recently covered. Design a scavenger hunt for participants to search for specific things throughout the museum.

MATERIALS:

- Museum tickets
- Transportation
- Journals
- Pens/pencils
- Clipboards or hard writing surfaces

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you had your own museum, what would you display? Why should people visit your museum? What other kinds of museums would you like to visit? Why?

EVALUATION: Did participants visit a museum? Did participants engage with the museum content? Did the museum field trip promote the goals of Girls Only?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants develop their own concept for a museum. Have participants create their own museum display, including a diorama displaying their lives. Invite an artist or a museum docent to speak at Girls Only.

## Field Trip: Theater performance

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is it like to see a theater performance?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants attend a theater performance; participants engage with actors and theater professionals.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Theater is a demonstrative form of cultural expression, allowing people to see stories play out before them, teaching lessons and making statements about the human experience through something tangible and relatable. Whether writing, directing, or acting within the realm of theater, ideologies, beliefs, thoughts, and emotions are being articulated. Attending a theater performance (a dance show, a poetry reading, an acrobatics demonstration, an improvised performance, a drama, musical, or comedy performance) is an increasingly rare public happening in which large numbers of people gather into a shared space and experience something together, whereby building community. Young people can be engaged with theater on multiple levels, including with the content of the show, performance space, performers, and practical elements like costumes, lighting, set design, and make-up. Arrange to view an age appropriate performance related to a general Girls Only theme or topic recently covered. Look for performances at local theaters or college campuses and ask for group discounts.

MATERIALS:

- Theater tickets
- Transportation

LENGTH OF LESSON: 2 to 3 hours

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** Are there times in your life when you “act” like an actor on the stage? Would you like to perform on the stage?

EVALUATION: Did participants attend a theater performance? Did participants engage with the performance? Did the theater field trip promote the goals of Girls Only?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite an acting coach or theater professional to come to Girls Only to do a theater workshop with participants. Challenge participants to create their own theater production to perform for a talent show, open house, or for fun!

## Field Trip: Service Learning Volunteer Project

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How can I serve my community? What can I learn from volunteering?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants engage with their community by volunteering to serve in some capacity; participants practice working as a team; participants learn the benefits of helping others and giving back to their society.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Volunteerism, or serving without monetary compensation, is a mutually beneficial way to engage young people with their communities: volunteers learn to help others and organizations in need get assistance without spending money. Volunteers learn new tasks, get experience working as a team for a common goal, and get exposed to various parts of their community. Arrange for participants to volunteer with an organization or on a project related to a general Girls Only theme or topic recently covered. Ideas for service projects include: serving food at a homeless shelter, participating in a beach clean-up or neighborhood trash clean-up, tutoring or mentoring younger students, visiting senior citizens at a senior center, visiting and entertaining hospital patients, organizing a food or clothing drive for children in need, weeding or planting on a local farm, or working as ushers at a local theater production.

MATERIALS:

- Materials will be specific to your service project

LENGTH OF LESSON: 2 to 3 hours

JOURNAL PROMPT: How did it feel to volunteer? What else would you like to do to serve your community?

EVALUATION: Did participants serve their community? How did participants work together as a team? Did the service learning volunteer project promote the goals of Girls Only?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Arrange for an on-going service project that participants can work on. Have participants brainstorm service project ideas for their community. Have participants help organize a service project. Invite a volunteer from a local organization, AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps to speak to Girls Only.

**Culture:** Participants discuss the role that cultural traditions and practices play in our lives; promote acceptance and inclusion of differences and commonalities amongst cultures.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Culture is Everywhere
- 2) Culture Day

### Lesson: Culture is Everywhere

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** What is culture? What does culture look like? What is the purpose of culture?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants define culture; participants find evidence of culture in their lives and all around; participants make an art project depicting culture in their lives.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Culture is a shared set of practices and traditions that characterize a society or group of people. Culture can include clothing, food, traditions, ceremonies, spiritual practices and beliefs, language, family structure, and communication styles. Culture is often, though not necessarily, correlated with ethnicity and racial identity. Culture plays a large role in individual identities. Helping young people recognize cultural influences all around them helps them understand themselves.

**MATERIALS:**

- Pens and pencils
- Paper
- String
- Hole punch
- Index cards or small squares of paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Begin by explaining culture is a shared set of practices and traditions that characterize a society or group of people. Culture can include clothing, food, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, spiritual practices and beliefs, language, family structure, and communication styles. Explain that culture influences who we are, just like our parents and personalities.
2. Have participants brainstorm a few examples of culture (ex: speaking English, speaking **Spanish, wearing a blue and white school uniform, saying “please” and “thank you,” giving your teacher a hug at the end of the day, wearing your hair in braids, using American money, wearing flip flop shoes**). Record their ideas on a board or large paper.
3. Explain that today they will be having a cultural scavenger hunt: they will find evidence of culture in their lives and all around. Explain that they will write their examples of culture on the

index cards or small squares of paper and draw a picture of it. They should find at least six examples of culture around them. Participants can work alone, in pairs, or in groups.

4. Pass out index cards or squares of paper, pens and pencils, crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Direct participants to get up out of their seats to search for evidence of culture all around them. Assist as necessary.

5. Have participants write their examples of culture on the index cards or small squares of paper and draw a picture of each example. An example of six cards: 1) “speaking English” with a picture of the A, B, C’s, 2) “using American money” with a picture of a dollar bill, 3) “going to church on Sunday” with a picture of a cross, 4) “watching cartoons on Saturday morning” with a picture of a TV or a cartoon character, 5) “bringing lunch in a brown paper bag” with a picture of a brown paper bag or lunch foods, 6) “wearing friendship bracelets” with a picture of a friendship bracelet.

6. When participants have finished at least six cards, punch two holes on the top of each card and string them together.

7. Have participants share what they found on their scavenger hunts. Ask participants to discuss what each example of culture means and the role it plays in their lives.

8. Hang cultural scavenger hunt art projects throughout the room.

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** If you were to invent a cultural tradition or ritual, what would it be? A language? A food? A dance? Describe your new tradition and why you would have people practice it.

**EVALUATION:** Did participants define culture? Were participants able to identify evidence of culture around them? Did participants create a collage of culture?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Ask participants to find examples of diverse cultural traditions in their community, or even within their families, and report back to the group.

## Lesson: Culture Day

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What are your cultural traditions?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants bring food, dances, songs and music, clothing, ceremonies, games, and traditions from their own cultures or a culture of their choosing to share; participants gain exposure to cultural traditions different from their own.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Culture is a shared set of practices and traditions that characterize a society or group of people. Culture can include clothing, food, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, spiritual practices and beliefs, language, family structure, and communication styles. Celebrating a diversity of cultural traditions promotes **tolerance and understanding**. **Plus, it’s fun to learn about other traditions.**

**MATERIALS:**

- Culture Day information sheet for parents/guardians

- Tables
- Plates, utensils, and napkins
- Stereo
- World map

LENGTH OF LESSON: 2 sessions, 1 to 2 hours

PROCEDURE:

### Day 1

1. At least a week prior to Culture Day, introduce the concept of Culture Day to participants. Explain that each participant will have a chance to share special foods, dances, songs and music, ceremonies, games, clothing, and traditions from their own cultures or a culture of their choosing.
2. Define culture. Explain that culture is a shared set of practices and traditions that characterize a society or group of people. Culture can include clothing, food, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, spiritual practices and beliefs, language, and communication styles.
3. Give examples of cultural traditions with which participants may be familiar: fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, **cards and flowers for loved ones on Valentine's day**, a cake with candles on your birthday, and eating certain foods at Thanksgiving. Give other examples from around the world.
4. Ask participants to brainstorm food, dances, songs and music, ceremonies, games, and traditions from their own cultures or a culture of their choosing. Explain that they will each have about 5 minutes to present their cultural tradition to the group. For each presentation, the participant should be able to answer: What did you bring? What culture is it representing? What does this cultural tradition mean to you? Assist with research as necessary. Participants might bring in a traditional dress worn at a Korean wedding, a special dish cooked for a Mexican quinceañera, demonstrate a traditional African dance style, or read a Jewish poem in Hebrew.
5. Send participants home with a Culture Day information sheet for parents/guardians, explaining Culture Day and asking them to help their child prepare if necessary. Remind participants to bring their cultural representation to the next session.

### Day 2

1. Set up the space for presentation of various cultural representations. Set up a table at the front of the space. Set up stereo and stage area as necessary depending on what participants are sharing. Post the map where it is visible.
2. Call participants one at a time to present their cultural tradition to the group. Remind the group to be supportive of each other! For each presentation, the participant should be able to answer: What did you bring? What culture is it representing? What does this cultural tradition mean to you? Direct participants to locate where their cultural tradition is from and place a marker on the map for each region or area represented. After the participant presents, allow others to ask questions of the presenter.
3. If participant has brought food to share, serve the food after their presentation.

4. After all participants have presented, invite participants to mingle and teach each other their cultural traditions.
5. Clean up and have participants respond to journal prompt.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is a new cultural tradition you learned about today?

EVALUATION: Did participants bring in a cultural representation? Did participants share the meaning of what they brought? Did participants engage with each other regarding their cultural traditions?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants research the origins of a cultural tradition. Invite a dance group or a music group to do a traditional performance at Girls Only. Arrange a field trip to a local restaurant featuring food from another country or culture. Arrange a field trip to cultural enclaves such as Chinatown, Koreatown, or Little Italy. Arrange a field trip to a music, dance, or theater performance. Arrange a field trip to a museum.

**Careers and Jobs:** Participants get exposure to possible career/job choices for the future; participants explore reasons to stay in school; participants explore reasons to further their education.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Goal Setting—Long-term and Short-term Goals
- 2) Career Day

### Lesson: Setting Goals—Long-Term and Short-Term Goals

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** What are goals? What is the benefit of setting goals? How do you achieve your goals?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants discuss the purpose and benefits of setting goals; participants set personal goals and make plans to achieve their goals.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Learning to set and work towards goals is an important life skill. A goal is something you are aiming to get or have or do, it is a desired destination or result. Setting goals helps you stay motivated and provides direction, especially when things are stressful or difficult and you feel like giving up. Long-term goals are goals for the future which means you will need to focus for a long time, maybe a month or a year or several years. Short-term goals are goals you have for the near future or that you will need to focus on for a short period of time, maybe a few hours, a day, or a week. Both types of goals require effort, concentration, and commitment. It is usually helpful to think of short-term goals that will help you achieve your long-term goals. Teaching girls to set goals and make plans to achieve their goals teaches time management skills, commitment skills, and helps them stay true to their values, thereby potentially avoiding peer-pressure and drug or gang involvement.

**MATERIALS:**

- My Goals worksheet
- Whiteboard, chalkboard, or large paper
- Pens and pencils

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 30 minutes to 45 minutes

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Begin by telling participants that today they will be setting goals and making plans to achieve their goals. Ask participants to define what a goal is out loud. A goal is something you are aiming to get or have or do, it is a desired destination or result.
2. Tell participants one of your goals today is to teach them about goals! Or in a sports game your goal might be to make a goal! Ask participants to give some other examples of goals. **Record participants' ideas on the board or large paper as they give them.** Examples of goals: get an "A" on a my science test, go to summer camp this year, go to college, make the volleyball team, make a goal in the soccer game, finish all my homework, become a mom, grow my hair

out, not bite my nails anymore, learn how to play the guitar, make a birthday card for my sister, not get in trouble at school, finish all my chores without being told, run a mile in ten minutes.

3. After participants have brainstormed examples of goals, explain there are two different kinds of goals. Long-term goals are goals that you have for the future or that you will need to focus on for a long time, maybe a month or a year or several years. Short-term goals are goals you have for the near future or that you will need to focus on for a short period of time, maybe a few hours, a day, or a week. Both types of goals require effort, concentration, and commitment. It is usually helpful to think of short-term goals that will help you achieve your long-term goals. Explain that setting goals help keep you motivated, especially when things are stressful or difficult and you feel like giving up.

4. Ask participants to categorize each of the examples you have recorded on the board. Put an **“L”** next to the long-term goals and an **“S”** next to the short-term goals.

5. Now ask participants to think of what they would do when they get older or what job they would like to have. These are long-term goals. Have them shout out their answers one at a time. Record their ideas on the board or large paper. Examples include: hairstylist, teacher, dentist, veterinarian, President of the United States, businesswoman, policewoman, dog-walker, librarian, actress, etc.

6. **Choose one participants’ long-term job goal to use as an example. Write that end-goal on the far right side of the board. On the far left side write the participant’s name and age.**

Stephanie, age 10-----Pre-School Teacher

7. Ask participants to brainstorm the big goals Stephanie will need to achieve along the way in order to become a Pre-School Teacher.

Stephanie, age 10→finish middle school→graduate from high school→go to college→get teacher training→apply for jobs→ Pre-School Teacher

8. Do the same activity for a few other participants. Examples:

Jenika, age 9→practice basketball and other sports→finish middle school→play basketball in high school→graduate from high school→play basketball in college→ graduate from college→get recruited by a sports agent→Professional Basketball Player

Alyse, age 12→finish middle school→graduate from high school→go to police academy→ apply for jobs→ Policewoman

9. After each example, ask the participant if they think they can achieve their goal. Tell them that you believe in them and have no doubt they can achieve their goals!

10. Pass out My Goals worksheet and give participants time to complete. Have participants write what they want their life to be like, not what they think it will be like. Assist as necessary.

11. When all participants have completed the long-term goals worksheet, have participants take out their journals. Explain that short-term goals are equally important to long-term goals: you cannot achieve your long-term goals without succeeding at your short-term goals. Have participants make lists of short-term goals they would like to achieve today, tomorrow, this week, or this month. Examples of short-term goals:

Today: eat a healthy lunch, take a walk, finish my homework, do my chores, write in my journal

Tomorrow: get a haircut, go to church, go to cheerleading practice, work on my school report

This week: finish my school report, finish my scholarship applications, write thank you letters for my birthday presents, call my aunt on the phone

12. **Remind participants that sometimes goals change and it does not mean you're a failure if you don't achieve your goals; you set your own goals so it is your choice to change them to what works best for you.** Ask participants to report back periodically to the group on how their short-term and long-term goals are going.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is one short-term goal you are working towards? What is one long-term goal you are working towards? What goals are you most excited about achieving?

EVALUATION: Did participants define goals? Did participants identify short-term and long-term goals in their lives? Did participants make plans to achieve their goals?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Provide a quiz or assessment for participants to find out what they are good at and what careers they may be well suited for. Have participants research various paths available to reaching certain career goals. Invite a career counselor or life coach to speak at Girls Only.

### Lesson: Career Day

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What are possible jobs to hold in the future? What needs to be done to work towards that career choice?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get exposure to possible career/job choices for the future; participants meet community members from various occupations.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: **Getting exposure to various career choices expands young people's imaginations and understandings of what they can "be when they grow up."** For career day, invite representatives from various occupations to present about their career choice and their path to getting there. These guests should be women who represent careers such as teachers, doctors/nurses, veterinarians, politicians, lawyers, cooks/chefs, artists, businesswomen, athletes, hairdressers, zookeepers, actors, and other fields. It is ideal if the guests are diverse in race, ethnicity, and age and/or look like the participants in your Girls Only group. The president of The White House Project, **Marie Wilson notes, "You can't be what you can't see" (Anderson 1)**; it is significant to show grown up women who look like the Girls Only participants as it builds motivation and hope for the future.

#### MATERIALS:

- Approximately 5 tables or work stations
- Approximately 5 guest speakers from various occupations

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Arrange for three to five professional community members from various occupations to be guests at Girls Only for Career Day. These guests should be women who represent careers such

as teachers, doctors/nurses, veterinarians, politicians, lawyers, cooks/chefs, artists, businesswomen, athletes, hairdressers, zookeepers, actors, and other fields. It is ideal if the guests are diverse in race, ethnicity, and age and/or look like the girls in your Girls Only group. **Give them at least two week's notice. Ask the guests to prepare a 10 minute activity or discussion about their occupation** (ex: an artist can lead an arts activity, a lawyer can lead a mock trial or ask participants to make a decision on a case, a doctor can lead participants through a typical day or demonstrate their instruments, a politician can discuss their election process, a chef can do a cooking demonstration—allow the guests to be creative! Remind each guest that they will be doing their presentation/activity four or five times and to leave time for questions.

2. Set up stations in separate rooms if possible or far enough apart so as to not disrupt each other. Set up four or five chairs around each table. Have the guests arrive 30 minutes prior to the session to set up their station. Decide which direction participants will rotate between stations.

3. Begin the session with the group explaining today is career day and they will be learning about different kinds of jobs and what it takes to get there.

4. Break the participants into groups of four or five.

5. Direct participants to each station and begin rotations of approximately 10 minutes. Timing will depend on the number of stations. Ideally each participant will be able to interact with each professional.

6. Conclude career day as a whole group thanking the guests for coming.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What do you want to do when you grow up? Why do you think you will be good at that occupation?

EVALUATION: Did career day go smoothly? Were participants engaged with the guest speakers? Did participants seem excited about career options?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Arrange for participants to visit a job site or to shadow for a day (ex: doctor/nurse, teacher, lawyer, hairdresser, artist, athlete, businesswoman etc). Invite a career counselor or volunteer to teach a workshop to Girls Only about writing a resume and managing money.

# My Long-Term Goals

**In 5 years.....**

Age\_\_\_\_\_

Where will you live?\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation\_\_\_\_\_

**In 10 years.....**

Age\_\_\_\_\_

Where will you live?\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation\_\_\_\_\_

**In 15 years.....**

Age\_\_\_\_\_

Where will you live?\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation\_\_\_\_\_

**Diversity:** Participants connect history to their present lives; participants brainstorm ways to promote diversity.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Personal History
- 2) Diversity
- 3) **Women's History**

Lesson: Personal History

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is your history?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants share their own life stories; **participants learn about their family's histories; participants make a book about their lives.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: **Autobiographical writings by women give voice to women's own histories. Women's voices and perspectives** have often been left out of traditional history books, leaving gaps in historical recollections. When women tell their own stories they are reminded where they come from, they are empowered to understand who they are and why they are the way they are, **and others learn about the variation of women's experiences.** Teaching girls and young women to tell their own stories can empower them to be confident in themselves and become leaders.

MATERIALS:

- Autobiographical books by women
- Pens and pencils
- Colored paper
- Tape
- Stapler
- Glue
- Magazines
- Family photos
- Other craft materials: stickers, glitter, string, etc.

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours, 2 sessions

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be thinking about themselves and their life stories. Remind them their lives are interesting and you want to hear their life stories!
2. Read some sample autobiographies or parts of them. Tell participants they will be making their own book about their own life. If conducting this lesson over a few days, ask participants to talk to their families about their lives. They can ask to hear stories about their birth, about

family members, and about events in their lives. Have them ask their family for photos to include in their books.

3. Pass out paper and pens. Direct participants to create a chronological timeline of their lives, starting with their birthday. They can add any detailed information as they remember it— **where they were born, where they have lived over the years, the schools they've attended, the teachers they've had, names of family members and friends, and big events in their lives.** Assist as necessary. The timeline should include memories and events from the past, details about the present, and hopes or plans for the future.

4. After they have completed their timelines, hand out paper and craft supplies.

5. Demonstrate how to make a book by folding paper creatively. Paper books can be stapled or folded creatively to hold together.

6. Direct participants to make their books. The book should be about ten pages long. Assist as necessary.

7. Direct participants to title their autobiographies and to decorate the front cover creatively.

The title should be something related to their name or their lives, for example: Jennifer's Journey or Laura's Life or My Life So Far. Remind them to put their own name as the author!

8. Give participants time to plan, sketch out, and then write their life stories into the book. The **book can be written in first person ("I") or third person ("she").** Their book should include memories and events from the past, details about the present, and hopes or plans for the future. Each page can include an event and a photo and/or drawing or more than one event. **The first page could say, "Jamie Elizabeth Santos was born on July 11, 2002 in San Diego, CA. Her mom, Jessica, and her dad, Pedro, loved her very much" and could include a photo of her parents holding her as a baby.** Allow participants to decorate each page creatively. Assist as necessary.

9. When the books are complete, have participants share their life stories and their completed books. Remind them their stories are important and they should feel proud to tell their life stories. **Remind them you can't wait to hear the rest of their life stories as they grow up!**

JOURNAL PROMPT: Did you learn something new about your family while researching your history? How did it feel to write your life story?

EVALUATION: Did participants share their stories? Did participants create a book about their lives?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create Power Point presentations or computer slideshows about their lives. Have participants create skits or dramatic performances of pieces of their lives. Have participants create a collage or a diorama of their lives.

## Lesson: Diversity

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is diversity? How do we all benefit from appreciating diversity?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants define diversity; participants define discrimination; participants practice tolerance; participants brainstorm ways to promote diversity.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Diversity means difference. There is great diversity amongst human beings that enriches our societies, communities, and lives as individuals. Child development research has revealed children begin to conceptualize gender, racial, and ability differences and begin to show signs of influence by societal norms and biases within their third year of life (Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force 2); it is essential that anti-bias lessons begin at young ages so young people grow up to be accepting, respectful, and compassionate. Teaching young people to appreciate diversity in race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, and size reduces prejudice and hate and promotes tolerance, respect, and peace.

### MATERIALS:

- Board or large paper
- Pictures of people of varying ages, races, sizes, abilities, religions, etc
- Pictures and stories of discriminatory treatment
- Paper
- Pens and pencils
- Poster paper
- General craft supplies

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

### PROCEDURE:

1. Have participants sit in a circle. Explain that today you will be talking about diversity, or things that make everyone different and unique.
2. Begin a discussion about diversity. Go around the circle and ask participants to give examples of ways people are different. Record their ideas as they give them. Encourage them to look for examples of diversity in the Girls Only space, as well as think about examples of diversity at their schools, homes, and in the world. Remind them to think in general terms: **if they say, “I am 10 years old and she is 12 years old” that would be a diversity of age. Categories of diversity** include: appearance, age, race, gender, social class, religion/beliefs, language, physical and mental ability, height, weight, size, nationality, educational background, family structure, sexual orientation, personal qualities/personalities, likes and dislikes, and feelings.
3. Remind participants that although people differ in many ways, all people have feelings, can think and learn, want to feel wanted, enjoy life, and have friends.
4. Go around the circle and ask participants to give examples of how they are similar to each other. Categories of similarities can be the same as categories of diversity, as well as more

specific things unique to the participants. Examples include: “we’re in Girls Only,” “we go to the same school,” “we both have moms who are nurses,” “the three of us play basketball.”

5. Continue the discussion about diversity. Ask participants: What does it mean to you that we live in a diverse world? Do you think our differences should separate us? How do we all benefit from diversity? Record their ideas as they give them.

6. Explain that living in a diverse world means we get to learn new ways of doing things, develop friendships, and use everyone’s unique knowledge and talents.

7. Begin a discussion about discrimination. Explain that sometimes people are discriminated against, or treated unfairly, because of their differences. Give examples and show pictures of discrimination. For each example, ask participants if they think this different treatment is fair and why or why not. Examples include:

- Segregation of blacks and whites in education, housing, buses, voting, drinking fountains, restaurants, etc until the 1960s
- Banning women from voting until 1920s
- Banning gays and lesbians from getting married
- Airlines making someone purchase two airplane seats because of their body size
- At the airport security checkpoint, only searching people who wear head scarves
- Hurting or killing someone because they are Asian, black, Hispanic, white, a woman, gay or lesbian, a certain religion, etc
- Only putting stairs in a building so someone in a wheelchair cannot go in
- Telling jokes about another race
- Calling someone a name that puts down their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

8. Ask participants: Have you ever been discriminated against? How do you think it makes someone feel to be discriminated against? Explain that being discriminated against makes people feel angry, sad, or lonely.

9. Remind participants of all the similarities they found amongst each other and all the benefits they get from diversity. Remind them how it feels to be discriminated against.

10. Introduce the Diversity Action Project. Explain that participants will have a chance to think of and brainstorm creative ways to promote diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and peace and challenge discriminatory behavior. Participants can work by themselves or in groups.

11. Have participants think of what aspect of diversity their project will be about. Topics can be as general or specific as participants want. Examples include:

- |                               |                          |                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Appearance                  | • Height                 | • Personal qualities/personalities |
| • Age                         | • Weight                 | • Likes and dislikes               |
| • Race                        | • Size                   | • Feelings                         |
| • Gender                      | • Nationality            | • Animals                          |
| • Social class                | • Educational background | • The Environment                  |
| • Religion/beliefs            | • Family structure       | • Children                         |
| • Language                    | • Sexual orientation     | • Senior citizens                  |
| • Physical and mental ability |                          |                                    |

12. Have participants think of what their Diversity Action Project will be. Examples include:

- Write a poem
- Write a song

- Write and illustrate **a children’s book**
  - Make a poster
  - Make a painting
  - Make a collage
  - Make a sculpture
  - Make a skit
- Dress in a different **culture’s clothes** for the day
  - Teach a class about diversity
  - Organize a volunteer service project
  - Learn a new language
- Write five possible responses to discriminatory language
  - Learn how to cook a meal from another culture
  - Make up a game to teach people about diversity

13. Give participants time to create their diversity action project. Assist as necessary.

14. Have participants present their Diversity Action Project to the whole group. For each presentation they should tell the purpose of their project, what it is, and how it promotes diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and peace. An example of a Diversity Action Project could be a **poem about being called a “bitch,” how it made the person feel to be called that, and what they would say to the person who called them that name if they got the chance.** Another example of a Diversity Action Project could be **making a skit about a group of kids who don’t let a girl who is Asian play on their team at recess because they don’t think she is good at sports, how it makes her feel, and how they all become great friends and a strong team after deciding to give her a chance.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: If everyone looked exactly like you, talked like you, and did the same things as you, how would your life be different? Are there friends you would miss? Are there family members you would miss? **How do you identify when someone asks, “what are you?” How does your skin color or your racial identity affect your life?**

EVALUATION: Did participants define diversity? Did participants brainstorm creative ways to promote tolerance and diversity?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Arrange for a field trip to a local site of cultural significance, a museum about diversity, or to cultural enclaves such as Chinatown, Koreatown, or Little Italy.

## **Lesson: Women's History**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** What is the **history of women in the United States**? How do women's life experiences differ based on race, class, and other characteristics? What is feminism? How can you benefit from learning about someone else's life?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants learn about the histories of women in the United States; participants research a woman of their choosing; participants connect history to their own lives.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Studying women's history means studying the stories of diverse women, the progress of women in recent history, and the further steps needed to ensure real equality between women and men of all races. Women, as a class worldwide, have endured gender discrimination and segregation as well as physical and emotional harassment and abuse, and continue to struggle for rights today. The National Women's History Project explains, "Knowing the challenges these women faced, grappled with and overcame can be an enormous source of strength to all of us" (NWHP 2). Teaching young women about the challenges women have faced and the triumphs they have celebrated can empower girls and young women to feel confident and become leaders.

### **MATERIALS:**

- **Fact sheets and timelines about women's history**
- **Videos or online videos about women's history**
- Historical pictures of women from different time periods in the United States
- Books and articles about women of note
- Computer with internet access
- Newspapers
- Poster paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Colored paper
- Pens and pencils

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 2 to 3 hours

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be learning about the histories of women in the United States. Show videos/online videos, pictures, timelines, and books and articles about **women's history during different time periods in the United States**.

2. Based on the films and information presented, begin a discussion about challenges that **women have historically faced**. Ask participants: "**what challenges have women faced?**"

Examples include: voting rights, not being allowed to work/being forced to work/job discrimination, freedom to control their bodies/reproductive rights, racism, homophobia, unequal pay, and physical abuse.

3. Remind participants that women have come a long way, but there is still work to be done and challenges to overcome. Explain feminism is the movement to end sexist oppression and to work for equality for women.

4. Have participants choose a woman to research. Participants can work alone or in small **groups**. **Explain that participants will be learning about this woman's life, thinking about the challenges she overcame, and relating her life to their own.** Participants can pick from the list given or think of someone they want to research. The facilitator should approve all proposed subjects. Suggestions include:

- Rosa Parks
- Coretta Scott King
- Myrlie Evers-Williams
- Oprah Winfrey
- June Jordan
- Michelle Obama
- Laura Ingalls Wilder
- bell hooks
- Mae Jemison
- Amelia Earhart
- Audre Lorde
- Margaret Cho
- Maya Lin
- **Georgia O'Keefe**
- Martha Graham
- Lena Horne
- Dolores Huerta
- Paula Gunn Allen
- Charlotte Bronte
- Zora Neale Hurston
- Adrienne Rich
- Harriet Tubman
- Sojourner Truth
- Marilyn Monroe
- Billie Holiday
- Marie Curie
- Abigail Adams
- Susan B. Anthony
- Rachel Carson
- Isadora Duncan
- Juliette Low
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- Mae West
- Betsy Ross
- Lucy Stone
- Elizabeth Blackwell
- Annie Oakley
- Helen Keller
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Margaret Mead
- Lucille Ball
- **"Babe" Didrikson O'Connor**
- Madeline Albright
- Condoleezza Rice
- Billy Jean King
- Hillary Rodham Clinton
- Sally Ride
- Venus and Serena Williams
- Maya Angelou
- Clara Barton
- Tyra Banks
- Ruth Bader Ginsberg
- Connie Chung
- Michelle Kwan
- Gloria Anzaldua
- Sonya Sotomayor
- Sandra Cisneros
- Ani DiFranco
- Queen Latifah
- Elizabeth Eckford
- Viola Liuzzo
- Better Friedan
- Alice Paul

3. **Instruct participants to research their subject's life** using books, historical newspapers, the internet, and film. Assist as necessary. They should find out:

- date and place of birth
- date and place of death
- where she lives or lived
- what life was like for women when she was growing up

- what life was like was like for people of her race when she was growing up
- what challenges she faced
- what she did or does that impacted history
- what she did or does that is significant for women
- two things about the woman or her life that strike you as interesting or surprising

4. **As they research, encourage participants to think about how their subject's life relates to their own life.** Prompt with questions: How are you and your subject similar? How are you and your subject different? What did you learn from your subject? What challenges do you face in your life? How can what you learned about your subject help you face the challenges in your life?

5. **Pass out poster making materials. Have participants create a poster about their subject's life,** including the elements they researched, photos, and copies of primary source documents.

6. When participants have completed their posters, have them present to the group telling the story of the woman they researched. Ask participants to connect the life of their subject to their own life, prompting them with the same questions from before.

7. Hang the posters around the room to inspire participants with the challenges faced and overcome by women historically.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What role will you play in history? How **will this impact women's history?**

EVALUATION: Did participants research the history of a woman of note? Did participants connect history to current events and to their own lives? Did participants make a poster demonstrating these connections?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a local woman celebrity, politician, or well-known community member to speak to Girls Only. Arrange a field trip to a local place of interest involving **women's history.**

**Media:** Participants learn about the media’s influence on our lives; participants identify how the media influences their attitudes; participants brainstorm ways to combat the media’s negative influence.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Media
- 2) Media and My Body and Mind
- 3) My Media

Lesson: Media

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is media?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: **Participants define “media;” participants learn about different forms of media; participants discuss the purposes and uses of media.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Media is used to convey information. Mass media is used to communicate to large numbers of people. Media includes television, radio, music players, computers, billboard advertisements, magazines, books, and newspapers. Teaching young people about the purposes and uses of media empowers them to be able to use a variety of media sources, allowing them an outlet for expression.

MATERIALS:

- Television set—TV shows, movies on VHSs, DVDs, Laser Discs, BluRays
- Radio—talk shows, music
- Stereo—CDs, tapes, records, podcasts, music
- Computer—internet, email, social networking sites
- Magazines and Zines
- Books
- Newspapers
- Video games
- Camera—(digital, Polaroid, film, movie camera)
- Cell phones—text messaging

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Display examples of all types of media on a table at the front of the room. Display pictures of **those you don’t have a real example of.**
2. Ask participants: What is media? If they are unsure, prompt them with further questions: How do you get the news? **How do you find out what’s going on in the world? What can be used to communicate a message?** List different forms of media as participants brainstorm.

3. After they give some answers, explain that media is anything used to convey a message and mass media, like newspapers and television, are used to reach a lot of people. Using several forms of media together is called multimedia and media is also used creatively as art.
4. **Demonstrate the use of each type of media. Show pictures of those you don't have. For each type of media, hold it up and ask the participants to name it. Ask them what it is used for. Ask them what it could be used for to encourage them to think outside the box and brainstorm how media can be used to challenge injustice. For example: "What is this?"—"A newspaper!"—"What is it used for?"—"To give the news! To advertise things you can buy! To share opinions! To give gossip about celebrities! To show comic strips! To share crossword puzzles and other games!" or "What is this?"—"A laptop computer!"—"What is it used for?"—"To play games! To write stories! To write emails! To look up stuff on the internet! To do scientific research! To listen to music! To make music! To keep pictures! To make slideshows to educate people! To report the news! or "What is this?"—"A digital camera!"—"What is it used for?"—"To take pictures! To be artistic! To keep memories!**
5. Pass around each type of media for participants to touch and hold.
6. Ask participants to share examples of the latest technological media advances that you may not even be aware of!

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you had your own TV show what would you show on it? If you had your own radio station what kind of music would you play? If you hosted your own podcast what would you talk about? If you had your own website what would be on it?

EVALUATION: Did participants define media? Did participants learn about different forms of media?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Participants can research the invention and development of different types of media. Invite a newspaper editor, a newscaster, a movie or TV producer, or book author to visit Girls Only. Take a field trip to a TV or movie studio or a newspaper publishing office.

### Lesson: Media and My Body and Mind

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How does the media influence your mind? How does the media influence your body?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants discuss the role of the media in their own lives; participants critically analyze and deconstruct images shown in the media; participants create posters demonstrating the stereotypical and damaging images portrayed in the media.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Influential media exposure infiltrates the minds of girls ages 8 to 12 at an alarmingly high degree. The inundation of media influences in our society such as television, movies, the internet, video games, music, and magazines has real effects on our **minds and bodies. According to research, "the average North American girl will watch 5,000**

hours of television, including 80,000 ads, before she starts kindergarten” (Baeza 1). Despite the incredible benefits the presence of advanced media technology has in our lives, especially the ever-increasing possibilities for communication and interconnection of people around the world, media can be dangerous. The majority of the images seen in advertisements and the media portray women (and men) in stereotypical roles: women are shown as sex objects and/or doing traditional female work. Many of the images we see have also been photo-shopped or altered to portray a different version of “reality” than we may believe. Women of color, when portrayed at all in the media, are often shown in negative and/or stereotypical roles; variation of body type, size, and ability in mainstream media imagery is rare; and variation of gender expression and sexuality in mainstream media imagery is rare. This media influence manifests in the minds and bodies of tween girls as unrealistic body expectations, stereotypic racial and gender ideas, and misguided notions of love, success, and career opportunities. Discussing the role of the media and critically analyzing and deconstructing images shown in the media helps young people understand the influence of media

#### MATERIALS:

- Computer with internet access
- Videos or online videos about ads, beauty, and the media
- Magazines
- Video games
- Newspapers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pens, pencils
- Poster boards or large paper

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Preparation: cut out images and ads from magazines that promote traditional gender roles or **stereotypical body images. Include sexualized images, women and men doing “feminine” tasks,** and models who look thin, light-skinned, and wealthy.
2. Remind participants what media is and what role it plays in their lives. Explain that it is okay to be susceptible to the influence of the media. It is all around us! Billboards, TVs, websites, magazines and other types of media send us messages all the time. These images and messages influence how we think and feel about our bodies and ourselves. Explain this may happen unconsciously: we may not be paying attention to what an ad is for or we may be thinking that **that picture looks silly, but the message of what is “beautiful” or “cool” gets transmitted to our brain anyways.** When this influence gets combined with trying to fit in with our friends and worrying about what other people think, we get caught up in trying to fit these unrealistic ideals instead of staying true to ourselves.
3. Divide participants into small groups. Pass out advertisement and magazine images to each group. Ask the groups to deconstruct or pick apart the image. Remind them to think about

colors, positions, lighting, and all elements of the image. Prompt them with questions: What product is being sold? Who is being portrayed in the picture? Who is the ad aimed at? Why is this the picture being used? What ideals are being promoted by the image? Are those ideals realistic? How does the image and/or words make you feel?

4. Have each group report out on their findings.

5. Pass out magazines, scissors, glue, poster paper, and pens and pencils.

6. Explain participants will create a poster of images from the media. Direct participants to cut out images and glue them to their poster with their group. The images should depict women in stereotypical roles. Remind them that stereotypes are beliefs or oversimplifications about groups or types of people—a stereotypical image of a woman might show her doing traditional **“feminine” tasks like laundry or cooking food. The images can also depict certain beauty ideals and ways of behaving.**

7. After cutting out images and gluing them on their poster, have participants write comments next to the images. Have them write what ideals the image is promoting, what makes them angry about the image, why it hurts their feelings, makes them feel bad about their body or how they look. For example, if there is an image of a thin, black woman advertising hair straightening spray, **a participant might write, “promotes thinness—makes me feel like I’m not skinny enough” or “promotes unnatural hair—makes me feel like my curly hair is ugly.”** Assist as necessary.

8. Have groups present their completed posters, describing the images depicted and their comments. Ask each group: who benefits from putting out images that make you feel like that? (ex: advertisers, cosmetics companies, weight loss companies, alcohol companies, modeling agencies, clothing companies, men). Ask each group for ideas to challenge the images they chose. Allow time for questions and comments.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What makes you angry about messages the media sends to you? Do you believe messages the media sends you about what you should look like? Which ones?

EVALUATION: Did participants critically analyze the role of the media in their lives? Did participants create a poster demonstrating the stereotypical and damaging images portrayed in the media and their feelings about the images?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite an employee of an advertising agency to come to Girls Only to speak about the intentions of ads. Have participants write letters to advertising companies telling them how their depictions make them feel.

## Lesson: My Media

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can I make my own media?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants create their own media messages that resist stereotypes, challenge standards of beauty, and encourage empowerment; participants create their own media display.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Teaching girls how to create their own media through arts education and technology education provides opportunities for them to creatively challenge stereotypes and empower themselves. Teaching girls about technology and media is also important because those fields have historically been dominated by men. If more women create and control the images of themselves shown in the mainstream, hopefully there will be more of an inclusive representation of women of all colors, abilities, ages, and sizes.

### MATERIALS:

- My Media Worksheet
- Computer with internet access
- Sample websites depicting empowering images and words
- Video Cameras
- Recording devices
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Photos of Girls Only participants
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pens, pencils
- Poster boards or large paper

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will have the opportunity to answer the questions: If you had your own television station what would you show on it? If you had your own radio station what kind of music would you play? If you hosted your own podcast what would you talk about? If you had your own website what would be on it? If you made your own video game, what would it be about?
2. Remind participants what media is and what role it plays in their lives.
3. Explain they will be designing their own media to resist stereotypes, challenge standards of beauty, and empower girls and women. Explain that they will be making posters, laying out magazines, designing video games, writing movie scripts, or designing websites.
4. Pass out the My Media Worksheets. Work on it as a whole group, talking and sharing ideas together.

5. Have participants choose what type of media they would like to design: poster, song, radio show/podcast program, television show, movie, video game, website, magazine, newspaper, or book. They probably only have time to create one media design. This will be how they convey their message.

6. After they have chosen their type of media, have participants answer the essential question: what message do you want your media to convey? The messages should be general and succinct. Examples of media messages:

- Everyone is beautiful inside and out
- You do not need to wear make-up
- Women and girls have changed the world
- Be true to yourself
- Believe in yourself
- I love my body
- Your hair is naturally perfect
- Eat healthy food and get lots of exercise
- Appreciate nature and the outdoors
- Protect the environment
- Volunteer in your community
- **I don't need a prince or a knight to rescue me**
- Read lots of books

7. After deciding on their general media message, have participants decide who will be their audience. Is their media intended for girls their age? Parents? Teachers? Younger kids? Everyone? Ask them to decide who they specifically want to send their message to and why.

8. Next, have participants decide on their slogan/tagline or title, appropriate to their media type and targeting their intended audience. The slogan/tagline or title may be the same as the media message, it may be an addition to, or it may be completely different. For example, if they **are going to create a television show and the media message is "Women and girls have changed the world," the title of the show might be: "We are the World: Amazing women and girls who have changed the world."** Remind the participants that it is *their* media and they can make it however they want! Allow them to be creative.

9. Next, have participants draw or write an outline or layout of their media design. This is the content of their media project, or what supports their message. For example, if they are making **the television show "We are the World: Amazing women and girls who have changed the world," an outline might include names of amazing women** and girls who have made an impact on their communities, ideas for who will host the show, and what kinds of images the show will depict.

10. After participants have outlined their projects, have them create their project! If they are making a poster, laying out a magazine, laying out a newspaper, or designing a website/webpage they can cut out images and words from magazines and glue them to a poster. Remind them that if the images or words they are looking for are not there, they should write or draw their own! If a video camera is available, teach them to use it to shoot a short film in line with their television show or movie design. If internet access is available, teach them to create a webpage in line with their website design using free software such as [www.sites.google.com](http://www.sites.google.com). If they are creating a song, radio show, or podcast, have them write a short script of a show and record their performance into a voice recorder.

11. Have participants present or perform their media to the group, stating the type of media, the media message, the intended audience, the slogan/tagline or title, and the content of the media. Remind participants to be supportive of one another and leave time for questions.

12. **Display participants' media projects around the Girls Only space.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you created a superhero to be the star of a television show or a movie you were writing, what super powers would she have and why?

EVALUATION: **Did participants create their own media message? Did participant's media message and display resist stereotypes, challenge standards of beauty, and encourage empowerment?**

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a web designer or technology expert to visit Girls Only to teach about creating websites and coding. Invite an artist to visit Girls Only to teach about using multimedia as creative expression. Invite a photographer or videographer to visit Girls Only to teach about using these technologies to create media; arrange for participants to create their own photo exhibits. Have participants design their own t-shirt or other clothing. Arrange

# My Media Worksheet

Type of media: \_\_\_\_\_

My media message:

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Who my media is for: \_\_\_\_\_

My slogan/tagline/title:

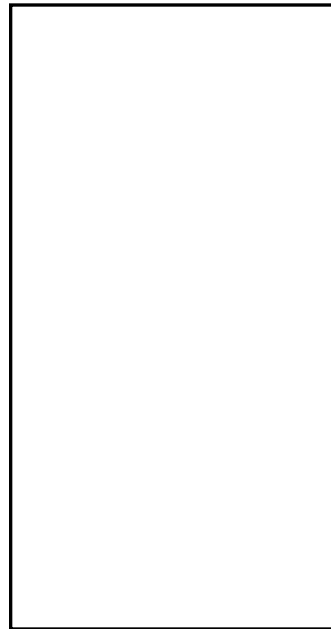
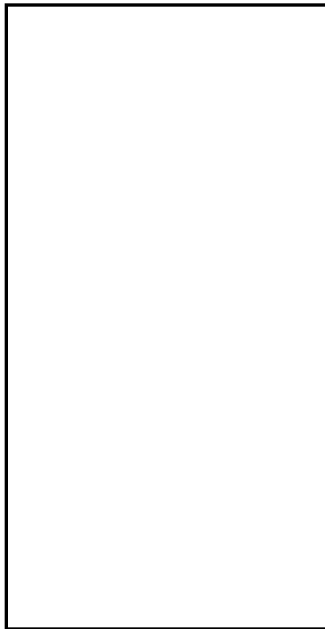
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Layout of my media:

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**Family Day and Open House:** Participants welcome their families to the Girls Only space.

Lesson plans:

1) Family Day

### Lesson: Family Day and Open House

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What are fun activities to do as a family?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants and their families enjoy a social event.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Involvement of and support from parents/guardians sets the tone for Girls Only as a holistic approach to prevention education. Having parents/guardians involved promotes healthy interaction between children and parents/guardians, provides insight into the home lives of participants, and provides opportunities to refer participants and parents/guardians to outside services if necessary. Familial support of young people prevents gang involvement, drug abuse, and involvement with the criminal justice system. Hosting a special social event for participants, their parents/guardians, and other family members builds community and celebrates family connection. Family Day is also an Open House, providing an opportunity for families to view artwork and projects completed in Girls Only. Ideas for Family Day: Arts and Crafts Day, Game Day, Creative Arts Performance, Show and Tell, Ice Cream Social, Movie Night, Exercise Day, or anything that might be fun!

MATERIALS:

- Promotional flyers
- Invitations
- Stereo
- Food
- Themed decorations
- Additional materials depending on the theme of Family Day! For example: craft supplies for Arts and Crafts Day, movies and popcorn for Movie Night, board games for Game Day, or sports equipment for Exercise Day.

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce Family Day at the Parent/Guardian Orientation at the start of Girls Only. Remind participants of the date of Family Day throughout the session. Create a flyer to be posted and sent home to parents/guardians. Send invitations approximately three weeks prior to the date of Family Day.
2. Encourage participants to bring their families, including siblings, parents/guardians, grandparents, and extended family.
3. Have participants prepare performances or arts demonstrations to be presented at Family Day and Open House.

4. Decorate the Girls Only space with pictures, artwork, and projects completed by participants. Have participants help decorate. Arrange chairs and tables according to need for the theme of the day.
5. On Family Day and Open House, greet each family as they arrive. When most families have arrived, welcome the group. Introduce yourself. Thank the families for coming out to support Girls Only and let them know how glad you are to see them. Remind them that their daughters, granddaughters, nieces, and sisters are smart, amazing young women who have been working very hard in Girls Only. Remind the participants how proud you are of them and that you are glad to meet their families. Tell the families you are there for them and the participants and you are available to answer questions throughout the day or at any time.
6. Explain the activity for Family Day and Open House. Direct participants and their families to begin the activity, assisting and mingling as necessary.
7. **Encourage families to view participants' work posted around the room.**
8. As the activity comes to an end, thank everyone for coming. Encourage participants and families to continue doing activities together as a family. Remind parents/guardians they are welcome at all Girls Only sessions. Remind them that you are available to answer questions or discuss issues at any time. Dismiss participants and their families with any favors or activities from the day.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What was your favorite part about Family Day?

EVALUATION: Did participants bring their families to Family Day? Were the families engaged in the activity and with each other?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Design a family activity for each Girls Only lesson and send these ideas home with participants.

**Graduation: Celebrate participants' successful completion of the program!**

Lesson plans:

1) Graduation Ceremony

### Lesson: Graduation Ceremony

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How far have you come since we began Girls Only? What have you learned in Girls Only?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants celebrate and are recognized for their completion of the Girls Only program.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: A graduation ceremony is a celebration that marks the completion of an education or vocational program. Celebrating the achievements of participants with a ceremony, certificates, and potentially a party, demonstrates that their hard work is recognized and valued. Graduation ceremonies are a time to honor progress, to be proud, and to be a launching point for next steps. Graduation eligibility may be determined at your discretion; it is recommended that girls who have attended a majority of the Girls Only classes during that session should be allowed to attend the ceremony and receive a certificate.

MATERIALS:

- Certificates
- Powerpoint slide show or poster display
- Party food, decorations, and supplies

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

PROCEDURE:

1. **Prepare graduation certificates for each participant. Put the participant's name in large print.** Sign and date the certificate.
2. Prepare a powerpoint slide show or a poster display showing photos or depictions of **activities from the session of Girls Only. Include every participant's name and picture at least once.**
3. Invite parents/guardians to attend graduation ceremony.
4. Prepare and set up party food, decorations, and seating as desired.
5. Begin the day of graduation with journaling. As participants finish their entries, allow them to get party food and whatever other graduation treats you have prepared.
6. When all participants have finished journaling and have received their food, bring the attention to you at the front of the room. Congratulate all the participants on completing the session of Girls Only and tell them how proud you are of them, how much you have enjoyed watching each of them grow, and how much you look forward to seeing where their futures take them.
7. Have all staff, volunteers, and mentors stand at the front of the room and take turns saying something encouraging to the participants: progress they have seen, favorite memories from

the past weeks, or kind words. Have staff, volunteers, and mentors remain at the front of the room.

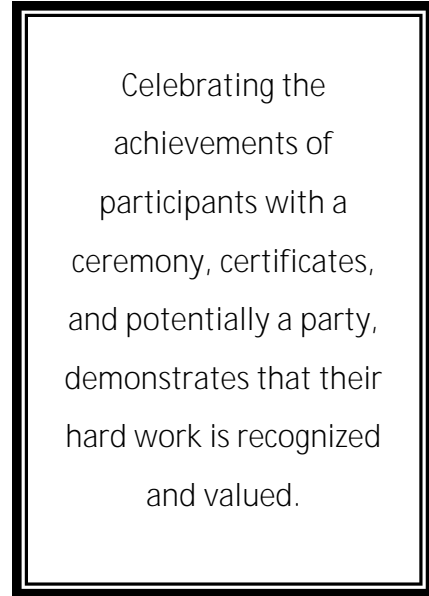
8. Invite participants to share, one at a time, something they learned from Girls Only, something they will take away from Girls Only, or favorite memories from the past weeks.

9. When sharing is finished explain that you will now distribute the graduation certificates. Call the first participant by name and have them stand and come to the front of the room. Direct everyone to applaud! Have them shake hands with each staff, volunteer, and mentor and then receive their certificate and return to their seat. After all participants have received their certificate, lead the group in a big round of applause for all of the graduates.

10. Have participants take their journals home. Encourage them to continue writing in them!

11. Remind participants you are always there for them and they are welcome back anytime!

JOURNAL PROMPT: How has Girls Only changed you?  
What did you learn in Girls Only?



EVALUATION: Did participants attend graduation? Did the participants seem excited about graduating? Were the participants engaged and participating during the various activities during the lesson? Did the journal responses indicate that the participants benefited from participating in Girls Only?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants prepare end-of-the-session gifts such as crafts or cards for each other. Bring in a special guest such as a singer or dancer to perform at the graduation ceremony.

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## Appendix A: Documents

# Girls Only Program Participation

To the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_:

Girls Only is a prevention education program for girls ages 8 to 12 years old. In Girls Only, participants learn how to build confidence, make healthy choices, and practice life skills. Girls Only includes interactive activities about feelings, communication, violence, health, community, media, creativity, careers, and diversity.

Girls Only will meet at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

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I agree to allow my child to participate in Girls Only.

I do not agree to allow my child to participate in Girls Only.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

In emergency, please contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact phone #: \_\_\_\_\_



## Pre and Post Assessment

*This document should be completed upon the child's entrance (Type: Assessment 1) and upon their completion of the program (Type: Assessment 2).*

Assessment Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group Leader/Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

### Child's Information:

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Female

Child's Caregiver (Name and relationship to child): \_\_\_\_\_

What are her Interests/hobbies:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does she like school?

\_\_\_\_\_

What kind of classes does she like?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If information is available:

School Attendance:

- Never missed a day
- Averaged absences from school 1 day per every 2 or 3 months
- Averaged absences 1 day every month
- Average absences more than one day a month

Comments about school attendance:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Academic Scores:

- Mostly As
- Mostly As & Bs
- Mostly Cs
- Below C average

Comments about Academic Scores:

\_\_\_\_\_

Based on your relationship with the child or conversation with others **about the child's** behavior please check the boxes which best describe current behavior tendencies:

- Easily angered or upset
- Non-social, unwillingness to participate
- Has a lack of respect for rules and adults
- Does not work well with others
- Enjoys expressing themselves
- Is respectful towards peers and adults
- Enjoys team activities and working with others
- Is not easily angered or upset
- Pro-social and willing to participate
- Additional behaviors Identified:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other comments about **child's** behavior:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Girls Only Questionnaire

What was your favorite Girls Only activity?

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Why was it your favorite? What did you learn?

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What did you learn overall at Girls Only?

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How has being in Girls Only changed you? How has it made you a stronger girl?

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What was the most interesting thing you learned at \_\_\_\_\_?

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What did you NOT like about Girls Only?

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What would you like to see in the next Girls Only session?

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## Appendix B: Additional Research

Continued from page 16 of research report.

Girls Circle: Girls Circle curriculum includes materials for programs interested in teaching about: Friendship, Being a Girl, Body Image, Honoring Our Diversity, Relationships with Peers, Mind, Body, Spirit, Expressing My Individuality, Who I Am, Paths to the Future, and Mother-Daughter relationships. Girls Circle curriculum is currently used in schools, community sites, juvenile detention facilities, and residential settings. Curriculum has recently been developed for a comparable program for boys. Research results from several studies show that girls who **participate in Girls Circle programming demonstrate**, “a decrease in self-harming behavior, a decrease in rates of alcohol use, an increase in attachment to school, and an increase in self-**efficacy**” (Girls Circle). Additionally, surveys of girls participating in Girls Circle curriculum programs revealed significant increases in the following short-term **developments**: “finding things they have in common with a new person, trying to see beyond girls' reputations, telling adults what they need, feeling good about their body, picking friends that treat them the way they want to be treated, **[and] telling people how much they mean to them**” (Girls Circle), proving the effectiveness of preventative education. **The studies found that, “Girls Circle groups benefit girls nearly equally across the subgroups of populations represented, including girls with no history of school problems, girls in juvenile justice programs, foster youth, and LGBT youth,”** (Girls Circle). Girls Circle curriculum serves as a model for Girls Only in that it is gender-specific, addresses a wide-range of issues relevant to girls, focuses on a similar age range as Girls Only, and is based on research.

Girls Inc.: **The Girls Inc. Girls' Bill of Rights, upon which the curriculum is based, states, “Girls have the right to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes; Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm; Girls have the right to take risks, to strive freely, and to take pride in success; Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies; Girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world; Girls have the right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence”** (Girls Inc). **Girls Inc educational programming serves over 900,000 girls each year. Evaluations and studies show that girls who participate in Girls Inc. programming are more likely to expect to go to college, read books, participate in sports, and feel safe in their schools than girls who have never participated** (Girls Inc). The Girls Inc curriculum serves as a model for Girls Only in that it is gender-specific, addresses a wide-range of issues relevant to girls, focuses on a similar age range as Girls Only, and is based on research.

Girl Scouts: **In Girl Scouts, “girls develop their full individual potential; relate to others with increasing understanding, skill, and respect; develop values to guide their actions and provide the foundation for sound decision-making; and contribute to the improvement of society through their abilities, leadership skills, and cooperation with other through service oriented leadership opportunities”** (Girl Scouts). **Research and impact reports demonstrate that girls who participate in Girl Scouts gain substantial skills in self-reliance, self-competence, ability to**

make friends, respecting others, feeling like they belong, responsible decision-making, helpfulness/concern for the community, teamwork, and leadership (Girl Scouts). The Girl Scouts of America curriculum serves as a model for Girls Only in that it is gender-specific, addresses a wide-range of issues relevant to girls, focuses on a similar age range as Girls Only, involves experiential education, and is based on research.

STAR/PAL—GirL-E: According to Lanae Gutierrez, a Probation officer who facilitates the GirL-E groups, the GirL-E program is characterized by small groups of girls who meet weekly with a facilitator and guest speakers to discuss their life experiences based on various topics on which **they have read media articles. The mission statement continues, “Positive female role models** in the program play an active role in educating participants on how to enhance their sense of self worth, protect themselves against teenage relationship violence, abstain from substance abuse, as well as develop awareness about other critical issues which impact the choices young **women make” (STAR/PAL 1). STAR/PAL’s GirL-E** program serves as a model for Girls Only in that it is gender-specific, covers a variety of girl- particular issues, and utilizes guest speakers to educate and engage participants. In being a preventative program for girls ages 8 to 12 Girls Only fills a need in San Diego that GirL-E does not since GirL-E is an intervention program that mainly targets teen girls who are already in the juvenile justice system.

GUTS: **“This program can be implemented** as a school based or community based program. The purpose of GUTS is to provide mentoring and support to middle and high school girls through small group (6-8 participants) relationship building; focusing on improving their behavior and academic success. Girls usually involved in the program have one or more of the following risk factors: have been a victim of violence, have been a perpetrator of violence, have negative/disruptive behavior in school settings, have low academic success, have high truancy rate and/or high absenteeism, have negative police contact, have associations with violent peer **groups (i.e. gangs), have a history of transition from juvenile detention facilities or probation.”** The GUTS program serves as a model for Girls Only in that it is gender-specific, is based on small **group discussions among girls, and focuses on participants’ life experiences as relevant** educational knowledge. In operating as a prevention program for girls ages 8 to 12 Girls Only fills a need in San Diego that GUTS does not since GUTS is an intervention program that mainly targets teen girls who are already in the juvenile justice system.

Jessie Aftercare program: The Jessie Program hopes to reduce recidivism by serving young women in juvenile hall via one-to-one mentorships. Adult female role models provide consistent guidance to program participants to encourage them to work toward achievement of their personal goals and dreams and to ensure their successful transition from correctional facilities to their homes, schools, and communities. An online appeal for mentors for this **program says to contact the facilitator, “If you are a positive role model and are seriously** committed in making a difference in the life of one girl, the lives of their children, and her **children’s children and future generations.” The Jessie Aftercare program serves as a model for** Girls Only in that it is gender-specific and is based on consistent mentorship and positive role models. In operating as a prevention program for girls ages 8 to 12 Girls Only fills a need in San

Diego that the Jessie Aftercare program does not since the Jessie Program is an intervention program that mainly targets teen girls who are already in the juvenile justice system.

**Young Women's Studies Club:** San Diego State graduate and undergraduate students, an SDSU professor/mentor and two on-site high school teachers serve as mentors for the high school students at weekly club meetings throughout the school year. The Young Women's Studies Club serves as a model for Girls Only in that it is gender-specific, attentive to race and class diversity, uses community mentors, and guest speakers. In operating as a prevention program for girls ages 8 to 12 Girls Only fills a need in San Diego that the Young Women's Studies Club does not since the Young Women's Studies Club is an education program for high school students and is neither expressly a prevention nor intervention program.