

**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!

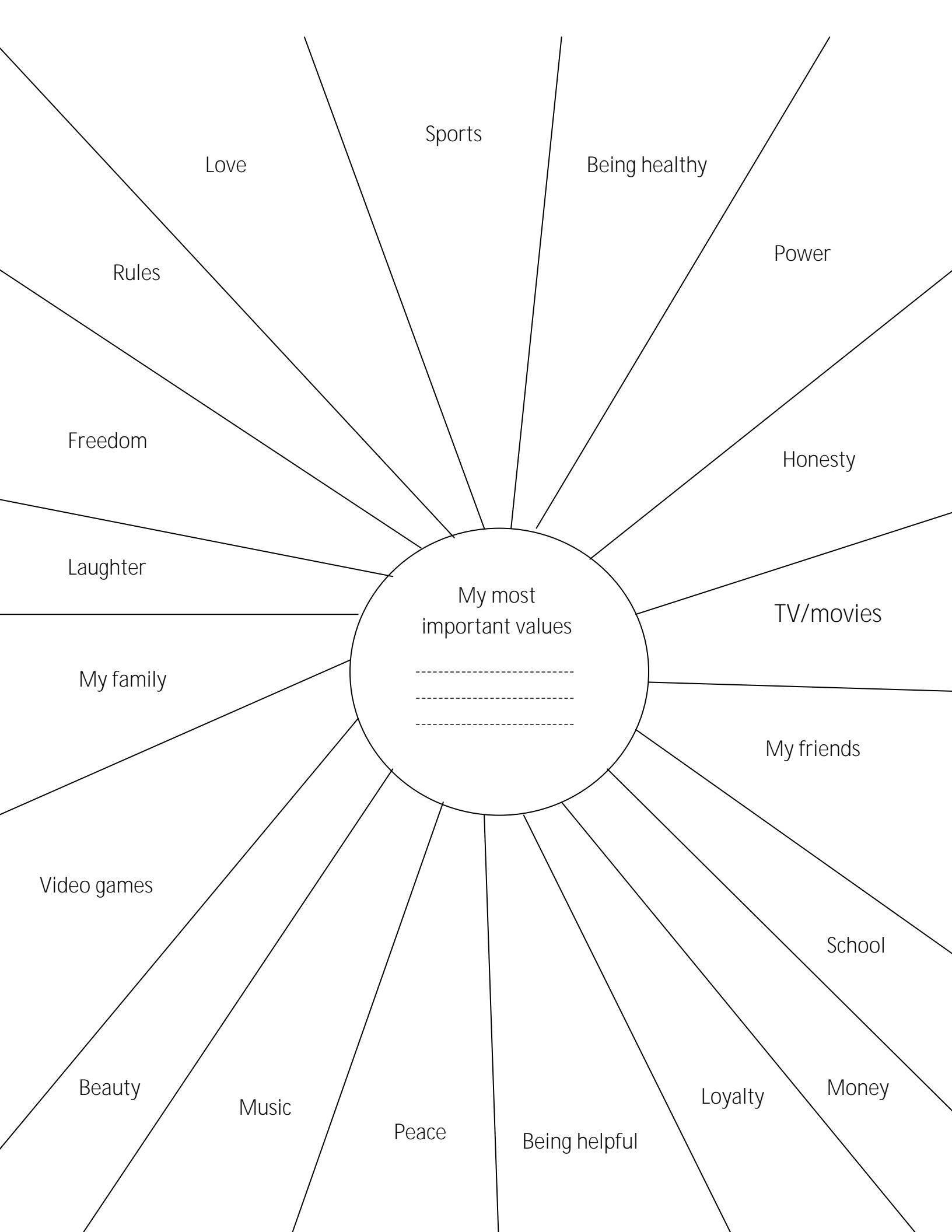
10. Have participants discuss how the values they chose as the most important to them relate **to the choices and consequences on the “Road of Life” handout.**

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

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

**Which road will  
you choose?**

Driver's License

Prom  
Graduation

College

Career/Job

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

**Death**

Jail  
Physical Injury

Drop out of school

Juvenile Hall  
Low Paying Jobs,  
Unemployed

On Probation

Suspension/Expulsion  
from school

Gang Involvement/Criminal Activity  
Kickin' it with Home Girls

Drug Addiction

Kickin' it with Home Boys

**Life will always have speed  
bumps (challenges). How and  
what you choose will determine  
your journey.**

Staying in  
School, Getting  
Good Grades

Playing Sports

Involved in School

Positive Friends/Peers

Cutting Class/Truant

Alcohol/Drug Use

Breaking Curfew

Negative Friends/Peers

Missing a lot of School

## 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.