

FIRST EDITION



# BE STRONG: FROM THE INSIDE OUT



An Asset-Based Health Promotion & Violence Prevention Curriculum Empowering Young Women Ages 13-19



# BE STRONG: FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Peace  
Over  
Violence

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# Workshop Objectives:

By the end of this workshop, participants will:

- ❑ Have increased understanding of strategies for working with gender-specific programming
- ❑ Have increased knowledge of the history and philosophy of the Be Strong curriculum
- ❑ Have increased knowledge of the impact of Be Strong

# Why Girls?

- National research suggests that 1 in 5 high-school girls is physically or sexually abused by a dating partner and nearly 1 in 3 experiences some type of abuse (physical, sexual, or psychological) in her dating relationships. Silverman, J.G., Raj, A., Mucci, L.A., & Hathaway, J.E. (2001). Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance use, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy, and suicidality. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 286, 372-379.
- Girls who have been physically or sexually abused are more likely than girls who have not been abused to experiment with dangerous substances, experience violence in their intimate and dating relationships, participate in risky sexual practices, participate in delinquent behaviors, and experience lower psychological well-being. Fellitti, V.J., Anda, R.F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D.F., Spitz, A.M., Edwards, V., Koss, M.P., and Marks, J.S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14, 245-248.

# Effects of gender-based violence

- Girls in the system have histories of physical, emotional and sexual abuse; have family problems; suffer from physical and mental disorders; have experienced academic failure and succumb more easily to the pressures of domination by older males. (The American and National Bar Associations Justice by Gender – the Lack of appropriate Prevention, Diversion and Treatment alternatives for Girls in the Justice system, May 2001)
- Being physically or sexually abused as a child is consistently identified as the first step along a girl's pathway to the juvenile justice system. It is estimated that 40% to 70% of girls in the juvenile justice system have been the victims of physical and sexual abuse.

Acoca, L. (1998). Outside/inside: The violation of American girls at home, on the streets, and in the juvenile justice system. *Crime and Delinquency*, 44, 561-590.

# GEM: Predecessor to Be Strong

- The Crime Prevention Act of 2000 created a stable funding source (\$116 million dollars statewide) for local juvenile justice aimed at curbing crime and delinquency among targeted high-risk youth populations (including gender-specific services)
  
- Effective girls' programs should address: physical and sexual violence (from parents, boyfriends, pimps, and others); risk of HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and motherhood, drug and alcohol dependency, family problems, unemployment and employment training, finding safe housing, managing stress, and developing a sense of empowerment .(February 2001 *Corrections Today* article "What About the girls? Delinquency Programming as if Gender Mattered" by Meda Chesney-Lind)
  
- Peace Over Violence created GEM: Girls Empowerment Modules
  - ▣ Designed to provide gender-sensitive services to females in the Juvenile Justice System
    - Contents
      - Module I "Me, Myself and I"
      - Module II "Deal With It"
      - Module III "Body Pride: Body Conscious"
      - Module IV "Building Personal and Community Power"
      - Module V "Getting Paid"

# Shift from GEM to Be Strong...

- It is important that women learn about and experience healthy relationships as part of the **intervention process**. If women in the system are to change, grow, and recover, it is critical that they be in programs and environments in which relationships and mutuality are core elements, both with staff and with one another. **However, the design of the system discourages women from coming together, trusting, speaking about personal issues, or forming bonds in relationships.** (National Institute of Corrections *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding principles for Women Offenders* by Barbara Bloom, Ph.D., Barbara Owen, Ph.D., and Stephanie Covington, Ph.D. June 2003)

# Why Be Strong?



- Move from Intervention to Prevention
  - ▣ Primary prevention aims to eliminate or minimize behaviors or environmental factors that increase girls' risk of delinquency (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1993). Primary prevention focuses on helping girls to develop the knowledge, skills, and experiences that will promote health and resiliency. All girls can benefit from primary prevention
- Empowerment used as the strategy for preventing domestic, dating, and sexual violence among young women.
  - ▣ It helps young women shape healthy views of themselves and promotes healthy female bonding while strengthening their capacity to take control of their lives. During this process, they begin to view themselves as positive role models for their peers, siblings, and communities.

# Effective Gender-Specific Programming

- The Valentine Foundation articulated the essential elements of effective gender-specific programming for adolescent girls include:
  - Safe Space
  - Peer Connectedness
  - Giving girls a voice
  - Education about women's health
  - **Opportunities to create positive changes to benefit girls on an individual level, within their relationships, within the community, and larger society.**

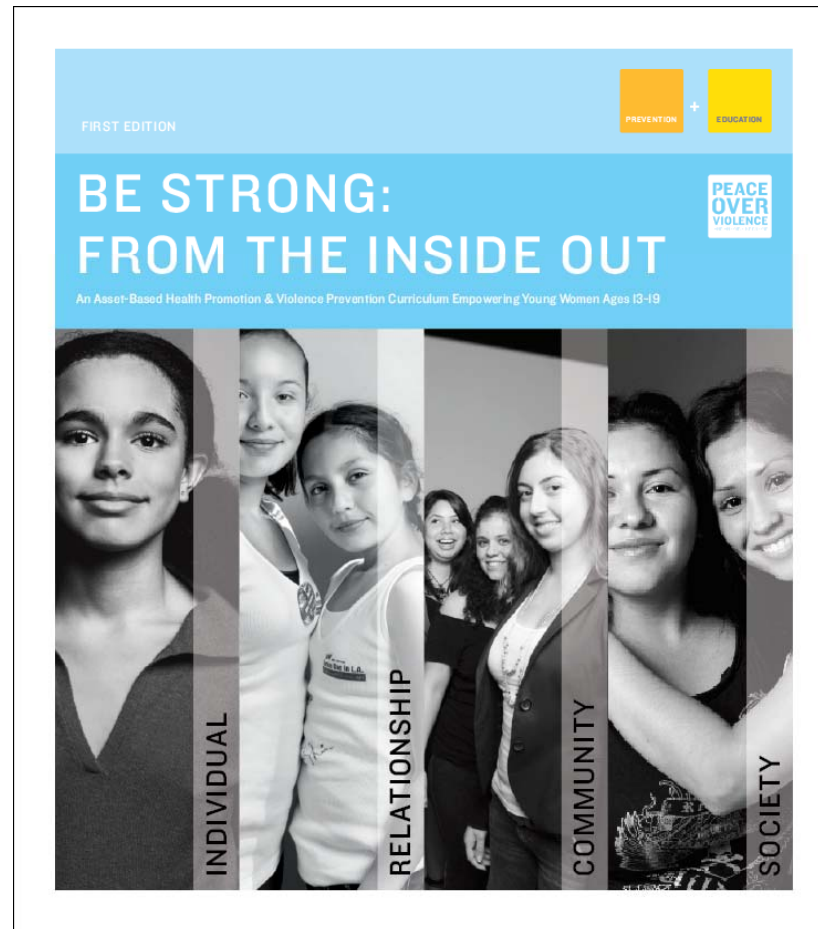
# Highlights of Be Strong



- Piloted and implemented in eight Los Angeles Unified schools during the 2008-2009 school year.
- Tested and evidence-informed by independent data analysis conducted by Harder + Co.
- Aligned with California Department of Education Academic Curriculum Standards
- Objectives focus on improving the *40 Development Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12 -18)* identified by Search Institute.

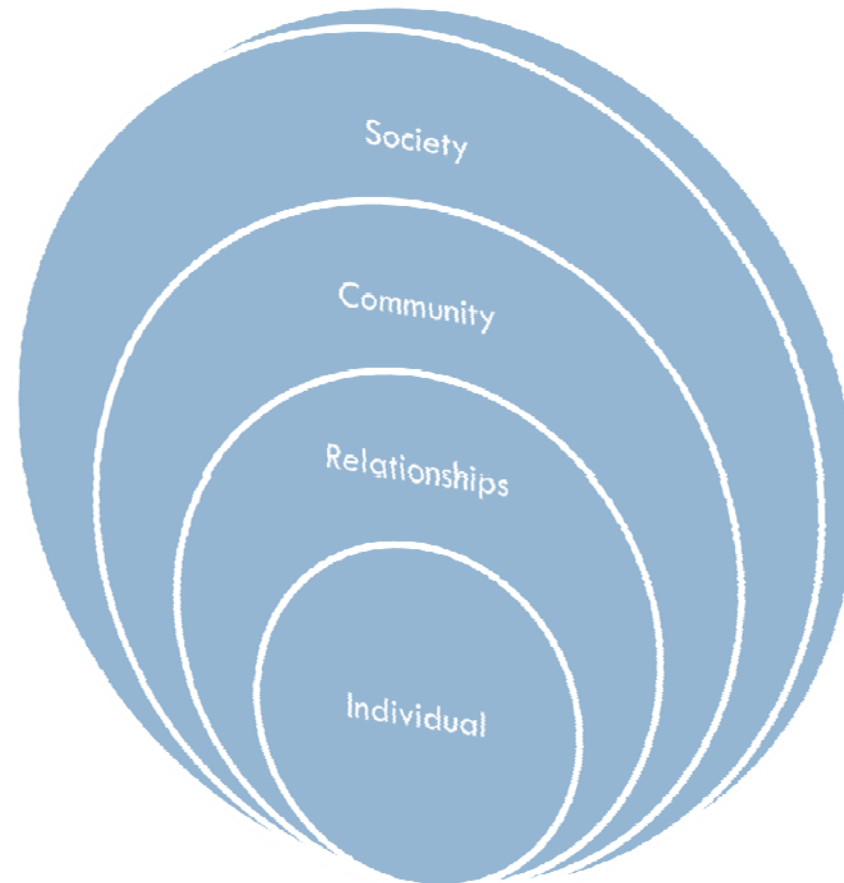
# An Introduction to Be Strong: From the Inside Out

An Asset-  
Based Health  
Promotion and  
Violence  
Prevention  
Curriculum  
Empowering  
Young Women  
Ages 13-19



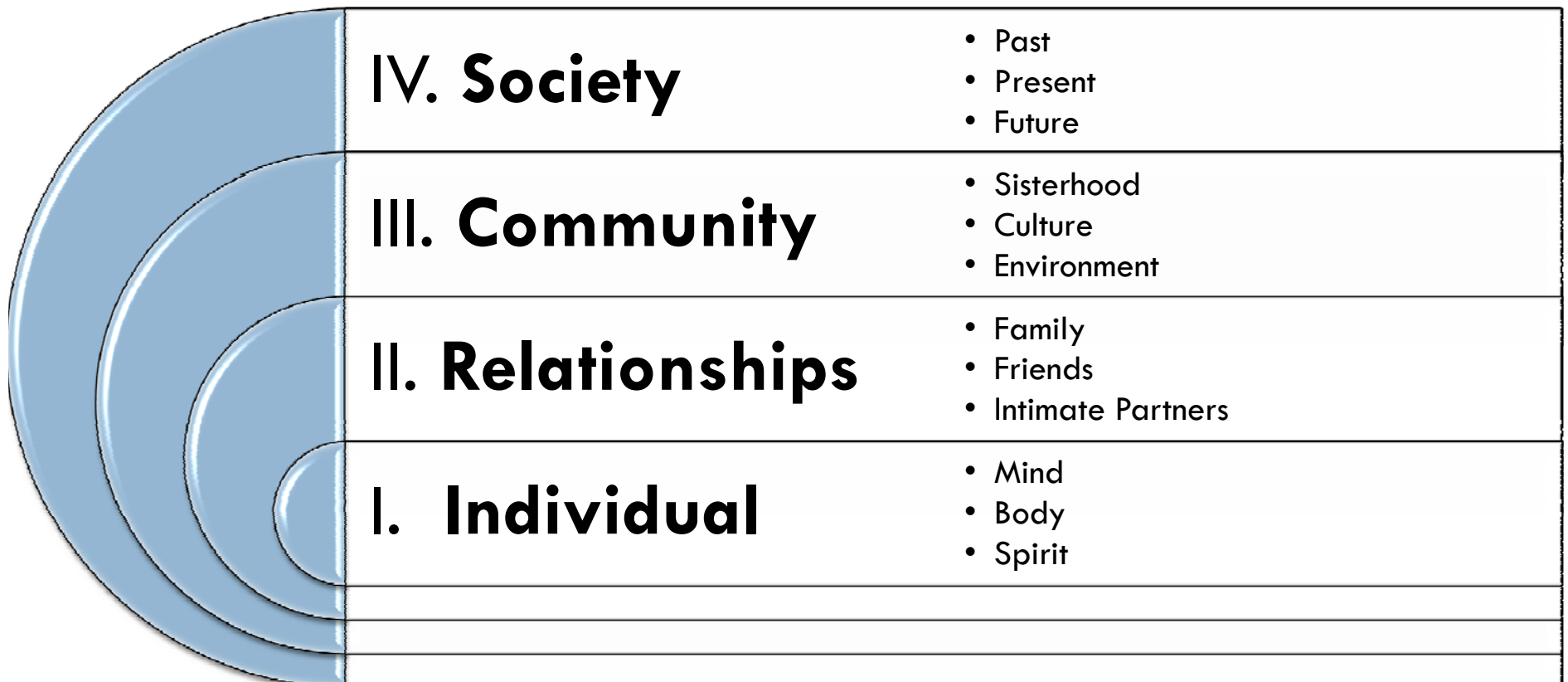
# Be Strong Empowerment Modules

**“Opportunities to create positive changes to benefit girls on an individual level, within their relationships, within the community, and larger society.”**



# Empowerment Modules

- Be Strong guides participants into planning for their future from a place of introspection (individual module), support and connection (relationships module), greater sisterhood and understanding of diverse experiences (community module) so that they may positively contribute to and participate in the larger society (society module).



# Individual Module

Each section guides Be Strong participants to challenge existing social norms and to develop their own positive, unique voices.

MIND		MIND IA	
<b>FINDING PIECES OF ME</b>		<b>PERSONALITY QUIZ</b>	
<p><b>Purpose</b> To introduce young women to their inner self and their mind through self-reflection on how different personality traits contribute to one's sense of self and to how one operates in the world.</p> <p><b>Objectives</b> To increase positive self-identity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.</p>	<p><b>Materials Needed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copies of personality quiz</li> <li>Personality test scores for facilitator</li> <li>Six index cards with the character descriptions</li> </ul>	<p>1. When do you feel your best?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. In the morning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. During the afternoon and early evening</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Late at night</p> <p>2. You usually walk</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Fast, with long steps</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Fast, with short, quick steps</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Less fast, head up, looking the world in the face</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. Less fast, head down</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> e. Very slowly</p> <p>3. When talking to people you</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Stand with your arms folded</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Have your hands clasped</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Have one or both of your hands on your hips</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. Touch or push the person to whom you are talking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> e. Play with your ear, touch your chin, or smooth your hair</p> <p>4. When relaxing, you sit with</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Your knees bent with your legs neatly side-by-side</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Your legs crossed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Your legs stretched out or straight</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. Your leg curled under you</p> <p>5. When something really amuses you, you react with</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. A big, appreciative laugh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. A laugh, but not a loud one</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. A quiet chuckle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. A sheepish smile</p> <p>6. When you go to a party or social gathering you</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Make a loud entrance so everyone notices you</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Make a quiet entrance, looking around for someone you know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Make the quietest entrance, trying to stay unnoticed</p>	<p>7. You are working very hard, concentrating hard, and you are interrupted. Do you</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Welcome the break</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Feel extremely irritated</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Vary between these two extremes</p> <p>8. Which of the following colors do you like most?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Red or orange</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Yellow or light blue</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. Green</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> e. Dark blue or purple</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> f. White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> g. Brown or gray</p> <p>9. When you are in bed at night, in these last few moments before going to sleep, you lay</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Stretched out on your back</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Stretched out face down on your stomach</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. On your side, slightly curled</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. With your head on one arm</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> e. With your head under the covers</p> <p>10. You often dream that you are</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Falling</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Fighting or struggling</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Searching for something or somebody</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. Flying or floating</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> e. You usually have dreamless sleep</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> f. Your dreams are always pleasant</p>
<b>ACTIVITY AND PROCEDURES</b>			
<p>1. Check in—Suggested Topic: How would you describe your personality? (e.g., shy, outgoing, studious, etc.)</p> <p>2. Facilitate a brief discussion about what type of personality each of the girls has. Talk about any discrepancies between what types of personality each girl says she has versus how other girls perceive her.</p> <p>3. Distribute the personality quiz. Give girls five minutes to complete.</p> <p>4. Have girls swap answer sheets to calculate points (using the score matrix).</p> <p>5. Have girls return scored sheets to their partner.</p> <p>6. Facilitator reads the personalities types with the corresponding scores.</p> <p>7. Debrief girls about the various personality types with the following prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you agree with the personality type you scored?</li> <li>Does knowing your personality type help you understand some of your behaviors? (Why do I gossip? Fight with parents? Have sex on the first date?)</li> </ul>	<p>8. Next write the character descriptions below on six index cards. Select volunteers to enact a group role-play of six different personalities deciding what to eat for dinner. Encourage girls to create their own dialogue based on the character's personality.</p> <p>a. The Dominant: Really wants pizza.</p> <p>b. Motivated: Wants everyone to eat Chinese food; that way everyone can share.</p> <p>c. Popular: Wants to try Sushi since it is the new fad and everyone else is eating it.</p> <p>d. Loyal Friend: Is having whatever everyone else is having. Thinks everyone's food choice is good.</p> <p>e. Cautious: Wants the regular burger and fries; does not want to try anything new and be disappointed.</p> <p>f. Shy: Really, really wants vegetarian but is afraid to voice her opinion.</p> <p><b>Wrap-up:</b> Facilitate an open dialogue with the group or have them write their responses in their journals.</p> <p><b>Prompt:</b> What did you learn about yourself and your personality during the activity? Does your personality type affect how you perceive the world and work in it?</p>	<p><small>Adapted from Personality Test Center's Human Resource Department. Permission by Test, available at: <a href="http://www.personalitytest.com/journals/010101.htm">http://www.personalitytest.com/journals/010101.htm</a></small></p>	

# Community Module

Where I'm from...

-helping young women share and discuss the liabilities and assets in their physical environments.

ENVIRONMENT



## ENVIRONMENT

### WHERE I'M FROM...

#### Purpose

To introduce the subsection on environments by helping young women share and discuss the liabilities and assets in their physical environments.

#### Objectives

To increase self-esteem and personal power; to increase cultural competence; to increase caring neighborhood and school; to acknowledge neighborhood and school boundaries.

### ACTIVITY AND PROCEDURES

1. Check-in. Suggested Topic: What do you like or dislike about your community?
  - What do you like about your community?
  - What would you change about your community?
2. On one side of the board write Community Liabilities and give the following definition: Liwing conditions of the community environment that are disadvantageous (e.g., violence, drugs, vandalism, dilapidated buildings, litter, gangs, potholes, unpaved roads, lack of resources, etc.); on the other side of the board write Community Capital and give the following definition: Resources in the community that are available to uplift the community (e.g., churches, parks, community organizations, museums, libraries, block parties, etc.).
3. Break students into two groups. Group 1 identifies various Community Liabilities and Group 2 identifies Community Capital.
4. Facilitate a discussion from the young women's responses about community environment using the following prompts:
  - What do you like about your community?
  - What would you change about your community?
  - Encourage students to give personal accounts and draw from their own experience of community.
5. Next take young women outside to the immediate community and ask them to point out the Community Liabilities and Community Capital. Alternative: Go online

to Google Maps and search the local zip code and explore the Community Liabilities and Community Capital of the environment using the street-level view tool.

6. Debrief the activity using the following prompts:
  - What did you notice?
  - What's missing?
  - What is there an abundance of?
  - How often do you think we go past things without noticing?
  - Whose responsibility is it to notice things?

7. For homework, have young women take pictures of Community Liabilities and Community Capital of their own neighborhoods.

Wrap-up: Facilitate an open dialogue with the group or have them write their responses in their journals. Prompt: What did you learn about your community today? What can you do to increase Community Capital?

# Society Module

## Gender Identity Timeline

PAST

### GENDER IDENTITY TIME LINE

**Purpose**  
To further explore the impact of society on young women's gender identities and experiences.

**Objectives**  
To increase self-esteem, personal power, and interpersonal competence; to increase the values of equality and social justice.

**Materials Needed**

- Gender Identity Handout
- White board or flip chart

**ACTIVITY AND PROCEDURES**

1. Check In—Suggested Topic: Name one time when you were told that you had to do something or did not have to do something because you were a girl.
2. Facilitate a discussion around influences of gender identity construction referring back to the previous role play activity. Suggested dialogue: gender identity is shaped by society and is not biological. Many child psychiatrists have experimented with how although baby boys and girls do not have much difference in their development during the first year, how they are treated channels them into certain genders from birth. For example, baby boys are bounced and roughhoused, whereas girls are hugged and nurtured more. Mothers tend to ignore the emotional expressions of their infant sons, and fathers spend more time with their boys than with their girls. Starting as early as infancy, their names, their clothing, and the "sugar and spice" messages in baby congratulation cards, all shape girls and boys into gender roles.
3. Distribute the Gender Identity Timeline Handout. Allow young women 5 minutes to think of times they were gender stereotyped or limited based on gender expectations. Examples you can give for this assignment may be if young women were called "tomboys;" if they were assigned chores in the house (i.e. cooking, cleaning) because they were female, they were told

they couldn't climb trees because they would get hurt, etc. Encourage young women to think of their lives and when they were structured based on their gender.

4. Afterwards, ask young women to share answers with a group and debrief gender constructions. Explore what influenced their gender identity formation through the following prompts:
  - Who influenced your gender identity? Family, friends, teacher, etc?
  - Are there any... media influences? Religious influences? Peer influences?
  - Which are most influential?
  - Are there any patterns amongst the influencers?
  - How is your gender identity still informed or affected by your experiences growing up?

Wrap Up: Facilitate an open dialogue with the group or have them write their responses in their journals.

Prompt: Where do you think gender identities originally came from?

**Handout: Gender Identity Timeline**

Description: We receive messages from the day we are born about what is appropriate for a male and a female. Cards celebrating the birth of a baby often reflect desirable gender stereotypes – pink, bows and tractors for a baby girl; puppies, balls and scraped knees for a boy.

Assignment: Think of events/times in your life which shaped your gender identity. Write in events that happened in your own lives that shaped your idea of what it means to be a "girl" vs. a "boy."

Hint: Think about times you were told you couldn't do something because you were a girl/boy. Think about times you were told you had to do something because you were a girl.

List at least three events that shaped how you understand what it means to be a girl/boy.

Childhood	Adolescent	Teen	Present

# Overall Satisfaction with Be Strong

Harder+Company  
Community  
Research used a  
mixed method  
approach,  
incorporating both  
quantitative and  
qualitative  
procedures. The  
data collection  
strategies were  
utilized:

+ Student post-test

+ Student focus  
group

+ Staff interviews

Overall, the participants were highly satisfied with all aspects of the *Be Strong* program (see Exhibit). All reported enjoying coming to the *Be Strong* sessions, and large majorities felt that they learned a lot of new things from the group, and they felt welcomed at the *Be Strong* sessions.

	Agreed with the statement*
I feel safe sharing my thoughts during <i>Be Strong</i> sessions.	94.6%
My facilitator is someone I can trust.	94.6%
I have gained something valuable by participating in this group.	97.3%
I have learned a lot of new things from this group.	94.6%
I enjoy coming to the <i>Be Strong</i> sessions.	100.0%
I feel welcomed at <i>Be Strong</i> sessions.	94.6%
I would recommend <i>Be Strong</i> to my friends.	97.3%
I was able to bond with other girls in this group.	83.8%

# Participant Evaluation of Be Strong

## Peer Connectedness

Participants reported that *Be Strong* helped them to feel better about being a girl and helped them develop skills to build cultural competency with people from different cultures, ethnicities, and walks of life

	Agreed with the statement <sup>a</sup>
Increased how much I trust other girls.	32.4%
Helped me to see that I have more in common with girls than boys.	78.4%
Taught me to treat all girls with respect, even if they are not my friends.	78.4%
Made me feel proud to be a girl.	97.3%
Helped me get along better with people who are different than me (for example, different race or culture).	86.5%

## Self-Confidence & Self-Esteem

A large majority of participants indicated that the program helped them feel more confident, taught them that they can reach their goals, and helped them feel that they can handle different circumstances.

	Agreed with the statement <sup>a</sup>
Helped me to feel more confident with myself.	94.6%
Taught me that I can reach my goals.	89.2%
Taught me to think through possible solutions when I am confronted with a problem.	97.3%
Helped me to feel that I can handle whatever comes my way.	97.3%
Helped me to work things out when I'm mad at someone.	83.8%
Taught me to respect other people's opinions even if I disagree with them.	86.5%

# Staff Evaluation of Be Strong

**“We see a lot of bright young ladies who have flowered with their self-esteem, who have become more vocal, able to have that conversation...[*Be Strong*] helps them to find their voice. We don’t see the kids who had behavioral problems as often in the Deans Office.”**

*– School staff member*

**“We saw less Dean’s office referrals. The girls are better able to articulate themselves. Less reactive. Showing vulnerability more.”**

*– School staff member*

**“On a scale from 1 to 10 - I give the program a 9. Girls need empowerment and need to understand their cultural and socialized roles. If they don’t know that things can be different, they can’t fight to end violence in their lives.”**

*– School staff member*

# Be Strong Summary



- goes beyond simply focusing on girls
- positive female development
- provides girls with decisionmaking and life skills that will assist their development into womanhood
- positive relationship-building skills
- Empowerment teaches girls to use their voice, to speak for themselves, and to recognize that they have choices

# Interested in Be Strong?



- Pre-order your copy now!
  - Brochures inside folders
- Any questions?