



LESSON PLANS

- Reclaiming Our Opportunities.
- Transforming Stereotypes.
- Addressing the Root Causes of Gender-Based Violence.

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The image features a vibrant, abstract background. It consists of several overlapping organic shapes in shades of dark blue, teal, and light orange. Thin white lines curve across the composition, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall aesthetic is modern and clean.

**ABOUT
PROJECT ROOTS!**



About Project ROOTS!

A prevention education toolkit designed to instill Empathy and Empower youth to achieve Equality.

Project ROOTS, formerly known as Girls Only! and Boys Only!, was founded on the need to address the root causes of gender-based violence including commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, rape, domestic violence, and sexual assault in the local context of San Diego, California. Project ROOTS is a conscious effort to move away from the binary impression of Boys Only! and Girls Only!, because although there are documented benefits to same sex groups, the toolkit is gender-transformative and does not discriminate based on sex. Creating safe spaces for children and adolescents to challenge gender roles and stereotypes and promote gender-equitable relationships, regardless of sex, is critical.

The Girls Only! (GO!) toolkit was developed by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and the City of San Diego's Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention in 2009 to address girls' increased gang affiliation. Growing concerns of the commercial sexual exploitation of girls prompted Project Concern International's (PCI) 2015 contribution which incorporated activities to mitigate this form of victimization. The International Labor Office estimates women and girls accounted for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry in 2016 and 58% in other sectors. The disproportionate victimization and perpetration prompted an urgency to create a safe space for community mentorship where young boys could discuss issues that, at their core, paralleled those of their female counterparts. As a result, the first version of Boys Only! (BO!) was completed and piloted in 2017.

Traditional prevention efforts such as public awareness campaigns and education can inform a community on how to identify or navigate a problem, but do not always address the root causes or cultural norms that perpetuate it. By failing to see primary prevention efforts through a gender-lens, we unintentionally contribute to victim-blaming as though the problem or behavior is inevitable all the while perpetration remains prevalent and unaddressed. Traditional prevention efforts also pose ethical limitations that cannot be ignored since victimization is potentially redirected to those that lack the knowledge to anticipate and avoid injury. Project ROOTS recognizes that effective primary prevention engages both the potential victim and the potential perpetrator. It seeks to equip all youth with the tools necessary to empathize with one another, recognize and question inequalities, and empower them to speak against them.

The toolkit is a guide for implementing a gender-specific, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate prevention education program for youth aged 8 to 13. The goal of working with youth during this critical period of childhood and adolescence is to model the soft skills necessary as they mature physically and developmentally. The toolkit provides an overview of current research to first understand the challenges negatively affecting our youth. The activities are then organized into three overarching themes: Empathy, Empowerment, and Equality. Project ROOTS first introduces the concepts of self-love, emotional intelligence, and compassion, continuously promoting healthy expression, relationships, and boundaries.

Project ROOTS discussion topics include:

- Inclusion & Diversity
- Emotional Intelligence
- Bullying
- Self-Love
- Communication
- Healthy Relationships
- Consent & Boundaries
- Successful Planning
- Technology Use and Safety
- Gender Roles & Stereotypes
- Human Trafficking

It is through a gradual process that young people begin to question the destructive cultural elements that surround them, such as exploitation. Project ROOTS addresses human trafficking, specifically the growing problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and sex trafficking and includes specialized activities to prevent both potential victimization – sexual, physical, and/or emotional– and predatory behavior. As a gender-transformative program, Project ROOTS creates safe spaces for Participants to begin questioning the cultural normalization of violence, their association to peers who tolerate it, the destructive norms that valorize power, and the violence that surrounds them at home and/or in their community. All this happens within the context of social emotional learning (SEL), the steppingstone to Project ROOTS. Project ROOTS acknowledges the importance of SEL and its impact on a child’s achievements and outcomes beyond school.

Distinct from what an instructional setting can offer, Project ROOTS’ “safe spaces” provide opportunities for healthy youth development. They invite and encourage self-exploration, inclusivity, emotional freedom, and mutual satisfaction in relationships. This strength-based model is designed to bolster socially conscious youth who embrace and celebrate diversity and reject the objectification of different genders. It incorporates reputedly effective approaches to primary prevention including consistent mentorship, supportive peer-to-peer interactions, and activities that fortify a youth’s sense of self-efficacy to ultimately inspire youth to become resilient catalyst of change.

At-A-Glance: Project ROOTS

Who is this toolkit for?

Project ROOTS is a guide for implementing a gender-specific, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate prevention program for youth aged 8 to 13. We understand that developmentally this is a crucial period for youth, one which must be coupled with consistent mentorship. Activities were designed for youth aged 8-13 but have been adapted for older groups.

What is the purpose of this toolkit?

Project ROOTS is a prevention education program for children and adolescents that addresses the root causes of gender-based violence and unhealthy relationships including severe forms such as sex trafficking, rape, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. As a gender-transformative program, it aims to strengthen protective factors in children as they are brought to question the cultural normalization of violence, their association to peers who tolerate it, the destructive norms that valorize power, and the violence that surrounds them at home and/or in their community.

Where should the toolkit be implemented?

Project ROOTS is an adaptable program that can be implemented within a school setting, recreational sites, or other community outlets where youth can meet in a safe space.

How do you use the toolkit?

Project ROOTS include interactive activities that are divided into three main lesson topics: Empathy, Empowerment and Equality. Please note that several of the activities overlap with more than one theme. The activities are adaptable, and each lesson plan should be appropriately modified for the population being served, maturity levels, length of program, and length of the session. The activities should be implemented by a trained Facilitator who is committed to the main goal of reducing gender-based violence and empowering youth, who has experience working with youth (particularly in under-resourced communities), who is consistently present and serves as a mentor, and is trained in mandatory reporting and trauma-informed care.

How much is enough?

To convey basic information, we recommend meeting 1 to 2 hours per session and completing all of the core lesson plans. Project ROOTS has documented benefits of two weekly one-hour sessions over the course of 14 weeks. When shorter sessions are applied, children may be more likely to react with resistance and skepticism. Safe spaces take time to organically create, and the process of learning and unlearning rigid norms is one that occurs over an extended period. Some sites have implemented weekly sessions over the course of the school year and have found this conducive to the continuity of information and discussions. Nonetheless, we recognize that it is not always possible to implement for an extended period of time and have outlined the core activities below.

Program Components

Each activity contains the following elements:

Length of Activity

The approximate time it takes to complete the activity.

Materials

Supplies or equipment needed for participation in the lesson.

Facilitator Tips/Activity Discussion Summary

The icon to the left identifies the activity's synopsis of the issue or history upon which the lesson is based.

Discussion Questions

These questions are guiding questions for the Facilitator to consider as they implement each activity. Some questions may be more appropriate to ask at the beginning of the session while others should be asked at the end.

Procedure

Step by step instructions on how to lead the activity including discussion questions and closing activities for Participant reflection. You will recognize the procedure of each lesson plan by the steps, bulleted in order.

Reminder!

Lessons take planning. Read the activities ahead of time to properly prepare materials and make any necessary arrangements.

The Recipe

While these are the ingredients of a typical day, just like every chef has different methods of cooking to produce something delicious, so does the Facilitator. Every Facilitator may even have a secret ingredient to add. This recipe is a guide to how it is done, as are the listed time frames, and it can always be altered to meet the needs of those at the table. Enjoy!

The Appetizer

Attention Getter! (3 – 5 minutes)

Start with a silly, inviting attention getter. It is also enticing to have a sweet or fun treat for the Participants to snack on while they are greeting one another and finding their seats.

Consider starting with a “call to order” to let the group know that the session is beginning. This can be a fun chant, hand clap, song, or game to get the Participants seated, focused, excited, and ready to learn. Gauge the group’s interests and be creative when developing an appealing way to kick off the session. The method should be something Participants can distinguish as the start of every session.

Do not forget to remain flexible. The entire day’s topic may shift based on the feedback received or the tone of the group. Perhaps something of high significance happened earlier in the day or week that requires more than a general 5-minute discussion. If many of the Participants want to discuss a relevant issue, this is an impactful and organic learning opportunity that should not be dismissed.

Introduction and Announcements (5 – 10 minutes)

- Prompt the Participants to sign in.
- Introduce yourself and/or other speakers.
- Take the pulse of the group by checking-in:
 - Ask Participants how their week has been.
 - Whether anything of importance has happened since you last met.
- Gather Feedback:
 - Ask if they have been able to apply last session’s lesson and if so, how?
 - Ask how that made them feel. If they have not applied the lesson, discuss examples on how they may do so in the future.
- Announce any new information pertaining to the group.

Before jumping right into the material, take some time to assess the tone of the group. Use this time to ask Participants how they have been since the group last met. Consider taking

this portion of the session a step further by gathering feedback from the group on if and how they may have applied the previously learned concepts. Reflect on the group's feedback to improve future sessions.

Icebreakers/Transitions (5 – 10 minutes)

Icebreaker Activity

After the introduction and announcements, consider using a transition relative to the topic that puts the theme into context. For example, if the lesson is about communication, start with a game of "Telephone." Keep the group involved by having multiple transitions throughout the session. In between discussions and activities, allow an ample amount of time for a quick game to allow Participants time to stretch and refocus. It is imperative that fun is incorporated into each session.

Please refer to the Icebreakers Activities section for more ideas.

The Entrée

Discussion (10 – 15 minutes)

Introduce the day's topic.

This is the core of the session and the key to determining the impact of the lesson. Keep the discussion interesting and engaging by utilizing various visual aids. Encourage questions and Participant led discussions, where appropriate. Participants should feel that their thoughts and opinions are equally as important as those of the Facilitator.

Prior to each session, research the day's topics and prepare the necessary materials to present information clearly and effectively.

Activity (15 – 35 minutes)

Transition into the activity.

Think of the activity portion as a hands-on way of learning the material. The activities should be diverse and interesting to the majority of the group. Stay away from regular journaling or worksheets. The Participants should be able to get up, move, and talk to each other while applying what they have learned during the discussion.

The Dessert

Closing (7-15 minutes)

Encourage closing thoughts and questions.

Always come back together as a group to debrief and share any closing feelings or questions. Prompt the group to consider how they could apply today's lesson into their own lives. Don't forget to ask for feedback on what the group enjoyed or disliked.

Icebreaker Activities

Bubble Pop

This game is messy and is best if played outside! Picnic tables or a grassy area are an ideal setting for this game. Each Participant will sit in front of a paper plate topped with whipped cream with their hands behind their back. (Please be mindful as this could potentially trigger a child and, if so, modify the activity accordingly (i.e. asking Participants to simply keep their hands on their sides). Under the whipped cream there will be a hidden piece of unwrapped bubble gum. Participants will race to find the bubble gum and compete to be the first to blow their piece of gum into a bubble. For a group of about 20, you will need at least three bottles of whipped cream.

Cold Potato

This game is great outside on a hot day! Ask Participants to sit in a circle as music is playing. Have multiple ice cubes ready. As the music starts, prompt Participants to pass the ice cube around in the circle. When the music stops, the Participant left holding the ice cube is out. The final person not holding the ice cube wins.

Famous People

Use markers and paper to write the names of famous people, each sheet of paper should have a different name. Write as many names as there are Participants. Discreetly, tape the name of the famous person on the back of each Participant, making sure the Participant does not see the name. Have Participants partner up and describe to each other the famous person on their back through acting, impersonating, or by using key words. You can also have the Participant come up to the front of the group one-by-one and have the whole group describe the person. (You can modify this activity by changing the category i.e. movies, animals, sports, etc.)

Human Bingo

On premade bingo sheets, each square will contain generic information that could apply to the Participants within the group. For example, one square might contain the statement, I wear glasses, or I have two siblings. Participants then must go around the room asking each Participant questions about themselves to find a Participant who fits into each description or statement (square). The first Participant to get a straight or diagonal line filled with a different name to make each square true, wins.

Marshmallow Toss

Line Participants into two lines and have them face one another. On one side, Participants will toss marshmallows into their partner's mouth. The receiving line will try and catch as many marshmallows in their mouth before the time is up. The pair who successfully catches the most marshmallows wins. Continue the game by switching who throws and who catches. Try using various sized marshmallows for a twist.

Mummy Fashion Show

Pair up Participants giving each pair a roll of toilet paper. Have one Participant act as the designer while the other acts as the model. Play music or set a timer and instruct Participants that whoever comes up with the best outfit in the allotted time, wins. Have each pair showcase their outfits to the group and describe their design. You can choose the winner or have the group help you decide.

Mummy Roll

Pair up Participants, giving each pair a roll of toilet paper. Play music or set a timer to see which couple can use the whole toilet paper roll to cover their partner completely, the fastest.

Never Have I Ever

Have all Participants sit in a circle with 10–15 jellybeans. In each turn, one Participant will tell the group something that they have never done for example, “I have never been on a roller coaster.” Any of the Participants who have done whatever the speaker says they have not done, will add a jellybean into the “pot.” After going around the circle 2–3 times, the Participant with the most jellybeans, wins. Make sure Participants are in complete control of the information they choose to share.

Question Ball

Bring a large beach ball with multicolored panels. Use a permanent marker to write a question in each panel. The questions can be informative or fun and silly. Have Participants form a circle, either seated or standing. Explain that whatever question their right thumb lands on when they catch the ball will be the question they answer. After the catcher answers the question, they will throw the ball to someone who has not yet answered. Make sure Participants are in complete control of the information they choose to share. For the sake of the game, the questions should be general and light.

Shoe Pile

Upon entering the room, instruct Participants to remove their shoes and put them into a pile. Choose one Participant, in socks, to stand up in front of the shoe pile and ask the other Participants to guess which pair of shoes belongs to them. The guessing will continue until a Participant guesses the right pair of shoes. The Participant who guesses correctly will be the next to stand up in their socks and have their pair of shoes be guessed by the group.

Skittle a Little Info

Prompt Participants to get into small groups of 2–3. Each group will receive a handful of skittles. On the board, there will be corresponding questions to each color skittle. Instruct Participants to pick a skittle and answer the corresponding question before eating it. Make sure Participants are in complete control of the information they choose to share.

Special Interviews

Ask Participants to partner up with someone who is not sitting next to them. Prior to the game, prepare a list of questions to be asked in the interview and either print or write them on a board. For the sake of the game, the questions should be general and light. Partners

should be spread out within the space and take turns interviewing one another. Once Participants return to the circle, have each pair introduce their partner to the group. Make sure Participants are in complete control of the information they choose to share.

Telephone

This game is the perfect example of how rumors can be spread accidentally when the original “story” is slightly altered by each person who hears and retells it. Start by having all Participants sit in a circle. One Participant will start with a phrase that they will whisper to the person sitting next to them. That Participant will then whisper that message to the person sitting next to them, and so on. This will go on all around the circle without any message being repeated more than once by any one individual. At the end of the circle, the last Participant will repeat the message to the group. More than likely this message will be completely different from the original message.

Trust Walk

In a wide, open space, use large objects to create a cluttered course. For example, a pool “noodle,” a textbook, or a backpack. Stay away from hard desks or chairs that could potentially physically injure a Participant. Pair up all Participants and ask one partner to blindfold the other. (Please be mindful as this could potentially trigger a child and if so modify the activity accordingly i.e. asking Participants to simply keep their eyes closed). Then explain that they will try to be the first to reach the destination by only listening to the guidance from their partner. The first pair that arrives at the destination without walking into any of the objects in the cluttered path wins.

Two Truths and a Lie

Ask Participants to think about two factual statements about themselves, and a believable lie. Then have them take turns and share their statements with the group. Challenge Participants to guess which two statements are true and which statement is false. The Participant who guesses correctly will be the next to share their three statements. Make sure Participants are in complete control of the information they choose to share.

Water Balloon Toss

This game is fun but super messy and is best suited for outdoors! Partner up Participants and have them stand in parallel lines facing each other. Hand out one water filled balloon to each pair. The parallel lines will start close together, with each successful toss and catch of the balloons, the lines will move further apart. Once the balloon breaks, the pair is out. The last pair standing, wins.

Would You Rather?

Split the room in half by sticking painters tape across the floor. Start by having the group stand in a neutral spot (e.g. against the wall, where there is no clear side being taken). The Facilitator will then think of gross or funny questions with only two possible answers. For example, “Would you rather be stranded on a desert or on an island?” Explain which side of the room corresponds to the two options. Once Participants choose a response, ask them to run to the side in which they would rather be. Once all Participants have made their selection, call on a couple of them from each side to explain their decision.

Who's That?

This game is the funniest when it is played with comical characters or celebrities with very distinguishable characteristics. For example, a celebrity such as Michael Jackson or a cartoon character, like SpongeBob. Print out large pictures of about 5–7 celebrities. Prior to the game, prepare by cutting out a feature of each picture. Using the cutout of your choice, number each cut out to the corresponding picture and hide the rest of the face from the Participants. The Participants will be shown each cut out and use notecards to jot down who they guess the cut out belongs to. At the end of the game reveal the rest of the faces and the Participant with the most correct responses, wins.

Icebreaker Questions

- What is your favorite...? Why? (Ex. color, food, music)
- Name a place you would love to travel to? Why?
- What are qualities that you want to have in a relationship/friendship? Why are these important?
- What's the scariest thing that has ever happened to you? How did you feel?
- What's the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you? Describe what happened.
- When you were younger, what was your biggest fear and why?
- If you had a million dollars to spend in a year, how would you spend it?
- What celebrity could you see yourself being friends with? Why?
- If you could be an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- What happened on the best day of your life?
- If you could invent anything, what would you invent and why?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
- What's the scariest/funniest movie that you have ever seen? Why was it the scariest/funniest?
- What is the most important thing that you have ever done or participated in? Why was it important to you?
- What superhero do you think is the best and why?
- If you could travel in time and meet anyone, who would it be? Why would you want to meet them?
- If you could travel in time, what year would you visit and why?
- What do you like most about being you? Why is this your favorite part about being you?
- What place do you fall in your sibling's birth order, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being the only, oldest, youngest, or the middle child?
- What are three ways that you could make the world a better place?

The Introduction Session

Let's walk through a very important session, The Introduction.

Developing community guidelines or rules within the group is crucial to holding a safe, trusting and healthy learning environment for all Participants. Allowing the Participants to create their own rules conveys the expectation that the group will operate as a community and makes them more willing to abide by them. Make your expectations clear. Before beginning the program, decide what will be cause for disciplinary action.

Consider the following questions before meeting with your group:

- What does a "safe space" look like for your group?
- What actions will be in place for behavior management? i.e., incentives, diversion techniques

Length of Activity: 60 minutes

What to expect

Be prepared to answer many questions. Keep in mind that there may be many Participants who have never been a part of a program like Project ROOTS. Not all program Participants will immediately feel comfortable with the group or you; therefore, it is important to be understanding of everyone, by allowing them to share and join the discussion as they feel comfortable.

Materials

While the materials may vary from activity to activity, there are a few basic materials that are recommended for each session, including:

- Daily attendance sheet
- A binder containing Participant permission slips and other important forms
- Pencils/Pens
- Project ROOTS community guidelines
- Questions/comments box
- Small pieces of paper for the questions/comments box submissions

Discussion summary

The purpose of the introductory session is to give all new and returning Participants a uniform understanding of the program and its expectations as well as an overview of the program content. The first day should stress the concept of a "safe space" reminding the group that confidentiality is key.

Procedure

Step 1—Icebreaker

This is particularly important on the first day! You want your group to have fun and look forward to future sessions. This is the perfect opportunity for you to show the group that this is not a stringent or typical classroom setting. Ensure every member has the opportunity to introduce themselves by name to the group and most importantly, have fun!

Example: Bubble Pop Icebreaker

This game is messy fun and is best if played outside! Picnic tables or a grassy area would be an ideal setting to play this game. Each Participant will sit in front of a paper plate topped with whipped cream with their hands behind their back. Under the whipped cream there will be a hidden piece of unwrapped bubble gum. The Participants will race to find the bubble gum and compete to be the first to blow their piece of gum into a bubble. For a group of about 20, you will need at least three bottles of whipped cream.

Please refer to the Icebreakers Activities section on page 9 for more ideas.

Step 2—Facilitator role

It is recommended that the Facilitator share with the group why they chose to facilitate the group or why you like or believe in it. Share your goals and expectations for the year, and any exciting activities, guest speakers, or trips planned. Try to avoid sharing information that may be too personal to keep the focus on the program and always remain age appropriate!

Stress to the group that as a Facilitator, you are not there to lecture rather your goal is for everyone to participate and learn from one another.

Step 3—Program goals

Discuss the concept of a “safe space.” Let all Participants know that everything shared within the group will be kept private unless necessitated by law or the child’s request. For example, you may say, “What is said or shared in this room stays in this room. We will not share other people’s feelings or experiences with others that are not part of this group.”

But be sure to stress that as the Facilitator, your priority is always their safety which means that if they are in danger, you cannot keep that a secret, and rather you will initiate the process for the Participant to receive help.

Inform the group:

- There may be instances where uncomfortable topics are discussed but reassure them that you are always there for support and to answer any questions they may have.
- They may choose to opt out of an activity at any point

- In order to set the tone for a “safe space,” your first activity together will be setting community guidelines

Step 4—Program logistics

Be specific about the daily schedule of events. Explain the logistics of the program, such as the time and place that the group will be meeting.

Step 5—Set community guidelines

Allow Participants to draft and agree upon a set of community guidelines so that they are held accountable for following them. Consequences should also be shared with program Participants to uphold and reinforce transparency and honesty within the group. Once the community guidelines are established, review them frequently and post them in a visible location at the start of every session.

It is recommended that you retain structure while remaining flexible based on the needs of your Participants and the goals of the program. Facilitators should refrain from being overly harsh or stringent and keep in mind that outbursts or deviant behavior may be symptoms of a child who needs more opportunities for social emotional learning and removing them from the program may be counterproductive. Instead utilize potential outburst as an opportunity to showcase healthy conflict resolution, empathy and patience. Facilitators should not use fear and punishment to gain Participant compliance.

If there is a need for serious disciplinary action, follow the procedures of the host agency and remove the Participant from Project ROOTS to ensure the safety of the individual and others.

Potential disciplinary action may include:

- Having a one-on-one outside discussion with the Participant
Having the site director address the undesired behavior with the Participant
- Speaking with the Participant’s caregiver
- In extreme cases, dismissal from the program

Community guidelines can be both general and specific but should be concise and positive. **Stay away from guidelines that begin with “No”** and rather use guidelines such as:

- What happens here, stays here (Remind Participants that you may need to break this rule for their safety)
- Be respectful
- Raise your hand to speak
- Listen when someone is speaking
- Be kind
- Have fun
- Be confident, be yourself
- Include everyone
- Use appropriate words

- Clean up after yourself
- Keep your hands to yourself

Step 6—Feedback

Ask the Participants what they would like to gain or learn from the group and adapt your activities accordingly. This group is for their benefit, and if they are uninterested in the topics, they will not assume ownership of the group nor will they build a comradery. The goal is for Participants to feel empowered and to do this they must felt heard. Take suggestions and ideas and implement these ideas into future sessions to keep the group engaged.

Stay away from a classroom-like setting. A practical way to accomplish this is by having all the Participants sit in a large circle. If the space permits, allow Participants to sit on the floor or take off their shoes to set an inviting tone. Typical classroom settings with lined chairs are not recommended since sitting behind desks may immediately place the Facilitator in a lecturer role and thus discourage participatory learning. By having everyone sit at eye-level, including you as the Facilitator, it creates a personal space. The space should be clean and free of distractions; backpacks and other personal items should be neatly organized away from the group.

The image features a solid blue background. In the upper left, there is a dark blue, semi-circular shape. To its right and slightly lower is a large, light teal, organic shape. Several thin, white, curved lines overlap these shapes and each other, creating a sense of movement and connection. The lines are smooth and fluid, some entering from the left and curving across the frame.

1: EMPATHY

1: Empathy

empathy | 'empəTHē|, noun

the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

The origin of the word empathy dates to the 1880s, when German psychologist Theodore Lipps coined the term “Einfühlung” (literally, “in-feeling”) to describe the emotional appreciation of another’s feelings. Empathy has further been described as the process of understanding a person’s subjective experience by vicariously sharing that experience while maintaining an observant stance. (Zinn W. 1999)

It seems that empathy plays an important role in a therapeutic relationship (Wiseman T. 1996). Empathy means to recognize others’ feelings, the causes of these feelings, and to be able to participate in the emotional experience of an individual without becoming part of it (Keen S. 2007). Gagan (1983) indicates that empathy is the ability to perceive one’s feelings on one hand, while transmitting them on the other.

Empathy and emotion-management are essential to a child’s success in school and in life in general. Paul Ekman established the six basic emotions as anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. Though there are theorists who propose varying models, most psychologists and many in the social and emotional learning community accept these as the basic emotions through which all others emerge as nuances of.

When speaking about empathy to children, it is crucial that they are guided through these basic feelings that they may or may not share with another person. It is harmful to classify some emotions as positive and others as negative because realistically, nearly every day, humans feel all six of the basic emotions. No one emotion is right or wrong or should be looked down on. For example, anger can be positive in that it drives people to action, to see what is wrong with any given situation and change it. In fact, the suppression of emotions leads to several adverse outcomes, and contrarily to that, emotional expression results in a host of beneficial outcomes. Unsurprisingly, emotional intelligence, “someone’s ability:

- to understand his feelings,
- to listen to others and to feel them, and
- to express his emotions in a productive manner,” can be strengthened through social and emotional learning which results in greater empathy, the cornerstone of emotional intelligence.

Unfortunately, our culture does not support boys and girls equally when it comes to their ability to express themselves openly, or process emotions and experiences through healthy means. This contributes to harmful behavior such as over-aggression, self-harm or emotional stoicism that is often characterized as “toxic masculinity” in men. Assisting boys and girls in first isolating, understanding, and then processing their emotions is a critical

step toward developing a healthy psyche and a positive relationship with themselves and with others. When an individual is presently incapable of comprehending the experiences, actions or emotions of another, the likelihood of gender-inequitable relationships increases substantially.

It is in part an ability to relate with others through empathizing which forms a foundation of appreciation and value for them:

Empathy on the other hand, is a skill learned or an attitude of life, which can be used to try to encounter someone, to communicate and understand others' experiences or feelings.

However, when empathy is diminished, there is a greater likelihood that acts of objectification, exploitation and aggression will follow. The Committee for Children notes "Social awareness develops perspective about, and empathy for, others; an understanding of social and ethical norms for behavior; and a recognition of resources for support from family, home, and community."

This section of the Project ROOTS curriculum offers skill-building activities for self-control, self-awareness, social awareness, and empathy, "a skill that yields better choices and decisions—based on the needs of others and the needs of the community."

Cross the Line

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 7

Learner/Participant Objectives: Accurate self-perception, self-efficacy, empathy, appreciating diversity, respect for others

Content Warnings: Hardships within family structure

Facilitator Tips: Feel free to get creative and use “cross the line if...” examples based on community and cultural relevancy! This doubles as a great getting to know you.

Key Terms: Empathy, connectedness

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Tape or string to divide the room in half

Background: Empathy means being able to put yourself in other’s shoes. The more we can find common understanding—especially amongst those who seem different than us—the more we’re able to understand and support those around us. This exercise is a visually powerful way for Participants to recognize both similar and unique life experiences with their peers.

Resources:

[20 Questions to Get Kids Talking & Build Community](#)

Procedure

- Create a line in the middle of the room and ask Participants to stand behind the line, so that everyone starts in the same place.
- Explain that you will read a question starting with, “Cross the line if...” and if the statement applies to them, they should step to the other side of the line. Remind Participants that ROOTS about the Rule of Roots, and they should only share experiences they feel comfortable disclosing.
- Inform the group that this is a silent exercise and there should be no talking, except for the person asking the questions. Ask if there are any questions before beginning.
- Begin the game. Read a question beginning with, “Cross the line if _____.” 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 Participants to silently look around and observe who is standing with them.

The following is a list of sample questions. The questions should be tailored to meet the needs of your group i.e., age, ethnicities, interests, hobbies.

“Cross the line if…”

- You have brown hair
 - You have a sister
 - You have a brother
 - You have a lot of chores at home
 - Your parents do not speak English
 - Your parents speak another language
 - You speak another language
 - You are African American
 - You are Mexican
 - You are Asian
 - You are Jewish
 - You are Muslim
 - You have experienced discrimination (race, ethnicity)
 - You have ever been told you are ugly
 - You have ever been teased/bullied
 - You have ever made fun of someone because of how they look
 - You have ever travelled outside of California
 - You are in foster care
 - You wish you could change something about your body
 - You have ever been told you could not do something
 - 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 in jail
 - Sometimes you deal with difficult situations at home
 - You made a bad decision because of peer pressure or fear
 - You have ever had someone you did not know help you
 - You have ever helped someone you did not know
 - Someone you care about has been mean to you
- After asking several questions, ask if anyone else in the group has a question they would like to ask.
 - After several rounds of questions and crossing the line, have Participants sit comfortably. Have Participants reflect on the activity by asking the following questions:
 - How did it feel to cross the line?
 - How did it feel when you did not cross the line?
 - What surprised you the most during this activity?
 - What did you learn?
 - What lessons can you take away from this activity?

Culture is Everywhere

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5

Learner/Participant Objectives: Helping young people recognize ways cultural influences can help gain a deeper appreciation for their own culture and the cultures of those around them.

Facilitator Tips: Encourage participants to appreciate the uniqueness in each culture by reminding youth that although a particular tradition may be different than their own, it does not make it weird or strange.

Key Terms: Culture, clothing, food, traditions, ceremonies, spiritual practices, religious beliefs, language, family structure, communication styles, identity, empathy

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Writing utensils, paper, string, hole punch, index cards/small squares of paper, crayons/markers

Background: Culture plays a large role in individual identities

Resources:

- [Top 10 Ways to Teach Culture \(busyteacher.org\)](http://busyteacher.org)
- [Cultural Awareness for Kids | PBS KIDS for Parents](http://pbskids.org/parents/cultural-awareness)
- [Teaching Teens to Respect Diversity \(today.com\)](http://today.com)

Procedure

- Begin by explaining 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, family structure, and communication styles. Explain that culture can influence who we are by directly shaping our personalities and ways culture influences our lifestyles and decisions
- Have Participants brainstorm a few examples of culture and record their responses on a board or large paper. (ex: speaking English, speaking Spanish, wearing a blue and white school uniform, celebrating Ramadan, celebrating Hanukkah, celebrating Christmas, wearing your hair in braids, using American money, wearing flip flop, kinds of food you eat, going to church/temple/mosque, music your family listens to, foods your parents make, instruments you play, etc.)
- Challenge participants to go on a cultural scavenger hunt: they should look for examples of culture in their lives and all around. Ask Participants to write examples of their culture on index cards and draw a corresponding picture for each example. Challenge participants to find at least **six examples of culture** around them. Have

participants walk around and explore their surroundings (whether this be in the ROOTS space or outdoors/on a playground). Participants may walk alone, in pairs, or in groups.

An example of six cards:

- Speaking English represented by a drawing of the A, B, Cs
 - Using American money represented by a drawing of a dollar bill
 - Going to church on Sunday represented by a picture of a decorated pine tree
 - Having long hair represented by a drawing of a boy with long hair
 - Going to church on Sunday represented by a drawing of a cross
 - Eating a specific food represented by a drawing of that food
- When Participants have completed six cards, punch two holes on the top of each card and string all index cards together
 - Ask Participants to share what they found on their scavenger hunts and explain what each example of culture means and the role it plays in their lives
 - Hang the cultural scavenger hunt art projects in the room. Ask Participants to share something new they learned about a different culture around them

Labeling Feelings: Managing Emotions

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: Understanding and regulating emotions

Content Warnings: Feelings of adversity

Facilitator Tips: The Facilitator should go around the room and ensure each Participant has identified five feasible and healthy coping skills.

Key Terms: Emotional awareness, feelings, self-awareness, coping skills

Time: 60 Minutes

Materials needed: Paper, writing utensils, dice, paint or crayons/markers (for Participants 8–11 years old), Participant scenarios (for Participants 12–15 years old)

Background: Emotional self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's feelings. Once the six basic emotions/feelings have been discussed with your group, it is equally as important to identify emotions that extend anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise, and to recognize that one situation can trigger a variety of feelings, not just one. It is important that Participants know that their emotions are important and valid and should not be hidden or suppressed, rather they should be expressed and managed in a healthy manner that does not inflict harm on others or leads to other maladaptive behaviors (i.e. isolation, overeating). Paul Ekman established the six basic emotions as anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. Psychologists of all fields have recognized and accepted these as the foundation of all emotions since the 20th century and will be utilized for the sake of this lesson.

Resources:

- [30 Games, Activities and Printable to Teach Emotions to Young Kids](#)
- [Childhood101.com](#)

Discussion Questions

With your group, identify various emotions that one may experience (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise). Other examples may include:

- Annoyed
- Bored
- Cold
- Confident
- Confused
- Content
- Curious
- Depressed
- Determined
- Disappointed
- Embarrassed
- Energized
- Envious
- Excited
- Exhausted
- Frustrated
- Hurt
- Indifferent

- Interested
- Jealous
- Lonely
- Loved
- Nervous
- Paranoid
- Proud
- Regretful
- Relieved
- Satisfied
- Sick
- Silly
- Worried

To further the discussion, ask participants the following about expressed emotions:

- I felt this way because...
- This is what I did about it...
- Something I can do or say better next time is...
- How can I have avoided the situation in the future?

Procedure

- Begin today's session by writing the following questions on the board or other visible location.
 1. I am most happy when _____
 2. I feel embarrassed when _____
 3. I think negative thoughts about myself when _____
 4. I get nervous when _____
 5. I get mad when _____
 6. Things that surprise me are _____
- Instruct Participants to sit in a circle. Then have Participants roll the dice one-by-one and fill in the blank to the corresponding number that they rolled (refer to the fill in the blanks numbered 1-6 above). You can then read them aloud to the group without stating who wrote it. This may validate a Participant's own feelings by realizing that others in the group have or currently feel similar emotions.
- Remind your group that there may be various situations that cause them to feel more than one emotion. Stress the point that each situation may trigger a very distinct emotion depending on the person; for example, while one person may feel excited about riding a rollercoaster for the first time another person may feel completely scared and worried. Emotions are subjective, and they are neither "wrong" or right."
- **Emotional Charades—for Participants that are 8-11 years of age:** have one Participant act out one scenario to the group. Select a few volunteers to act out the same scenario, then compare the different way Participants reacted. For example, one Participant may physically express excitement when acting out "riding a rollercoaster for the first time" while another expresses fear.

- The scenarios are as follows:
 - Hitting a baseball through a car window
 - Fighting over a toy with your brother or sister
 - Saying goodbye to someone you care about
 - Riding a rollercoaster for the first time
 - Eating a cake
 - Falling off a bike
 - Breaking your favorite game
 - Losing a competition
 - Holding a baby
 - Speaking in front of the class
 - Taking out the trash
 - Not getting invited to a friend's party
 - Drinking spoiled milk

- **Reflection—for Participants 12+ years of age:** discuss the physical, emotional, and behavioral consequences of not managing emotions in a healthy manner. Ask for examples, and guide them with the table below:

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral
Chest pains	Mood changes	Smoking
Dizziness	Inability to concentrate	Nail biting
Excessive fatigue	Nightmares	Tapping
Excessive sweating	Panic attacks	Pulling hair
Headaches	Anxiety	Grinding teeth
High blood pressure	Aggressive behavior	Excessive use of alcohol
Inability to sleep	Irritability	Misuse of Prescription drugs
Joint pains	Excessive crying	Compulsive dieting
Nausea	Thoughts of suicide	Hair chewing
Oversleeping	Depression	Nervous laughter
Rapid or difficulty breathing	Confusion	Pacing
Skin problems	Feelings of helplessness	Procrastinating
Stomach aches	Restlessness	Not caring about personal hygiene/appearance
Stomach problems (ulcers)		Overeating
Twitches (eyes, face)		
Weakness		
Weight gain or loss		

- Now shift the conversation and brainstorm healthy ways in which Participants can manage their emotions. A few examples are listed below:
 - Ask for a hug
 - Call a friend or loved one to ask for their opinion or help
 - Close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths
 - Cooking
 - Crafting
 - Dancing
 - Draw a picture or color
 - Exercising/Playing a Sport
 - Gardening
 - Go outside and play
 - Listen to music or sing a song
 - Paint
 - Read a book
 - Talk to a friend
 - Write a letter, story, or song

- **High Five—for Participants that are 8–11 years of age:** have them trace their hand on a sheet of paper. Then help them brainstorm a few ideas on how they can personally manage their emotions. Once they have traced their hand, have them write down their 5 tools for managing emotions.

- **Reflection—for Participants 12+ years of age:** ask for volunteers to identify a previously acted scenario, whether it be anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, or surprise. Then have the Participant answer the following questions.

- If Participants don't volunteer, ask them to reflect on one of their six scenarios by answering the following questions directly on their paper. Help Participants identify the different components to their scenarios such as the trigger, initial response, alternative response, and how they may be able avoid the trigger/situation in the future.

Trigger	I felt this way because...
Initial Response	This is what I did about it...
Alternative Response	Something I can do or say better next time is...
Avoid Trigger	How can I have avoided the situation?

Acts of Kindness

CASEL Core Competencies: Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5

Learner/Participant Objectives: Respect for others, impact of acts of kindness, empathy

Facilitator Tips: Find relevant examples of recent acts of kindness within the community, local news or pop culture. Having real life examples can support youth in putting the impact of kindness into perspective.

Key Terms: Kindness, egalitarian

Time: 30 Minutes

Materials needed: White board/sticky notes, (optional) TV/table/phone to show videos of Random Acts of Kindness

Background: Being kind is the opposite of being cruel, because it helps another person feel good instead of bad—it gives a person a good feeling rather than takes away a good feeling. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a compliment. Stress that acts of kindness are selfless. That is simply, “It’s not all about you.” Exchanging an egocentric mentality for an egalitarian one is a key step towards empathizing with others.

Resources:

- [101 Of The Best Random Acts of Kindness Ideas](#)
- [Random Acts of Kindness](#)
- [101 Random Acts of Kindness – Simple Ideas to Make a Difference](#)

Discussion Questions

Use the discussion questions below to open conversation.

- Have you ever shown someone else kindness for no reason?
- Has anyone ever done something nice to you without receiving anything in return?
- How did it make you feel?

Procedure

- What are examples of acts of kindness? Ask Participants to describe one nice thing they did for someone else, an act of kindness, how it made the other person feel, and how it made them feel. Ask Participants to share times someone was kind to them.
- Write the feeling words on the whiteboard/sticky notes to reinforce the positive impact of an act of kindness

- Have each Participant plan one act of kindness that they will do that day for someone else in the group or in their family
- At the end of the day, or the following day, have Participants report on their acts of kindness. Have them answer the following questions:
 - How did this act of kindness make you feel?
 - How did the person receiving the kindness respond?
 - How do you think you would feel if you had done the opposite to an act of kindness and bullied someone instead?
- Conclude the activity by pointing out that an act of kindness is not only a great thing to do for someone else, but it makes you feel good too and that is a bonus.

Bullying

CASEL Core Competencies: Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: Responsible decision-making: ethical responsibility, identifying problems, analyzing situations, evaluating, reflecting

Content Warnings: Bullying, suicide, physical abuse, mental abuse, discrimination

Facilitator Tips: Bullying can take many different forms based on platforms, context and relationships i.e. social media, during school or within families. Encourage youth to recognize the various ways that bullying occurs by offering diverse examples or asking youth to reflect and share.

Key Terms: Bullying, bystander, upstander

Time: 60–90 minutes

Materials: Writing utensils, whiteboard/large paper

Background: Statistics show bullying is on the rise both in-person and online. According to isafe.org, reports of cyber bullying is the primary form of bullying as opposed to physical bullying. Cyber bullying can include rumors, hazing, singling students out, harassment, stalking, catfishing and more.

Resources:

- [Bullying Statistics – Bullying Statistics](#)

References: This activity was adapted from Monique Burr Foundation for Children, Inc.

Prevention Education Programs: <https://mbfchildsafetymatters.org/resources/>

Source: <https://www.buckfirelaw.com/library/student-bullying-in-united-states-statistics-and-facts.cfm>

Procedure

- Inform Participants that today you will spend some time discussing an important topic. Bullying is wrong, and we want to teach all Participants about bullying and how to prevent it or stop it
- Many times, when people think of bullying, they think of fighting, arguing (drama), teasing, or acting mean. These are not acceptable behaviors, but they may not be bullying. An easy way to remember what bullying means is by using the acronym, or by thinking of the letters **RIP** (write RIP on the board):
 - **Repeatedly:** This means it happens over and over again, NOT just one time.
 - **Imbalance of Power:** This means someone who is bigger, stronger, and/or more popular than another person is using the imbalance of power to bully. It

- can include telling them to do something and even if the person does not want to do it, they do not have the courage or confidence to say “no.”
 - **On Purpose:** This means it happens on purpose. It does not happen by mistake, but instead it is done intentionally.
- Bullying occurs face-to-face, while cyberbullying occurs through electronic devices like computers or cell phones. How could cyberbullying happen? (Elicit responses such as texting, posts on social media, online gaming chats, etc.)
- Explain that some participants may have experienced bullying or cyberbullying or have seen it happening. Neither form of bullying is ever safe. Let’s talk about what to do if you see bullying and how to stay safe.
- Explain to Participants that there are **five different forms of bullying**. Write each form of bullying on the board and go through each one. Ask Participants to think about what that form of bullying looks like, feels like, sounds like, and why someone might bully someone in that manner.
 - **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:* “stupid, nosey, nerd, geek” (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, “stupid, nosey, nerd, geek”
 - **Intimidation bullying**
 - *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”
 - **Cyberbullying**
 - *Looks like:* mean comments or posts about someone else on social media, starting an argument or spreading rumors in messages or online videos, posting embarrassing or hurtful pictures or videos against the will of the person being shown
 - *Feels like:* pain, hurt, embarrassment, sadness, anger, fear
 - *Sounds like:* hurtful words in videos, yelling in video chats

- 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.
- Write each rule on the board as you introduce it.
 - **Safety Rule #1 is Know What's Up.** This means you are aware of what bullying is in your environment and who you are talking to, online and offline. It is knowing what websites are appropriate or inappropriate. This also means that you are aware of the social interactions that are occurring around you, and you know what bullying behaviors look like. Raise your hand to tell us some behaviors of a bully. (Elicit responses)
 - **Safety Rule #2 is Spot Red Flags.** Think of a traffic light. When you see a traffic light that is red, what does the driver do? (Elicit responses)

Spot Red Flags means you STOP and use your awareness to determine if someone's behavior or social interaction online or offline is bullying or unsafe. This could be someone trying to control someone else or saying hurtful things to them on purpose. What are some Red Flags you should be aware of? (Allow Participants to offer suggestions, then follow up with these suggestions if they are not offered by Participants):

- A student or group of students picking on someone else.
- A student who does not have any friends.
- A student who sits alone.
- A student who never has a partner.
- A student who is always made fun of.
- Texting or typing on social media about someone in a hurtful way.

If you see Red Flags, you can then use the other Safety Rules you will learn today to avoid those bullying behaviors and dangers.

- **Safety Rule #3 is Make a Move.** This rule involves making a good decision when you see a Red Flag and getting away from an unsafe situation or staying away from those who are making a poor decision. Bullying behaviors are Red Flags. If you see bullying occur, you can choose to get away and stay away from the situation and spend your time with people who are going to make good, safe decisions.
- **Safety Rule #4 is Talk It Up.** With this rule, you can use an assertive voice to say NO to Red Flags, such as bullying. An assertive voice is when you say something

confidently, like you mean it, to make sure the listener understands. It's not yelling or being mean.

You can also be an **Upstander**, who is someone who sees the bullying occur, stands up to the bully, and helps the person being bullied. You can be an Upstander alone, or with a group of other people. The Upstander can use their assertive voice tell a bully to STOP, and that their behavior is hurtful. Unlike an Upstander, a Bystander sees bullying occur, but does nothing about it.

You can also be an Upstander by getting help from a safe adult. A safe adult is a trusted adult that you know well and that will listen and help you if you go to them to talk about an unsafe situation.

- Raise your hand to name one safe adult at our school. (Elicit responses, such as the teacher, the principal, a school counselor, etc.)
- Raise your hand to name a safe adult you know and trust outside of school. (Elicit responses)

If you see Red Flags, you can then use the other Safety Rules you will learn today to avoid those bullying behaviors and dangers.

You can also talk to a Safe Friend if you do not feel comfortable talking to a safe adult. Sometimes it is easier to talk to an adult if you have someone with you for support. If you have a good friend that you trust, they can go with you to go talk to a safe adult.

It is important to remember that telling is not snitching. Telling a safe adult will not only help you but will also help the person who is hurting you and it may also prevent them from hurting others in the future.

Now, I want you to imagine how you would feel if it were you being bullied. Trying to understand how another person feels is called having empathy. It might be easier to stand up for them and be their friend if we know how they might be feeling. Sometimes people refer to empathy as "putting yourself in someone else's shoes."

- **Safety Rule #5 is No Blame | No Shame.** This rule says that if you are ever hurt or bullied, you are never to blame, and you should never be ashamed to tell a safe adult.

Now that we have talked about what bullying is and is NOT, we are going to practice empathy.

- Give each Participant an activity sheet. Instruct the group to put themselves in the Upstander's shoes. Ask:
 - If you saw bullying happen, what could you do?
 - How could you show empathy?
- To get your brain thinking in the Upstander mindset, an example might be that when a bully makes fun of someone, an Upstander would NOT laugh at the joke.
- Take 5–10 minutes to write/draw what an Upstander would think/say/do if they saw bullying happening. Upstanders can also do the following to help the person being bullied:
 - Change the subject
 - Start a new conversation
 - Invite other people to walk away from the bully, including the person being bullied
 - Tell them objectively with your assertive voice that their behavior is bullying and say STOP
 - Tell a safe adult you trust about the bully's behavior, so they can help him/her
 - Model/show the bully positive skills about how to be a friend
- Many people have seen or have either been an Upstander or someone being bullied. But what do you do if you realize YOU are a bully? Here are a few things you can try:
 - Stop the bullying behavior immediately. People will see a new side of you.
 - Acknowledge that you might have hurt someone. Apologize to the person because we all make mistakes. If you own the mistake, you can move on faster.
 - Plan to change your behavior with the help of a safe adult or safe friend.
 - Engage in new behaviors and start to create positive, healthy relationships.
- Ask Participants to share stories of bullying if they want to.
- Acknowledge the group's effort! When we understand the feelings of someone else, we are being empathetic. Explain that each of the participants thought about how it might feel to be in someone else's shoes as a way of understanding another's point of view. Bullying is a serious topic that unfortunately affects many children every day. Be part of the solution by being empathetic to everyone!

Mindfulness

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making skills

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: Apply skills to become self-aware leaders in their communities, making thoughtful and unimpulsive decisions.

Content Warnings: There is no definitive religious or spiritual connotation and no underlying agenda other than to simply help calm the mind if participants so that we may have more productive sessions

Facilitator Tips: This activity includes multiple mindful tools that can be used as ice breakers or brain breaks for other sensitive topics and as coping tools beyond the group time. Because scents or eyes closed can be traumatic, you may also consider prompting “if it’s comfortable look downward or maybe close the eyes” and “if there’s a comforting scent, consider smelling that scent...”.

Key Terms: mindfulness, concentration, making better decisions, self-awareness

Time: 5–10 minutes each

Materials needed: Each activity varies

Background: Mindfulness is noticing our thoughts, our sensations and being grounded in the present moment. Becoming aware of our thoughts and external and internal environment can help participants focus, concentrate, and simply make better, more conscious decisions by not allowing every urge and impulse to take precedence.

Resources:

- <http://leftbrainbuddha.com/10-ways-teach-mindfulness-to-kids/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scqFHGI_nZE

References: <http://kidsrelaxation.com/uncategorized/spider-man-practicing-mindfulness-and-increasing-focus>, Adapted from: Willard, Christopher, 2010, A Child’s Mind: Mindful Practice to Help Our Children Be More Focused, Calm, and Relaxed, Parallax Press,

CASource: <http://blog.atriushealth.org/2013/04/smart-kids-practice-mindful-eating>

List of Mindful Activities

Listen To the Bell

An easy way for children to practice mindfulness is to focus on paying attention to what they can hear. You could use a bell, a set of chimes, or a phone app that has sounds on it. Tell your participants that you will make this sound, and they should listen carefully until they can no longer hear it (which is usually 30 seconds to a minute). This exercise has a calming effect, and it is a fun way to teach participants to pay attention to their surroundings.

Mindful Walks “Noticing Walk”

Stroll through the neighborhood, nearby park or open field and have the participants notice things they haven't seen before. Designate one minute of the walk to being completely silent and simply attention to all the sounds they can hear—birds, wind, cars, a lawnmower etc. Come back to the room and have the participants write and discuss any new sensations which may have emerged.

Gratitude Practice

Gratitude is a fundamental component of mindfulness, teaching participants to appreciate all that they do have instead of what they do not. Have the participants share one thing they are grateful for after writing their list down on a piece of paper. Let them sit with that for a moment and remind them how fortunate they and we all are to be here, to have family, friends, and food etc.

Meditation

Materials needed: Relaxing sounds on a CD or video, writing utensils, flashcards, screen with audio

Relaxation of the body is important to maintaining wellness. When your body is tense or tired, problems appear to be magnified and decisions can be made without proper thought. Relaxation enhances clear thinking. Brainstorm with the group stressful situations that may make relaxation breaks useful. Come up with multiple quick ways to relax.

- Start by explaining how crucial a clear mind is to decision making, problem solving, and learning throughout the school day. Although we get busy or there are times when our minds are on multiple things, it is important that we take time out of our day to relax and refocus. This time can be as quick as 2 minutes and can be practiced in various methods. Today we will be listening to calming music to reflect and clear our minds.
- Prompt the group to find a comfortable space in the room to sit or lay down with their eyes closed in silence. Provide water or calming scents to relax the Participants.
- Play the relaxing recording and read the prompt softly: Sit back and make yourself comfortable. Allow your eyelids to close. Become conscious of your body's growing relaxation. Imagine yourself as a leaf floating peacefully to Earth. Feel the muscles relaxing in your scalp ... your face ... your neck ... shoulders ... arms ... and hands. Continue floating to Earth. Breathe easily, with each breath becoming relaxed and free of tension. Relax your chest ... stomach ... abdomen. Be calm and comfortable. Let go of all your problems. Continue floating to the ground. Relax your legs and feet. Drift comfortably ... deeper ... deeper ... until you rest gently on the ground. Enjoy the calmness ... enjoy the quiet ... enjoy the peace.
- Allow the recording to finish playing.

- When the Participants arise from reflection, ask them to jot down some things that they thought about, how they felt, empowering words, or other relaxation methods that might be helpful to them.
- Have each Participant display their cards in a space where they may be reminded to take a relaxation break. For example, in a binder or inside their desk or locker.

This activity was adapted from the 2016 Girls Only! Toolkit created from the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and Project Concern International.

Spider-Man Meditation: Practicing Mindfulness and Increasing Focus

Materials needed: Bell, flower, small food item (such as a berry, piece of cereal, or raisin)

- Prompt the group to find a comfortable space in the room to sit or lay down with their eyes closed in silence.
- Read the prompt: One of Spiderman's superpowers was the ability to tune into his senses. Like a spider, he could hear very faint sounds. He was able to pay very close attention to them. When you pay very close attention, you can calm your mind and Jet go of all the loud thoughts in your head that can be distracting. With practice, you can improve your focus and relax right now, right where you are. Right now, we are going to learn to activate your superpowers and tune into your senses, just like Spiderman. These are your Spiderman super senses. What it takes is a little practice. Let's start with your sense of hearing.
- First let's sit down. Close your eyes and place your hands on your knees. I am going to ring a bell. When you hear the bell, pay attention to the ring until you can no longer hear the ringing sound. (Repeat 3 times). Like Spiderman, we have activated your superpower of hearing! Excellent work!
- Next, we are going to activate your superpowers of sight, touch, and smell. I'm going to give each of you a flower. Hold your flower gently in your hand. When I ring the bell, I want you to close your eyes and gently touch the petals. Feel what each petal is like beneath your fingers. Is the petal soft, rough, wet, furry, smooth, or prickly? Pay attention to other things that you may feel. As I ring the bell next, I want you to keep your eyes closed and smell the flower. Is it sweet? Maybe it has very little smell at all? What do you smell? Now, finally, as I ring the bell, I want you to open your eyes and look very closely at the flower. Pay attention to the lines on the petals. What does the center of the flower look like? Is it bumpy? Smooth? Silky? What color is it? Is there powdery pollen in the center? See what details you can notice in the flower, what little shapes, what lines, what circles, if any. (*Ring the bell a final time to signal the end of the activity*).
- The final activation of your Spiderman super senses is to practice your sense of taste. We are going to activate our taste buds! (*Please feel free to use whatever small food you like such as a piece of cereal, a sunflower seed, a raisin, etc ..*). Start

by looking at the berry and using your superpower sight, notice first what the berry looks like. Turn the berry gently between your fingers, feeling what the berry feels like. Next, place the berry in your mouth. Allow the berry to move slowly in your mouth, paying attention to how it feels on your tongue, how the juices in your mouth start to flow. Now slowly begin to chew the berry. See how slowly you can chew it. How does it taste? Sweet? Tart? Sour? Gently swallow the berry, paying attention to the taste that remains in your mouth after you swallow it.

- Now you have activated all your Spiderman super senses! Remember that when you get very quiet and focus, your body and mind can relax and take a break from the day's busy activities. You have the power to activate your Spiderman super senses whenever you want to calm down and focus for a moment.

Mindful Eating Practice

Mindful eating is an experience that engages all five senses. **Remember to look, smell, taste, touch, listen.** By using all your senses, you will appreciate all the characteristics of the food. You are more likely to really taste the bites, eat slower, digest better and enjoy the food more. Mindful eating means that one understands why he or she is eating and the 3 different triggers for eating – hunger, appetite and emotion. Walk the Participants through some scenarios to help grasp these concepts.

Prepare for Exercise – (2 minutes)

Abdominal or Diaphragmatic Breathing: Use the following script to guide yourself and the group through this exercise to prepare for a mindful eating practice.

- Let your body rest comfortably in the chair. Notice your legs and feet. Relax them. Let any tension move out of them. Close your eyes, notice your shoulders, arms, and hands. Let the tension pour out of them. Relax your hands, your arms, let your shoulders sink into a relaxed state. Place a hand on your belly so you can feel the air come in and go out. Now focus on your breath.
- Slowly breathe air into your body. First in through your nose or mouth then fill up your belly (full diaphragm) and feel your belly rise as your lungs fill with air. When your belly is full, slowly exhale: first empty the air from your belly, feel the belly get smaller. Continue to slowly move the air out through your mouth. Repeat the full breathing process one more time. Then slowly open your eyes and prepare to begin the mindful eating activity.

Mindful Eating Practice (3–4 minutes)

- Place the selected food on a plate in front of your Participants (recall the raisin example). Take your Participants through the script below, varying it as you feel appropriate.
- "Look at the (food's name). What is its shape? What size is it? What color is the (food)? What smell do you notice? What sensation do you notice in your mouth as you look at the (food)? What's the feeling in your stomach? Pick up the food slowly.

Hold the (food) in your fingers and look at it in your grasp. What does the (food) feel like in your hand: its texture, temperature?

- Bring the (food) slowly to your lips. Before putting the food to your mouth, pause and be aware of what you are experiencing in your mouth. Slowly open and place the (food) on your tongue for a moment without biting into it. Feel what your mouth wants to do with this (food). Take a few moments before you bite into it. Feel its texture on your tongue and in your mouth. What do you taste?
- Now bite into it noticing what you taste and what it feels like. As you continue to taste, try not to swallow the (food) right away. Does the taste and feeling change as you are chewing? Feel the food going down as you swallow. Refocus on your mouth. Notice your stomach and what it may be feeling. Notice what you are feeling? Now you have finished your exercise.

Adapted from: Willard, Christopher, 2010, A Child's Mind: Mindful Practice to Help Our Children Be More Focused, Calm, and Relaxed, Parallax Press, CA. Source: <http://blog.atriushealth.org/2013/04/smart-kids-practice-mindful-eating>

The image features a teal background with abstract shapes and lines. In the top left, there is a large orange shape. On the right side, there is a large, dark blue shape. Several thin white lines are scattered across the teal background, some forming loops and others being straight segments. The text '2: EMPOWERMENT' is located at the bottom center in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

2: EMPOWERMENT

2: Empowerment

empowerment |əm 'pouərmənt| noun

the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

Empowered individuals become leaders, innovators and free thinkers. Many studies link self-esteem and self-confidence to success. In contrast, people who doubt their capabilities are more prone to shy away from difficult tasks that they view as personal threats. Empowering individuals is paramount to preventing exploitation and objectification.

While still in the earlier years of growing and accumulating information, instilling youth with the tools of empowerment can lead to a genuine confidence in one's ability and capacity to lead themselves and others. Boy and girls alike are important agents of change in our community and thus they must be empowered to challenge harmful practices and cultural norms of power and privilege.

Five ways by which we can empower our youth, whether on a daily basis or over time, include: listening to the ideas and perspectives of others, providing mentorship, passing on the torch, exercising humility, and offering youth a seat at the table. These methods are encouraged to be demonstrated by not only the Facilitator, friends and family of the Participant, but amongst the Participants themselves. We wish for our youth to not only feel comfortable in expressing their thoughts and ideas, but to be open-minded in the face of those differing amongst their peers. They should feel empowered to pursue their goals, values, and interests. By combatting the repercussions of stoicism altogether, they can become positive catalysts of change within the community.

This section of the Project ROOTS curriculum offers skill-building activities to understand what healthy relationships look like, how to set boundaries and to both give and ask for consent, how to safely navigate the internet, and envisioning positive short and long-term outcomes.

"You need to be the driving force of your own future, your own career. What you should be wanting to do is going, "What is the world that I want to live in when I am an adult?" and shape that for what you want."

-Sean Smith, TEDxYouth@Bunbury

Red Light Green Light

CASEL Core Competencies: Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: Self-efficacy (personal boundaries/assertiveness, Gender norms

Content Warnings: Intimate partner violence, mental abuse

Facilitator Tips: When working with youth, remember that relationships can look different for participants. This activity can appeal to a wide range of youth by recognizing that participants may come from a wide range of different backgrounds, language should be inclusive and not assume the gender/sexual orientation of the youth or their family, friendships, and other relationships that may be discussed.

Key Terms: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

Time: 30 – 60 minutes

Materials needed: Red Light, Green Light, and Yellow Light Paddles (Participants can create their own). White board or large paper, writing utensils, crayons or markers, paper. *Without materials, this activity can also be adapted to a physical demonstration using the model of the game red light, green light*

Background: Prompt a discussion about the criteria the Participants use to categorize the qualities or behaviors that are healthy or desired in a relationship. Although every relationship is unique, there are certain behaviors that are objectively unhealthy. Discuss the qualities that Participants feel fall into definitive categories as well as behaviors that are worrisome. This activity is an interactive way to discuss what is acceptable and unacceptable in various circumstances.

References: <https://parents-together.org/simple-language-swaps-to-make-your-family-vocab-more-lgbtq-inclusive>

Discussion Questions

- Why do some behaviors depend on the situation?
- How may people who are displaying green light behaviors feel?
- How can the “red light” behaviors be dangerous?

Procedure

- Begin by handing out red, green and yellow light paddles or have Participants create their own.
- Explain what each category means:
 - **Green light** = Acceptable/Healthy Behaviors
 - **Yellow light** = Sometimes acceptable or based on circumstances
 - **Red light** = Completely unacceptable

Note: It is helpful to record these definitions on a visible location for Participants to refer to such as a white board.

- Name off a few scenarios from the table below and ask Participants to raise their paddle according to what category they believe each situation belongs to. If there are any outlying answers ask the Participant to explain why they feel the action belongs in that category. *If participating “red light, green light” style (staying put if red, moving slowly if yellow, going fast if green).*

Green Light	Yellow Light	Red Light
Talk to each other/ good communication	Embarrasses you	Clingy
Trust each other	Is annoying sometimes	Jealous
Support each other	Shows off	Asks you to commit crimes or participate in illegal activity
Feel happy around the other person	Calls you on the phone often	Asks you to do something you are not okay with
Communicates feelings	Is competitive with you	Have limited trust
Have freedom within the relationship	Makes plans and then breaks them	Controlling/manipulative
Have fun together	Tries to make you more like them	Makes you feel bad about yourself
Compromise	Uses sarcasm	Does not make time for you
Encourages you to pursue your goals	Disagree from time to time	Discourages you from being close to anyone else
Encourages other friendships	Have unequal power	Always criticizes you
Trust and honesty between each other	Ask you to change things about yourself	Uses you
Laugh together	Tells you not to play outside until you finish your homework	Asks you to keep secrets you are not okay with

- As a group, expand on the green light scenarios. Have Participants select and write the most important quality to them on their paddle. They can decorate their paddles and display them throughout the ROOTS space.
 - Keep me safe
 - Listen
 - Care about how I feel
 - Encourage me to do better

Forgiveness

CASEL Core Competencies: Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: Self-efficacy (personal boundaries/assertiveness, gender norms)

Content Warnings: Racism, physical abuse, mental abuse

Facilitator Tips: Try looking for recent examples of forgiveness in familiar local news or popular culture. This helps youth put the content and themes into perspective. Consider exploring the idea of forgiveness to also forgiving oneself. For participants who may have experienced trauma, this can avoid suggesting that healing/letting go of anger is contingent on forgiving someone who harmed them.

Key Terms: Forgiveness, Empathy

Time: 30 – 45 Minutes

Materials needed: White Board or Large Paper, Paper, Writing Utensils

Background: Forgiveness is letting go of any anger or resentment that you may feel towards another person who has inflicted harm. Forgiving someone, no matter how big or small the situation, requires compassion, empathy, and strength. Recognizing the power of forgiveness can help young people build strong relationships both within and outside their household.

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to forgive someone?
- What can forgiveness look like?

Procedure

- Begin today's activity by exploring the meaning of forgiveness with your group. Record their responses in a visible location.
- Explain that forgiveness is letting go of any anger and resentment that you may feel towards another person. You may forgive someone for something minor like bumping into you or taking your seat. Or you may forgive someone for not including you during a game at recess or forgetting to call you on your birthday. You may also forgive someone for something more serious such as ending a romantic relationship or physically hurting you or someone in your family. Forgiveness is not easy, and it may take a significant amount of time to achieve.

- Discuss current events and examples of forgiveness. You may also share powerful moments of forgiveness in history 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 black and white people 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 adults 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 mob follows her. Thirty four years after the picture was taken, Hazel Massery, one of the white women shown in the picture yelling, apologized to Elizabeth.

- 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" to break the cycle of youth violence. Tony Hicks pleaded guilty to murder in 1996 and delivered a remorseful speech at his sentencing, accepting responsibility for his actions and asking 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 nonviolent choices (TKF).
- Lead a discussion on what Participants would have done in each of the two situations above. Could they have forgiven the person? Why or why not? There is no right or wrong answer!
- Now shift the discussion and ask Participants:
 - Why might you want to forgive someone? (Ex: they asked for forgiveness; they said they were sorry; they made it up to me; 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 benefits from forgiveness? (If it is genuine, everyone!)
 - Can you recall a situation where you forgave someone in the past? What happened and how did that feel?
- To end the session, ask Participants to think about anyone in their life that they currently want to forgive or ask for forgiveness. Invite them to take a few minutes to write that person a letter. This is private and should not be shared with the group.

Consent / Talk Pants

CASEL Core Competencies: Social awareness, self-awareness, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5

Learner/Participant Objectives: Learners will learn the definition of consent and its application in real life scenarios. Learners will understand how to respond to non-consensual interactions with their peers and others in their lives.

Content Warnings: Discussing consent may bring up past non-consensual experiences from the participants.

Facilitator Tips: Have ground rules to establish a safe space for vulnerable discussion. Notify onsite behavioral health staff when the lesson will occur and be ready for potential referrals. It is important for participants to understand that if they themselves are not comfortable with something and are being forced against their will (they do not give consent), to reach out to a trusted adult and ask for help immediately.

Key Terms: Consent

Time: 60 minutes

Materials needed: Large white paper, markers, sticky notes, Kahoot, notebooks for journaling

Background: Across the United States, age of consent ranges state-by-state from 16 to 18 years old. 22 states and the District of Columbia mandate both sex education and HIV education, but only 13 states require that the instruction be medically accurate. Although this activity is not intended to provide comprehensive sex education, it does address a fundamental element of sexual intimacy, which is consent. When discussing the elements of consent to children, mutual respect, meeting of the minds, and the absence of force, coercion, and deception should be integral components of the conversation.

Unfortunately, children are continuously receiving harmful mixed messages about romantic relationships that normalize aggressive behavior and violence, such as:

- Boys will be boys.
- Well, what did she expect? Look what she was wearing.
- She wanted it all along.
- No until I say yes vs. yes until they say no and mean it.
- It's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.
- Boys only want one thing, sex.
- She owes it to him especially if he spent money on her.
- A "nice" girl would never have gone out alone with him.
- She's supposed to say "no" even if she means "yes" because girls play "hard to get."
- Gay men act like Cis women.

Resources: Consider reviewing this resource <http://www.teachconsent.org/facilitators> and incorporate the videos or other materials into this session.

- <http://www.teachconsent.org/facilitators>
- <https://www.safesecurekids.org/teaching-consent>

Procedure

- Ask participants to describe what consent means to them. Have them provide their answers verbally. Then clearly define consent to your group by providing age-appropriate examples:
 - to agree to do or allow something
 - to give permission for something to happen or be done
- Play one or both videos and facilitate discussion.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3nhM9UIJjc>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vmsfhw-czA>
- Have your group discuss key words or phrases that indicate someone has given you their consent. Consider using Kahoot for a fun, interactive way to engage the participants on the topic.
 - **You have consent if the person says...**
 - Yes, I want that.
 - Yes, I like that.
 - I would love that!
 - That sounds like a great idea!
 - I want to go with you.
 - **You do not have consent if the person says...**
 - No.
 - Maybe.
 - I'm not sure.
 - I think so.
 - Please, stop.
 - Their body moves physically away from you or they look uncomfortable (i.e., trembling because they are scared)
 - I like you, but I do not want to...
 - We should not do that.
 - I'm scared.
 - Move.
 - **But remember...**
 - Stop, Listen, and Observe

- No means NO!
 - Consent can be taken away at any time which means someone can change their mind at any point.
 - Just because the person said “yes” to one thing, you cannot assume that it is a “yes” to something else.
 - The activity should be fun for everyone.
- In closing, stress to participants that consent could be given and/or taken away at any time and simply because the person agrees to go to the movies with them it does not mean they want to hold their hand, for instance. Or saying to someone, “I’ll give you \$5 if you hit Joey with the ball” (bribing) or “I’ll punch you if you don’t hit Joey with the ball” (coercion) or “I won’t be your friend if you don’t hit Joey with the ball” (coercion) is not true consent.

I AM Poem

CASEL Core Competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: To positively improve self-image

Content Warnings: Self-image

Facilitator Tips: Expand the exercise! Have Participants switch partners and repeat the activity. Participants may be uncomfortable at first, but after practicing a few times with different people their confidence begins to show.

Key Terms: Self-identity, self-esteem

Time: 60 Minutes

Materials needed: Paper, writing utensils, crayons or markers, stickers or other decorative craft supplies, glue, wooden popsicle sticks, mirrors

Background: Self-image and positive self-esteem empower youth to make safe and healthy decisions. Actively practicing self-affirmations can improve youth self-identity.

Discussion Questions

- How do you identify yourself?
- How does the way you identify yourself affect your life?
- How can you see yourself in a more positive light?

Procedure

- Prepare appropriate size paper to fit inside of wooden popsicle squares. Set up craft supply stations to be shared between 3-4 Participants. (If wooden popsicle sticks are unavailable, participants can use construction paper).
- Ask Participants to quietly reflect upon some of their positive qualities and inform them that they will be using these qualities to create an "I am poem."
- Explain that with this poem, Participants will have the opportunity to share how they feel, how they see themselves, what they like to do, what they are good at, and/or what they hope for.
- The poems should be about 10 lines and each stanza will begin or end with "I am [Participant's name]"

Give an example of your own "I am..." poem.

*I am a teacher. I am a man/woman.
I am a dancer.
I am Gabriel/a.*

*I am a child of divorce.
I am worried sometimes.
I am happy when I am cooking.
I am Gabriel/a.*

*I am a volunteer.
I am hopeful.
I am grateful for my friends.
I am Gabriel/a.*

- Give each Participant paper and writing utensils. 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 poems.
- When each Participant has written 10 to 15 "I am..." statements, have them get into pairs. Have Participants choose which partner will go first to share their "I am..." poem.
- Pass out a mirror to each pair.
- Have one partner be the listener and hold up the mirror so that the one who is reading can see themselves. When you say to begin, have all the readers read their poems aloud 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 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. Now switch roles and repeat the same step.
- When all Participants have read their poems aloud, collect the mirrors.
- Ask Participants to 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?
- 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.

- Give Participants time to write out a final copy of their poem on paper that will fit into the frames. Allow them ample time to decorate.
- Display the “I am...” Poems throughout the ROOTS 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 ROOTS session.

Online Safety

CASEL Core Competencies: Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6, Standard 7

Learner/Participant Objectives: Self-efficacy (personal boundaries/assertiveness, safe media use/technology, gender norms)

Content Warnings: Online predators and predatory behavior

Facilitator Tips: Recruitment for human trafficking largely takes place online. Since the pandemic, virtual schooling and many social interactions have moved online, increasing the amount of time and comfortability youth experience online. To protect youth from online predators, it's important to give them the tools necessary to recognize and report unsafe interactions.

Key Terms: Online Safety, Online Predator, Personal Information

Time: 60 minutes

Materials needed: Butcher paper or white boards, markers or other writing utensils, chairs (enough for the number of students in the group)

Background: The internet has created new ways for people to communicate and stay connected. Through the internet and other technology, young people can gain media literacy, become technically savvy, construct identities, socialize, and connect to people all over the world. Despite the benefits of computer innovation, social media platforms are one of the common ways that children and youth will be contacted and groomed for trafficking. Approximately 95% of teens between ages 12–17 years old are online. One in five teenagers who utilize the internet regularly report receiving unwanted sexual solicitation via the internet, only 25% told a parent. Internet sexual predators are known to target teens aged 11 to 15 years old. Teens are increasingly willing to share more personal information online. 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. Teaching children how to navigate the internet and social media platforms safely is extremely important as internet use and social media sites become more integrated into everyday lives.

References: Adapted from Rise Above "PHE School Zone – Rise Above – Overview." [Overview] | Campaign Resource Centre. Retrieved July 18, 2018, from <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview#onlinestress>.

This activity was adapted from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's NetSmartz Workshop. <http://www.netsmartz.org>

Procedure

- Begin a discussion about internet use. For example: To share and/or obtain news, connect with friends and family, watch movies/TV shows, play games, listen to music, check the weather, watch sporting events, and apply for college or a job. Ask Participants:
 - Have you ever used the internet before?
 - How often do you use the internet?
 - What do you use the internet for?
 - What can the internet be used for?
 - In what ways are the internet useful?
 - How can the internet become dangerous?
- Continue the discussion with a focus on social media. Explain that although the internet can be used for a variety of purposes, sometimes it is used in negative ways to deceive or exploit people. Explain that learning about the internet’s potential dangers, specifically social media, is important to stay safe while enjoying its benefits. Ask Participants:
 - What is social media?
 - What are popular social media sites? (TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter).
 - Why do people use social media?
 - Who can use social media?
 - How can you access it? From where?
 - What information do people share on social media?
- Now show “5 Internet Safety Tips for Kids” video clip (00:43)
 - [Privacy and Internet Safety Parent Concern | Common Sense Media](#)
- After the video, ask Participants to work in groups to create rules to safely use the internet. Rules could include:
 - Do not give out personal information: home address, school name, or phone number
 - Never send pictures to strangers
 - Keep passwords private except from parents
 - Do not download anything without permission, it may contain a virus
 - Tell an adult if you receive a mean or strange message
 - I will tell my trusted adult if anything makes me feel sad, scared, or confused.
 - I will ask my trusted adult before sharing information like my name, address, and phone number.
 - I will not meet face-to-face with anyone from the internet.
 - I will always use good netiquette and not be rude or mean online (digital citizenship).
 - Let the groups come back together and share their safety rules.

- Continue the discussion by asking Participants what a stranger is. Come up with a simple, easy definition as a group and write it on a visible location. Explain that personal information should not be shared with strangers.
- Transition into the next step and explain to the group that you will be playing musical chairs (*see instructions below*).
- After the activity, ask Participants to recap today's activity and encourage them to share or add any of their own experiences relating to internet safety.

Musical Chairs Set-Up

Instruct Participants to organize chairs in a circle in the center of the room. Use the "Internet Safety: Musical Chairs Questions" guide on the following page.

- Ask Participants if they have ever previously played musical chairs? If they haven't, please explain the basic rules. Then, explain that in this version of musical chairs you will be adding a step.
- Extra step: if you are the person left standing, I am going to ask you a question based on what we have been learning or give you a scenario, then you are going to tell me if this 1) raises a red flag and 2) what you would do.
- If the person does not know the answer or guesses incorrectly, I will ask the same question again to the next person, so don't say it aloud!
- If you get the question correct you can stay in the game, if you get the question wrong, you're out of the game.

Remind Participants of a few safety guidelines before beginning:

- Keep your hands to yourself
- Be gentle (no pushing, shoving, etc.)
- Be respectful of others
- Do not answer the question for someone else

Internet Safety: Musical Chairs Questions

Questions do not need to be asked in order. Mark off the answers that Participants have given so that you do not repeat the same questions.

- There are five rules from the “5 Internet Safety Tips for Kids” video we watched, what is one of the rules? *(You may ask this question until Participants have named each rule)*
 - Do not give out personal information
 - Never send pictures to strangers
 - Keep passwords private
 - Do not download anything without permission
 - Tell an adult if you receive a mean or strange message

- What is one example of personal information? *(You may ask this question several times)*
 - Name
 - Address
 - School Name
 - Password
 - Phone number
 - E-mail
 - Age
 - In some instances, personal thoughts and feelings

- What information is okay to share with an online friend and what information is not okay to share with an online friend?
 - Okay to share favorite food, color, movie, toy, game, book.
 - NOT okay to share personal information (see question 2)

Red Flag Scenario Questions

- **Q:** You forgot to message your online friend today. The next time you get online, he/she makes you feel guilty.
- **A:** Red flag! Your friend could be trying to control you by manipulating your feelings.

- **Q:** Your online friend asks for your home address because they want to send you a gift.
- **A:** Red flag! This is personal information!

- **Q:** Your online friend asks you what your favorite movie is.
- **A:** No flag.

- **Q:** Your online friend offers to send you a cell phone.
- **A:** Red flag! Accepting gifts from people can make it hard to tell them no.

- **Q:** Your online friend asks for a picture of you.
- **A:** Red flag! This is personal information.

- **Q:** Your online friend tells you something that makes you uncomfortable and asks you to keep it a secret.
- **A:** Red flag! No one should ask you to keep a secret that makes you uncomfortable.

- **Q:** Your online friend sends you a popular music video.
- **A:** No flag.

- **Q:** Your online friend offers to send you a bus ticket so that you can visit them.
- **A:** Red flag! No one should try and meet you without your parents'/caregivers' permission.

- **Q:** Your online friend asks if you want to play her/him in an online game.
- **A:** No flag.

- **Q:** Your online friend does not want your trusted adult to know about him or her.
- **A:** Red flag! No one should ask you to keep secrets from your trusted adults.

- **Q:** You play basketball and so does your online friend. He/she asks to come watch one of your games.
- **A:** Red flag! This could be a sneaky way of trying to meet face-to-face.

- Give me an example of something an "online fake" would say that would raise a red flag? (*You may ask this question several times*)
 - What's your home address?
 - Let's just keep this between you and me.
 - Why won't you tell me? Don't you trust me?
 - Do you want to meet in person?

Stress Balloon

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6, Standard 7, Standard 8

Learner/Participant Objectives: Practicing mindfulness and positive mental health, stress and emotional management

Content Warnings: Stressful situations, adverse and negative emotions

Facilitator Tips: Give the youth an example of how much air to blow into the balloon, or let out of the balloon, for each stressful situation. This makes it easier for participants to recognize the impact of both accumulating and releasing stress. This also prevents youth blowing up their balloon and releasing fully each time (this is common!)

Key Terms: Mindfulness, stress management, mental health

Time: 25 minutes

Materials needed: Balloons (1 per Participant)

Background: 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, and may trigger a headache, accelerated heartbeat, tense muscles, stomachache or indigestion, and sweaty palms. Along with rapidly changing bodies, minds, and emotions, young people deal with stress from school, friendships, parents/caregivers, siblings, romantic relationships, money, extracurricular activities, and uncertainty about the future. Stressors may look different for adults and youth, but nonetheless they are present and valid. Noting the range of stressors, learning to navigate them can be a powerful tool for young people as they are developmentally and physically mature.

References: This activity was adapted from TKF.

Discussion Questions

- What are some things that stress you out?
- How can you handle stressful situations?

Procedure

- Explain that stress is normal, and it is part of being human. Stress can be triggered by a variety of things, such as fatigue, an argument with a friend, schoolwork, etc. Stress can make us feel worried, nervous, anxious, angry, sad, or a combination of emotions. Being stressed can cause us to be unfocused or in more serious instances it can cause us to give up and avoid responsibility all together. Some may even cope

with stress by abusing alcohol, overeating, or even hurting those around them. Inform Participants that not only do people have a different tolerance for stress and how they manage it, but people are also triggered by very different things, and these are called stressors.

- Have each Participant share one thing that causes them stress.
- Explain that many things in life are stressful and that it is OK to be stressed. What matters is how we deal with stress.
- Explain that the balloons represent their hearts and all the 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 a small amount of air into the balloon).
 - Each added stressor, or thing that stresses us out, is more air into our balloon. (Blow into the balloon again).
 - **Ask:** As things happen to us that are difficult or make us feel bad, what is happening to the balloon? (Answer: Getting bigger!)
 - **Ask:** What happens when our balloon is full, and we try to add more air? (Answer: It pops!)
- Explain that it is important that we manage and release stress to avoid bursting like the balloon. (Now release air from the balloon).
- Tell Participants: Listen to the story about Dakota's day. Dakota's day is full of stress; however, they have found ways to relieve their stress, so they does not "pop." As you listen to the story, blow air into your balloon when Dakota feels stress and release air as Dakota releases it.
- Hand each Participant a balloon and read "Dakota's Day." While reading, have each Participant identify a stressful situation (in red) by blowing air into the balloon and identify a coping skill/positive thing (in green) by letting air out of the balloon.
 - Dakota woke up in the morning to their **mother yelling at them** to get out of bed. They were very tired and not ready to get up, so they ignored her and stayed in bed. Dakota's mother came into the room and **pulled their covers off. Dakota felt very angry.** When Dakota's mother left the room, they sat up and **took three slow, deep breaths.** Dakota got dressed and headed to the kitchen for breakfast. Their little brother **was eating the last of their favorite cereal.** However, they saw a box of a new type of cereal they had never tried. They **decided to try it and really liked it.** After breakfast, Dakota finished getting ready for school and started walking. But because their friends had already left, Dakota **had to walk with the new kid in school that they did not know.** Dakota and the new kid started talking and they **quickly realized that they were really nice.** Dakota **got to school early,** so they **got to play before**

the bell rang. But while they were playing another kid came up to Dakota and began to tease and laugh at them. Dakota asked the kid to leave them alone, but the kid would not. Dakota decided to walk away and found some other kids to play with. Soon after, the bell rang to get to class. In class, Dakota realized they forgot to do their homework. The teacher had Dakota stay during recess to finish it. After school, Dakota's mom was late to pick them up and once they got home Dakota had to finish their chores before being allowed to play. Dakota was feeling very frustrated but once they finished their chores and played outside with friends, they started to feel better. When it started to get late, Dakota came inside to finish their homework and felt very proud of themselves for doing it. After dinner, Dakota showered and got ready for bed, feeling refreshed for the next school day.

- Ask Participants and discuss:
 - What kinds of things/events filled Dakota's balloon?
 - What did Dakota do to release the air/stress?
 - What else could have Dakota done to release air/stress out of their balloon?
 - What do you do to release air out of your balloon?

- Have Participants get in pairs and share with their partners what stresses them out? As a group discuss the following questions:
 - What kinds of things did you put inside your balloon?
 - How are you affected by the feelings you keep inside?
 - What kinds of things help you release air/stress?
 - How can you take care of yourself and manage your stress?

- Explain that sometimes our stress is too difficult to manage by ourselves.
 - Ask Participants who they can go to for help when they are stressed? (Ex: teacher, counselor, parent).
 - Remind Participants that this should be someone they can trust.

- In closing, ask Participants to give their balloon to someone at home that they trust, like giving their heart to someone, in exchange for that person being there for them when they need to talk and vent.

- At the next session, follow up by asking Participants who they gave their balloons/hearts to.



3: EQUALITY

3: Equality

equality [ə'kwälədē] noun

the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.

Historically, exploitation has risen due to one person's belief that another's beliefs, religion, and race are fundamentally inferior or "less than." This notion has manifested in many forms of dehumanization such as slavery and objectification. Some of the most palpable and recognized forms of inequality concern gender. Examples include the denial of women's voting rights until the early twentieth century and the present gender wage gap, with the US Census Bureau reporting that women earn 80 percent of what men are paid.

These practices, whether subtle or overt, influence the ideology that there is a hierarchy between man which may be capitalized on. This contributes greatly to the exploitation of others. In its most insidious forms, we find victims of human trafficking or modern-day slavery. Other prominent injustices regarding inequality include employment discrimination, class stratification and socioeconomic disparities. Cumulatively, these areas affect all aspects of modern civilization.

Equality is a necessity in that it's humbling capacities imbue the individual with a view of others as equally worthy of respect and dignity, regardless of race, class, creed or ethnicity. The Equality and Human Rights Commission affirms that "equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have less opportunities because of where, what or whom they were born, beliefs, or abilities. Equality recognizes that historically certain groups of people with particular characteristics (e.g. race, disability, sex and sexuality) have experienced discrimination."

In consideration of the issue of toxic masculinity, it not only poses as a threat of violence against women, but to other men who do not follow accordingly to those behaviors. "A system of gender inequality is fairly pervasive in societies globally which prescribes that men need to prove themselves as powerful and strong. Men who do not portray or even prove themselves as such can be victimized, stigmatized, or relegated to lower social status." Both the spaces in which this curriculum is administered, as well as the discussions guided by Facilitators, are shaped to allow youth to freely question and challenge the social injustices that surround them. "Men who are not perpetrating violence, but are complicit, may be contributing to the culture of violence that exists in our society by not challenging it."

While the theme of peer advocacy resonates throughout this toolkit, it is especially important to address the underlying tones of complacency. As a byproduct of the previous section, empowerment, to cultivate an equal community, we must recognize and intervene in such social disparities.

Equality is in part an appreciation of diversity and value for others as equals despite differences, and this section of the Project ROOTS toolkit seeks to raise awareness on the inequalities that exist to strengthen Participants' agency to question and challenge injustices.

Stop, Look Back, Pass the Mic

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6,

Learner/Participant Objectives: To understand the impact of privilege and power of equality.

Content Warnings: Stereotypes, discrimination, racism

Facilitator Tips: Some Participants, particularly those that are being targeted for the purpose of this activity, may begin to express frustration, anger, or even sadness. As the Facilitator, it is your responsibility to stop the exercise if a child becomes emotionally distressed. You may continue the activity by simply explaining the concepts in the following steps. It is critical that there be time allotted for group reflection and that the Facilitator reaffirms the purpose of the exercise which is to help them understand the complexities of identify privilege.

Key Terms: Privilege, equality

Time: 45–60 Minutes

Materials needed: Trash can, scratch paper (3 per Participant), large poster board, marker, candy (optional incentive)

Background: To make our communities more equitable, it's important to understand where and how inequalities exist. By understanding privilege, participants will be more aware of situations and opportunities to help facilitate and advocate for equity.

Resources:

- [Being 12: Kids on Race by Jennifer Hsu \(04:17\)](#)
- [BuzzFeed Video. Students Learn a Powerful Lesson on Privilege \(1:45\)](#)
- [How to Talk About Privilege to Someone Who Doesn't Know What That Is](#)

Discussion Questions

- What is identity privilege?
- If you are in a position of privilege, how can you advocate for someone in a constructive manner?

Procedure

- Hand each Participant a sheet of paper and ask them to sit in rows. Once seated explain that they are not allowed to move to a different seat or spot on the floor.
- Have Participants crumple the piece of paper. Then place a trash bin at the front and center of the room.

- Tell the group, “You all represent the country’s population and everyone in the country has a chance to win a piece of candy. To win a piece of candy, all you must do is throw your wadded-up paper into the bin while sitting in your seat.” *Note:* Some of the Participants in the back of the room may immediately begin to voice how they are positioned unfairly relative to the Participants in the front row. Remind Participants that they are not allowed to move their seat during this activity.
- Have all the Participants take their shot one row at a time. Take note of how many Participants make it in each row. It is expected for most of the Participants in the front to make it while only a few Participants in the back of the room will be successful.
- Now explain to the participants that those sitting in the front row may move a little closer to the bin and participants in the back row must now throw their balls into the bins with their eyes closed.
- Once the entire group has had an opportunity, explain that this is a simple way to explain privilege. The closer you are to the bin, the better your odds.
 - Point out to the group whether the front row complained, or if it was just those in the back of the room.
 - By contrast, note how those in the front of the room were less likely to take notice of their privilege. All they can see is what is directly in front of them to meet their goal.
- Explain to Participants that many things can grant “identity privilege.” Define what identity privilege means: any unearned benefit or advantage one receives in society by nature of their identity. Ask Participants to brainstorm aspects of identity that may grant privilege. These may include:
 - Skin Complexion
 - Religion
 - Education Level
 - Race
 - Gender Identity
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Class/Wealth
 - Ability
 - Citizenship Status
- So, it is all about the row you start in? Well not quite. Reflection is key in this exercise. Have all Participants sit in a circle and share with the group how they felt. The following are a few guiding questions:
 - How did the backrow feel?
 - How did the other rows feel?

- Did anyone in the front row want to speak up and advocate for their peers? If so, why didn't you speak up?
- Inform the group that as the Facilitator, you were continuously presenting the back row with obstacles. Brainstorm with Participants what these obstacles may look like in society.
- Remind Participants that although we must all try our best to achieve our goals, it is equally as important to "stop, look back, and pass the mic" to the unheard. People are not voiceless, we have just been talking over them for far too long.
- Ask Participants to think through different ways they may "pass the mic." Record their responses on a poster board and title the exercise, "stop, look back, and pass the mic." Examples include:
 - Acknowledge your own privilege
 - Point out situations where others may be treated unfairly and voice it
 - Write a letter, post a blog, or discuss it with your friends to bring awareness to the issue
 - Recommend a peer to a position or role that they may have been overlooked for in the past
 - Listen to what others that are different from you have to say
 - Make friends outside of your circle
 - Educate yourself and be aware of the injustices around you
 - Help/support others in need
 - Stop untrue or harmful messages
 - Respect others' differences and help others respect them too
 - Tell an adult if someone is in danger
 - Practice being a role model
 - Ask questions: "Are there certain groups who never get to be the hero in comic books and movies?" and "Who gets to be considered 'pretty'?"
 - Celebrate diversity
- It is recommended that the poster be displayed in the ROOTS space as an ongoing reminder of ways in which Participants may advocate for their peers and others by "passing the mic."

Human Trafficking Awareness and Safety

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6, Standard 7, Standard 8

Learner/Participant Objectives: Coping skills and resilience, Increased knowledge of human trafficking prevention, identify tools to stay safe

Content Warnings: Physical and sexual abuse, predatory behavior, human trafficking, sex trafficking, slavery, labor trafficking

Facilitator Tips: Although it is encouraged that Facilitators be available for Participants outside of the ROOTS space, it is not recommended that a Facilitator and child are alone one-on-one. While meeting with a child in a private setting may be necessary at times, it is strongly recommended that another child or mentor be in the same room/space to ensure safety. Keeping in mind the Participant's privacy, the "witness" can be within clear site of both the Facilitator and the Participant, but with enough distance where the conversation is inaudible. Always be trauma informed!

Key Terms:

- Human trafficking: use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain labor or a commercial sex act
- Sex trafficking: commercial sex acts performed by force, fraud or coercion
- also referred to as: commercial sexual exploitation
- Labor trafficking: a form of human trafficking where victims are made to perform work through force, fraud or coercion
- CSEC: commercial sexual exploitation of children. Does not require force, fraud or coercion. Does include paid rape or molestation of children and child pornography creation, distribution and consumption
- Victim: a person currently being sexually exploited
- Survivor: a person who has exited the life of commercial sexual exploitation
- Human smuggling: illegal facilitation or transportation of humans across borders
- Victim Service Organization: VSO, non-profits serving victims & survivors of sex trafficking

Time: 60 minutes

Materials needed: writing utensils, whiteboard or poster paper, crayons or markers

Background: Like slavery in the United States before the Civil War, human trafficking involves forcing other people to work for an exploiter's own personal and/or financial gain. It is often referred to as a form of modern-day slavery. According to the International Labor

Organization, in 2016 there was an estimated 40.3 million victims of human trafficking/modern day slavery. While slavery in both contexts is extremely inhumane, this means more slaves exist today than at any other time in human history. Sex trafficking is an international and domestic issue, one that also effects San Diego County. One of the factors that cause children to be more susceptible to being victims of sex trafficking is their socio-economic status. However, this does not mean that adolescents from higher socio-economic status are not actively recruited. This problem exists in San Diego. It is important that we empower adolescents by providing them with red flags or signs of exploitation to make them more resilient against recruitment.

Discussion Questions

- What does freedom mean to you?
- Is everyone free?
- What are some characteristics that define a person who is free versus unfree?

Procedure

- Ask Participants what being free means to them. Explain to the group that today's topic is sensitive, and it may be a bit frightening. Explain to them that the purpose is not to scare them, but rather to inform them so they may recognize a potentially harmful situation and ask for help.
- Explain to participants that human trafficking is a real and growing problem not only globally, but here in America. Youth are often the target of traffickers, and they rely on children not knowing what to look for to target them. So, our purpose for today's lesson is to teach youth about trafficking so that they can stay safe.
- Share with participants the definition of human trafficking.
 - **Human trafficking:** the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain labor or a commercial sex act
- Discuss what trafficking looks like:
 - Loss of freedom
 - Disrespect of boundaries or consent
 - Being told to do something that's unsafe or dangerous
 - Being controlled by someone else
 - Asked to perform sexual acts or labor
- Ask the group, "What kind of people do you think are most likely to be sexually exploited or trafficked into prostitution?" Write the question on a piece of poster paper and jot down the Participants' answers. If prompting is needed, ask "Are they boys? Girls? Young? Old? Students?"

- Show the group Polaris, America’s Daughters (04:00) and allow time for reflection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTAVZChvLR4>
 - Ask the group if they were aware that this was happening in the United States, and whether they think it happens in San Diego?
 - Ask the group who the victims were in the videos? What were some common themes that they noticed amongst the victims? For example, she was sexually abused, she wanted love, she was American, and she was 12 years old.
- Next, show the group MSNBC, Young, LGBT, Homeless in NYC (03:17) and allow time for reflection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNvWGuLRenE>
- Finally, show the group the Project Unbreakable, Victims of Sexual Assault (02:53) and allow time for reflection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l892WPTYUDc>
- Now redefine who the victims are by asking the group by re-asking these same questions: “What kind of people do you think are most likely to be sexually exploited or trafficked into prostitution?” Write the question on a piece of poster paper and jot down the Participants’ answers. If prompting is needed, ask “Are they boys? Girls? Young? Old? Students?”. Stress that anyone can be a victim regardless of the following: age, race, gender, socioeconomic status.
- Discuss some of the statistics of human trafficking in San Diego. Emphasize the average age of exploitation in San Diego is 16 years old, but victims can be much younger.
 - Many more girls than boys are trafficked (based on the current statistics).
 - Traffickers and pimps often target children who run away from home or are in foster care
 - Traffickers may target children who drop out of school
 - Trafficking is likely to happen in neighborhoods where gang activity, prostitution, and sex crimes already take place.
- Ask the group if anyone has heard of something like this happening in their own community or school? Does anyone have friends who have been in situations where they may have been exploited?

Note: Be aware of the requirements of mandated reporting of child abuse. This discussion may prompt a Participant to self-identify as a victim of abuse or trafficking or share stories about others who may be victimized. Be prepared for this situation and know the protocols before implementing this activity.

- Now move to a Facilitator-led discussion and define what a Perpetrator/ Exploiter/ Trafficker/ Pimp means.

- Then identify who a perpetrator could be making sure to emphasize that like a victim, a perpetrator can be anyone regardless of income, profession, race, religion, economic status, age, etc. Inform the group that an exploiter could be a stranger, a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend, or someone they have known for an extended period i.e. A “friend” they met over the internet and two years later they begin the exploitation.
- Reinforce the distinction between a mutual and manipulative relationship:
 - Forced to have sex in exchange for money or other goods, such as a place to sleep
 - Someone promises you love, but physically and emotionally inflicts harm
 - Isolates you from loved ones and friends
 - Branded with a tattoo
 - Forced to take drugs
- With your group, write down a list of risks or dangers associated with being prostituted or exploited. Call on Participants to share their thoughts. These may include:
 - Loss of freedom
 - Loss of contact with family and friends
 - Unwanted pregnancies
 - HIV/AIDS and other STDs
 - Severe violence, or even worse
 - Threatened or actual violence against family and friends
 - Shame, depression, suicide ideation
 - Others
- Now brainstorm with the group how they can avoid these dangers.

Note: that some of the characteristics which describe some vulnerabilities of a victim, may be the realities in any or all the Participants’ lives. Stress to the group that some of the best things they can do to avoid exploitation is to know and practice the many skills they are learning in ROOTS. These include:

- Identify and reach out to your list of trusted adults
- Do not share private information on social media
- Know your boundaries and speak up if someone does not respect them
- Pursue your positive passions
- Set goals that will help you succeed

- Ask Participants to think of different types of helpful people. Explain that people whom they can trust and who can help in times of need might be very different for

everyone such as, a parent, a sibling, a cousin, a friend's parent, a teacher, etc. Inform Participants that not all people you know are necessarily trustworthy.

- Pass out one flashcard and a writing utensil to each Participant. Have Participants create a list of three people whom they trust the most on their flashcard. Encourage them to write down specific people and their phone numbers, and to keep it somewhere safe.
- Stress to the group that they should always call 911 in an emergency. Always!
- Have Participants write down the National Human Trafficking Resource Center number below and remind them that the people on their cards will help them seek help/call the appropriate people if they are in danger or suspect someone else is in danger. Reinforce people you trust do not force you to keep secrets that make you feel worried, scared, or uncomfortable.
- As the Facilitator, it is crucial to review each Participant's list of trusted people since some may write down their peers, who may not necessarily be able to help them contact police, etc. If Participants do not know a phone number, leave that as a 'homework' assignment and follow up at the next ROOTS session.
- Remind Participants that the purpose of today's activity was not to scare them, but rather to inform them so they may recognize a potentially harmful situation and ask for help.
- Reassure the group that you are available after today's activity should they have any questions or comments. Remind them that you are also someone they can reach out to for help.

The Gender Box

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills

State Health Standards: Standard 2, Standard 3, Standard 4

Learner/Participant Objectives: Learners will learn key terms related to gender identity and gender roles. Learners will learn the definition of a stereotype and how society uses stereotypes when discussing gender and gender roles or explaining a person's gender identity. Learners will learn and critically discuss how gender identity and related concepts impact their lives within school, at home and in the community. Learners will learn how society, media, culture, friends, or family impact a person's gender identity.

Content Warnings: Discussion around gender and gender identity may facilitate a range of responses from youth.

Facilitator Tips: Use the graphics provided under resources to help explain the key terms. Consider incorporating ground rules that involve non-judgment and respect for differences. Facilitators may consider having youth self-identify nonverbally, like writing their identity on paper. Youth identify when they are ready and who they trust. Sharing and encouraging participants to share their pronouns can be helpful in generating an inclusive space here, but make sure to assure youth that they only need to give their pronouns if they feel comfortable. Remember gender and gender identity are fluid.

Key Terms: Gender identity, transgender, cisgender, non-binary, gender expansive, gender fluid, gender nonconforming, gender queer, stereotype, gender role

Time: Two 60-minute sessions

Materials needed: virtual – digital whiteboard, sticky notes, markers, large white paper or dry erase board

Background: Gender is a socially constructed concept that dictates behavior of people based on their sex. If you are a man, society expects you to exhibit more masculine characteristics. If you are a woman, society expects you to exhibit more feminine characteristics. Society constantly reinforces gender by ensuring that men and women both conform to gender roles. If men or women deviate from these roles, they are likely to suffer verbal abuse and become ostracized until they re-conform to the norms of society. Femininity is conceived in stereotypical terms leaving no possibility of variation.

Resources:

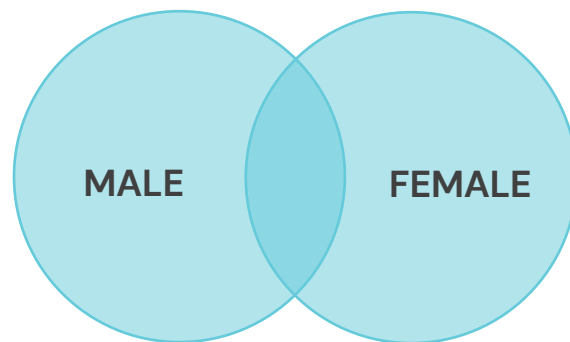
- <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/kUa7vxRoA2ITCkRX6>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/DLifU29YpXJQY83w6>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/ZSH2hMi5ZSbEcmaN6>
- <https://images.app.goo.gl/MfC4MDPKduTwejqh6>

References:

- <https://transstudent.org/gender>
- Schippers, Mimi. (2007) "Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender Hegemony." *Theory and Soci-ety* 36, no.1, 85-102

Procedure: Session 1

- Begin the session by defining gender identity.
 - **Gender Identity:** One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you.
- Ask the group to think about the benefits of identifying as a male and/or female. Have the participants record their responses on the digital whiteboard within a Venn diagram (example below).



- Ask the group to think about how identifying as a male and/or female restricts or limits them. Have the participants record their responses on the digital whiteboard within the Venn diagram.
- Have the participants identify which of these experiences are shared between the two gender identities within the Venn diagram.
- Ask the participants to identify all the negative or non-inclusive items in the Venn diagram. As they identify these, write them outside of the Venn diagram.
- Introduce the following identities that do not fit within the binary construction of male and female.
 - Transgender
 - Cisgender
 - Non-binary
 - Gender expansive
 - Gender fluid
 - Gender nonconforming
 - Gender queer

Please see resources:
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

- Facilitate a dialogue with the following questions. Provide options to respond orally, written and anonymously.
 - How do you identify?
 - Does your identity fit within the binary gender box?
 - How does your identity benefit you at home, school or in your community?
 - How does your identity restrict or limit you at home, school or in your community?
 - How can the binary gender box be expanded to represent all genders?

Procedure: Session 2

- Share the following definitions:
 - **Gender role:** the role or behavior learned by a person as appropriate to their gender, determined by the prevailing cultural norms.
 - **Stereotype:** A stereotype is a mistaken idea or belief many people have about a thing or group that is based upon how they look on the outside, which may be untrue or only partly true. Stereotyping people is a type of prejudice because what is on the outside is a small part of who a person is.
- Watch <https://youtu.be/UlhODnFUGsk>. Then, facilitate a dialogue with the following questions:
 - How does society expect you to act?
 - How does this make you feel?
- Watch <https://youtu.be/q7-FDCSsWpM> (STOP at 1:51). Then, facilitate a dialogue with the following questions:
 - What were some of the negative stereotypes you witnessed in the video?
 - How did those negative stereotypes affect the persons in the video?
 - How did the camp leader challenge negative gender stereotypes?
 - How can you challenge negative gender stereotypes?

