

Beautiful You:  
Program Design and Manual

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**Beautiful You:**  
**Program Design and Manual**

I love to learn. I am equally passionate about teaching, being able to reach someone and convey a message that hopefully lasts a lifetime is invigorating. Education motivates me to keep learning and question the conventional methods of teaching and learning. I have been encouraged not to take things at face value, but to dig deep and draw well thought-out educated conclusions; I encourage my students to do the same. Stepping outside of convention and connecting with youth, allowing them to direct their learning and the trajectory of the material is often labelled “alternative,” however I find this structure comparable to real life learning. I experienced the power of self-directed learning when I was hired to animate an after-school program years ago. While I still used teaching practices, I was also able to marry the methodologies with counselling elements, which was emotional and liberating for the participants. I was taught so much; there was an exchange of energy, thoughts, and issues that equally enriched my life. The students I worked invested their time in the program and showed me, nonempirically, that youth yearned for an outlet to express themselves in a nonjudgemental forum. They desired the freedom to express themselves, to grow both intellectually and personally.

I knew then that teaching in that this form was right for me, I was being authentic and found joy in helping my students make meaning of the material covered. Animating allowed me the opportunity to create solid bonds with the students and have relationships that were transparent and more respectful than I would have in a traditional classroom. I had the liberty of meeting them where they were, as they were, and growing with them instead of grouping them all together and grading them according to predetermined scales of success.

As in any classroom, there were challenges but the reward, in my experience, was more profound. Participants were encouraged to take leadership roles, implement changes and goals that were decided communally and not programmed by me. I was able to gently guide the group along and navigate the lessons according to their experiences. Being a facilitator, I noticed that I was less intimidating, more on “their-level,” so their willingness to share thoughts and feelings came naturally. It was an alternative form of teaching that incorporated communication and social skills, structured so that participants were free to speak their minds and encouraged to dig deeper, not to solely memorize concepts. Therefore, the emergence of critical thinking.

I reflected on how profound the experience was for me, to see the students really enjoy the workshops and create solid bonds with their cohorts, I knew I could take that know-how and develop something incorporating my passion for art and knew that I would be able to create something that would help participants grow, spiritually, intellectually, and personally. I set out to create this program, Beautiful You, designed as an art workshop series based on relevant topics adolescent teens face. I did not want participants to feel confined to one art medium, to that end, I created a mixed-media art program called Beautiful You. The topics and art pieces were paired to maximize the participant’s individual learning and the artwork would be a platform to unlock thoughts and expression. The structure of the program is collective and the role of the facilitator is to guide the experience, not to take ownership and dictate the outcome, but to allow participants to emerge as leaders.

Young males were intentionally excluded. Undeniably, males grapple with many issues, however I created a girls-only program, which I would be able to manage as the facilitator and serve as a role model. I would not be effective modeling a males-only group. The statistics indicate, however, that they would benefit greatly from a program like Beautiful You. Male

cases of anorexia have risen, reports of teen male body dissatisfaction are up due to a plethora of reasons, most significantly because lean muscular bodies perpetuated on TV, magazines, and throughout popular culture depicting the male physique as long, strong and toned. The desire to emulate them is a factor that creates a vicious cycle of self-hate, negative self-talk, and low self-esteem. To optimize efficiency and positive role modelling, adapting the program with male educators and researching issues that are currently trending with young men can surely be addressed in the near future.

**Topics and Linked Activities**

<b>Title*</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activity</b>
U.N.I.T.Y.	Welcome	Ice-breaker, Norms
Pressure Cooker	Peer Pressure (Bullying)	Ice-breaker, Art Journal
I'm Too Sexy	Body Image	Ice-breaker, Collage
Phenomenal Woman	Self Esteem	Ice-breaker, Poetry
I Am Me	Diversity	Ice-breaker, Group Mandala
R.E.S.P.E.C.T Find Out What it Means to Me	Values and Boundaries	Ice-breaker, Open Art
Time's Ticking	Time Management	Ice-breaker, Create a Schedule
End of the Road	Closure	Ice-breaker, Closure Party, Feedback

\* Titles are based on popular song titles or literature

The list above can be expanded over a couple of sessions. For example, one session could be devoted to the discussion and a lecture; the other session would focus on artwork. The Beautiful You program can also be modified to cover other topics. The program can be adjusted depending on the needs of the participants. Examples include sex, sexually transmitted infections, and teen pregnancy. Other issues to discuss might be coping with loss, divorce, separation, healthy relationships, and abusive relationships. It is recommended that facilitators discuss the needs with administrators and or program directors. Also, inquiring with the participants if there are topics they would like covered will ensure the success of the program and help participants gain the most from it.

This manual is divided into three sections, the first of which is the research to support the need for the Beautiful You program. It contains an overview of art, art therapy, and includes the benefits of working in a group. The literature review is also segmented; it is covered by the itemized topics listed on page 7. Originally I felt, most significantly through my work with youth, that the above-mentioned themes should to be covered and discussed in detail, as I began researching them, I quickly realized that the need for Beautiful You is very real.

Following the literature review section is a unit devoted to animators. This includes program design elements and tips. The final section is the detailed eight-week session of Beautiful You in which the topics, lectures, ice-breakers and art activities are described. This section provides the description of the artwork, including the benefits of the respective art form for the participant.

Some basics to the Beautiful You program are not empirically based, but are included because they are helpful as teaching guides. They have been implemented in previous animation sessions I have held. Others are helpful suggestions shared by peers in their classroom, most specifically when working with an alternative group (behavioral or problematic students, students that do not work well in conventional settings) I found them to be interesting gems to get participants to share and get closer. Seating arrangements, and having separate areas as break out rooms (e.g., The Lounge) are other examples; some icebreakers used previously were, upon review, found to be suitable so I incorporated them in the program design. Others I drew from several education-based classes; I found they were a great fit for Beautiful You so they were incorporated as well.



## Literature Review

### Art

Art can be described as creative expression through a variety of means and is being redefined continuously and paid homage to daily. Art can be expressed in a myriad of ways; it is difficult to subscribe to a particular definition. For many people, art means different things. New boundaries are tested and interpretations of new mediums are experimented with, incorporating various methodologies and technologies.

Webster's dictionary (*Art* [Def. 2], Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.) defined "art" as "something that is created with imagination and skill that is beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings: works created by artists: paintings, sculptures, etc., that are created to be beautiful or to express important ideas or feelings: the methods and skills used for painting, sculpting, etc."

The Beautiful You program was carefully designed to help the participating groups reach cohesion by discussing the artwork and how it links to the associated topic. Beautiful You's use of art is basic by design, because the emphasis is on group sharing and team building.

### Art Therapy

**The history of art therapy.** Artistic expression has been around for millennia. Art has been esteemed for centuries, however the revelation of its therapeutic properties is credited to Adrian Hill in the 1940s. While in the hospital seeking treatment for tuberculosis, the English painter suggested that he and fellow patients begin to paint. From there Hill, along with others in agreement about the beneficial properties of art therapy, most notably Edward Adamson, began the movement of art therapy, which is now widely accepted as a medical and psychiatric means of therapy.

**Medical acceptance of art as therapy.** “Hospitals have long served as important incubators for the field of art therapy. For better or worse, medical model concepts such as diagnosis, disease, and treatment have had a strong influence on the development of most schools of thought within Western psychotherapy, including art therapy. Although psychiatry has always been the medical specialty most closely allied with the field, art therapists have worked with patients being treated for AIDS, asthma, burns, cancer, chemical dependency, trauma, tuberculosis, and other medical and rehabilitation needs” (Malchiodi, 1999, p. 6).

**Art as therapy.** “Art therapy is based on the idea that the creative process of art making facilitates reparation and recovery and is a form of nonverbal communication of thoughts and feelings. Like other forms of psychotherapy and counselling, it is used to encourage personal growth and has been employed in a wide variety of settings with children, adults, families, and groups. It is an approach that can help individuals of all ages create meaning and achieve insight, find relief from overwhelming emotions or trauma, resolve conflicts and problems, enrich daily life, and achieve an increased sense of wellbeing” (Malchiodi, 2006, p. 6). “Art therapy supports the belief that all individuals have the capacity to express themselves creatively and that the product is less important than the therapeutic process involved” (Malchiodi, 2006, p. 6).

Art therapy is still a new form of treatment. It has had much success in unlocking deep-seated emotions and brings joy to those while creating. The application of using one’s hands, the tactile connection, creates a sense of pride and encourages conversation, without the subject being pushed. The results of art therapy, which connects mind, biochemistry, and creativity, will continue to have a role within the medical community. Its benefits are substantial, boosting

creativity, increasing pride and giving a sense of accomplishment in a nonjudgmental environment (Malchiodi, 1998).

It is imperative that counsellors and educators understand that it is not about the art per se, rather the process that unlocks emotions, gives clarity, and allows one to extract meaning from his or her creations. “Art therapy supports the belief that all individuals have the capacity to express themselves creatively and that the product is less important than the therapeutic process involved” (Malchiodi, 2011, p. 6). Through the act of creating and thinking about art, individuals are able to develop increased cognitive thinking skills, resulting in a higher sense of awareness of self and others. As well, they develop the ability to engage altruistically and gradually discover that they are able to cope with stress more effectively.

**Art therapy and adolescents** Succeeding in encouraging teens to talk or seek assistance is challenging. Their worldview and fragile sense of self are partially molded by their environment and role models, e.g., television celebrities, athletes, and musicians. It is through this same outlet, the media, that the teen is receiving messages about seeking help. “Teenagers are sensitive about their image, particularly with their peers, and often put themselves at emotional risk rather than confess that they need help from a “shrink.” Furthermore, their view of the ‘talking’ psychotherapies has been shaped by the movies, and they often think that these therapies are only for serious “mental” cases. In contrast, they come to art therapy without such preconceived ideas, and this form of therapy has proved effective with adolescents” (Riley, 2001, p. 1).

Cathartic and intense feelings emerge from art pieces and can then be dissected or explained. It gives the adolescent the opportunity to wrap their emotions around the issues they are not able to speak about or discuss without being harassed or made to feel they are being put

on the spot. “The ‘art’ allows clients to distance themselves from their own dilemma and, in that manner, work with the therapist toward alternative solutions to a problem. Art as an expressive language provides an entrée into a relationship with teenagers by tapping into their creativity and offering a form of communication that is nonthreatening and over which the adolescent has control. When teens enter the art therapy room, they find drawing materials and other forms of media on a table. They are invited to draw anything they choose and even to make a statement in images that represent their feelings about being in the therapeutic setting” (Riley, 2001, p. 4).

**Group therapy.** Group therapy for adolescents is a safe haven; it is a protected environment in which they can be supported by fellow members. Intimate groups can serve as a security blanket for teens to discuss subjects freely. Teens are quite preoccupied with perceptions and image; disclosing to a therapist or counsellor one-on-one may be intimidating and they may wish not to divulge information, thus preventing the therapist from offering assistance. The benefit of sharing in a group allows the girl to gain insight on subjects regardless if she brings up the topic. It is an opportunity to share and question things as a collective, the safety net of the group takes the pressure off the adolescent.

Group support provides a buffer and safeguards members to discuss things openly. Participants can bring up issues that are happening to a “friend” and hear what the group offers as suggestions, advice etc. In the process of designing Beautiful You I recognized that participants may want to inquire about topics they feel are sensitive or embarrassing, therefore a suggestion box has been incorporated into the program encouraging the girls to leave comments or questions with the reassurance that their anonymity is protected. Devoting quality time at the beginning of every session enforces the message that facilitators care and are invested in the wellbeing of the members. The suggestion box works well in conjunction with checking-in

(explained in detail on page 28). Over time, participants come to realize that they are not isolated, and eventually they start to communicate. Another advantage is that participants can redirect sessions, if facilitators notice that questions are repeatedly asked about topics that are not formally covered, themes like sex, sexuality, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Most teens prefer interacting with their peers rather than with an adult counsellor. Group therapy can be a very effective way for the girls to discuss their problems and develop a sense of altruism by helping others, offering possible solutions and demonstrating a sense of humanity simply by listening. During the program, participants will acquire the ability to manage their feelings, put things into perspective and confront issues and circumstances that are challenging. Participants will stretch themselves, grow through the group experiences, art expressions, and develop links to concepts.

#### **Group therapy benefits.**

- refining social skills
- learning coping mechanisms
- discovering they are not isolated
- developing a network of peers with whom they can exchange

#### **Media Effect on Youth**

A major component of self-image is realized through the societal lenses of pop culture and the media. Television has its good side; it can be entertaining and educational, opening up new worlds, promoting critical thinking and even have positive role models to idolize. Certain programs are created specifically to promote healthy relationships and help youth navigate the world with an open mind. The negative is also true. Poorly programed shows, including ones

that are not age appropriate, can lead to negative effects on a young person's behavior and worldview.

The amount sedentary technologies (video games, smart phones, tablets, and computers) youth engage in on a daily basis has increased. "Over the past five years, there has been a huge increase in media use among young people. Five years ago, we reported that young people spent an average of nearly 6½ hours (6:21) a day with media—and managed to pack more than 8½ hours (8:33) worth of media content into that time by multitasking. At that point, it seemed that young people's lives were filled to the bursting point with media. Today, however, those levels of use have been shattered. Over the past five years, young people have increased that amount of time they spend consuming media by an hour and seventeen minutes daily, from 6:21 to 7:38—almost the amount of time most adults spend at work each day except that young people use media seven days a week instead of five. Moreover, given the amount of time they spend using more than one medium at a time, today's youth pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes worth of media content into those daily 7½ hours—an increase of almost 2¼ hours of media exposure per day over the past five years" (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010, p. 2).

Reinforced is the message that media are among the most powerful forces in young people's lives today. Screen time has jumped up, including television screens, computer and tablets, smart phones and video games. Gone are the days of going outside and playing with the neighborhood children. Nowadays interactions are over the internet, connected to a headset while playing a sedentary video game. "Eight- to eighteen-year-olds spend more time with media than in any other activity besides sleeping—an average of more than 7½ hours a day, seven days a week. The TV shows they watch, video games they play, songs they listen to, books they read and websites they visit are an enormous part of their lives, offering a constant

stream of messages about families, peers, relationships, gender roles, sex, violence, food, values, clothes, and an abundance of other topics too long to list” (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010, p. 1). Understanding the role media play in the life of a youth is important, and it is also imperative to understand that the content they are absorbing is helping to shape their views of others, including themselves. Adolescents are acutely aware of body image and the overall desire to be model-thin is at an all-time high. It is reported that the “repeated exposure to the ultra-slender models in the media promotes an internalization of the thin-ideal body image for women and may also alter normative perceptions regarding the average body dimensions of women” (Stice, Spangler, & Agras, 2001, p. 669). The “thin ideal” message is blasted via the media in almost every way possible. Stunning news anchors, TV actors, and models on the covers of magazines and advertisements are exemplifying the “thin ideal” resulting in constant messages that “regular folk just are not good enough.” This message of the “thin ideal” is transmitted so early on that, many individuals do not even recognise they are being conditioned to accept the societal standards and ideals. This conditioning happens at such a young age that even in children’s movies, viewers accept and are accustomed to thin characters as being desired and perceived as beautiful while overweight ones are not. “Even when they are viewing child-oriented video programming (e.g., *Cinderella*), children are still exposed to content glamorizing the thin female body ideal; however, this ideal is typically represented in the form of young women, not prepubescent girls (Herbozo et al., 2004). Thus, we argue, prepubescent girls are more likely to be exposed to media (particularly television) depictions glorifying slender adult bodies than slender child bodies. It follows, then, that young media users may be internalizing a thin adult body ideal in hopes of realizing future goals, and consequently that media (particularly television) exposure will be a stronger predictor of the internalization of a thin future (post-

pubescent or adult) body ideal than a thin current (prepubescent or child) body ideal. When girls reach adolescence and begin to develop physically into young women, their goals should become more immediately attainable, resulting in an increased risk for indulging in problematic behaviors (e.g., disordered eating) aimed at satisfying aspirations that were in the process of forming years earlier” (Harrison & Hefner, 2006, p. 155). The Marilyn Monroe voluptuous body has been replaced over the years with cover models who reach new levels in their thinness, levels so thin that they exceed the criteria for anorexia (Grabe, Hyde, & Ward, 2008). It is challenging for young people to make sense of these images when they are flooded with Photo-shopped images, dangerously skinny models and actors which are generally accepted globally, adored and idolized, but these images and people do not represent real people globally.

Harrison and Hefner (2006) commented on the slim trend of models and celebrities who are occupying adolescents’ screen more and more. The North American depiction of the slender female and muscular and toned male body may also contribute to mental and physical problems among adolescents, ranging from obsession with thinness, to excessive exercising and dieting, to sometimes fatal eating disorders. A great deal of research has been conducted in the past decade on the media’s role in adolescents’ body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. In general, the “frequent positive portrayals of thin models and negative attributes of heavier characters on television and in magazines reduces adolescent girls’ satisfaction with their own bodies immediately and over time and contributes to disordered eating symptoms for both males and females, but especially for girls” (Harrison & Herfner, 2008, p. 390). Compounded with the rail-thin images of celebrities, the emergence of “reality TV” has hit networks with ferocity, claiming to be depicting “real lives” of ordinary people. This explosion has further confused teens since the “real life” depictions portray people mostly leading excessive lifestyles have



perfectly sculpted bodies. They usually talk about dieting, exercise, and cosmetic surgery openly.

The access to images and emphasis on the “thin ideal” is constant and everywhere as supported by the research. Bus shelters and metro ads, including the usual suspects, TV commercials, magazines, and television shows, etc., are subconsciously framing and creating social norms on today’s youth. I saw a need to create a program in which young girls would be able to learn about these tendencies and encouraged to start to deconstruct media portrayals.

Today’s youth have more to keep pace with than in previous years. Image is everything and emphasis on quality relationships and healthy lifestyles is not. The argument can be made that every generation has had pressures and issues to deal with, however not one has had this type of constant screen time inundation. Coping with the relentless messages, the connection to their smart phones, Facebook, Instagram, and various social media outlets is overwhelming and unprecedented. The research validates the need for youths to check into real life “face-time” and out of the technological media frenzy that is their day-to-day life.

### **Peer Pressure and Bullying**

Adding to the constant screen time, youth are using the technology in increasingly frightening amounts for cyberbullying. Students in this digital era have had more severe levels of peer pressure and bullying to deal with. The same platforms that adolescents are connected to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., are being used to inflict pain on others. Some cases have been so serious that the victim of the bullying has committed suicide. According to the Statistics on Bullying website, suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people, resulting in about 4,400 deaths per year in the US. Of that figure, at least half are attributed to bullying. For every suicide among young people, there are at least 100 suicide attempts and over 14 percent of

high-school students have considered suicide, and almost seven percent have attempted it. The web site discussed a study conducted at Yale University that states victims of bullying are between two to nine times more likely to consider suicide than nonbullied teens.

With a few clicks of a mouse, the bully can send out nasty notes, compromising photos, and hate mail. What is more damaging to the victim is that once posted the above-mentioned items can resurface. This is causing serious problems on school property and in homes for the government and police. Policymakers recognize that cyberbullying has lasting effects and is as damaging, possibly more so than traditional bullying; therefore, united with law enforcement and school boards, they are trying to implement zero tolerance policies with the strict message that bullying of any nature is unacceptable. The government is also trying to pass legislation at the federal level in Canada to have regulations in place to condemn cyberbullies and protect victims. On November 20, 2013, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General introduced legislation applicable for all citizens to be better protected against online violation and exploitation. The document admits that more regulations and attention is required to police the relatively open World Wide Web and its reach.

Cyberbullying can take many forms; the following list details what it can look like:

- Sending mean messages or threats to a person's email account or cell phone
- Spreading rumors online or through texts
- Posting hurtful or threatening messages on social networking sites or web pages
- Stealing a person's account information to break into their account and send damaging messages
- Pretending to be someone else online to hurt another person

- Taking unflattering pictures of a person and spreading them through cell phones or the Internet
- Sexting, or circulating sexually suggestive pictures or messages about a person

(<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org>).

The effects of bullying regardless of the type endured create mental suffering. Being at the mercy of a bully and the anguish it creates is sufficient to destroy the confidence of anyone, let alone a child, on whom it can have lifelong effects. The evidence illustrates that the impact of bullying should not be taken lightly. The bully and victim equally demonstrate greater psychological problems, have a tendency to seek out peers with a similar aptitude to engage in risky behaviors (drug and alcohol use) and overall perform more poorly in their schoolwork. Both the victim and bully report poorer self-concept and greater social dissatisfaction, creating a cycle of victimization and cruelty. “Those who fluctuate between bullying and being victimized show the greatest tendency for serious aggression and criminality in adulthood (physical fighting, weapons use and theft)” (Shariff, 2008, p. 27).

The victim will have a shattered sense of self-perception; and will feel she is not good enough, will suffer from low self-esteem, negative self-talk and thinking that they deserve it. The constant anxiety of bullying becomes their mantra. As the adolescent begins to believe that being at the mercy of a bully is their story, very similar to the acceptance of a child of abuse who begins to create acceptance around the behavior as a coping mechanism, the teenager alternates between either extremity. By never having to “tap into” expressing their feelings or healing the hurt, they hold onto it.

The external effects of bullying can go undetected because they are reported mostly as being stress-related, headaches, stomach upset, and fatigue. Many adolescents at this time

exhibit some if not all the external reactions to bullying; understandably teachers and parents might assume that the child has a physical illness.

### **Adolescent Girls and Cyberbullying**

Bullying has surpassed the age of “giving someone your lunch money”; great amounts of torment are released to the youngster at the mercy of a bully. Increasing amounts of torment are being released towards the victims resulting in alarmingly higher risk rates of suicide for girls between 10 to 14 years of age. There are various reasons, however most of the evidence points to excessive bullying as the leading cause. The overarching belief is that young girls often attack their victims’ characters, ostracising them whereas young boys may have a disagreement resulting in a physical fight, which in most cases, is over once the dust settles. Females tend to drag the victimizing on. They are more cunning in their methods, spreading rumors, gossip, and forming allies around and against their respective target. The American National Crime and Prevention Council recognizes that the face of a female bully is quite different from common conceptions of a classic bully. The typical girl who bullies is popular; she also usually does well in school, and can even be friends with the girls she bullies. She does not physically fight, normally, although some do. Instead, she spreads rumors, gossips, excludes others, openly shares the victims’ secrets, and teases about their hair, weight, intelligence, and athletic ability. She usually bullies in a group and others participate when she pressures her “friends” to join in on the bullying. The “mean girl” or perpetrator not only expects her friends to join in but also is quick to turn on anyone and inflict the same pain if they do not comply with her request to torment another girl. It is bullying by association (NCPC, 2014).

Examples of the types of effects bullying on the female victim include lowered or a drop in grades, low self-esteem, poor eating habits, increased reports of depression and risky behavior such as drug and alcohol use, as well as risky sexual behavior.

The situation is far from being rectified. Some parents and people feel bullying is a “normal” part of growing up, however it is clearly not acceptable that nearly 30 percent of students are either bullies or victims of bullying and 160,000 students stay home from school every day because of fear of bullying (<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org>).

Recognizing the need to find solutions and or an outlet for students to retreat to, to gain the tools necessary to empower themselves and potentially develop a greater friendship network, one in which the girl is not bullied but supported, encouraged and valued as she is was a great driving force in developing Beautiful You.

Understanding the delicate balance of mediating victims and aggressors in the same group is imperative. In the manual, there are notes to the animators, highlighting the importance of being present during sessions, listening attentively to what is being said including nonverbal cues from participants. In the controlled environment, animators will be able to discern the need for private interventions or discussions and be prepared to provide the resources necessary to support the troubled teen.

The Beautiful You program will provide a safe place for participants. Expected outcomes from “blowing the top” off on bullying and getting an open exchange will encourage members to be kind to one another. Hearing the story of a fellow participant and their experience on bullying can create empathy for those that are not affected, encouraging them to develop the ability to advocate for themselves and others. While in the Beautiful You program, members will be in a “no bullying” zone, regardless if of whether or not members are joking

about someone; if that humor can be hurtful, it will be stopped. The constant modeling will be helpful for members to see. The goal is over time, they too will not gossip or talk about others in a harmful way.

### **Body Image**

As mentioned above, there are reasons why young girls are experiencing body dissatisfaction. Many have to do with the representation of media and therefore the misrepresentation of “real” body types. The effect bullying has and the need to “fit in” and be accepted at this tender age contribute to appearance. Already covered is the stake society has placed on appearance. We are inundated with over-sexed, pristine images force-fed to us, and that those representations are the standard of beauty one must aspire to achieve. The importance of what is on the outside overshadows what is on the inside; this unrealistic trend is creating havoc for adolescents. Acceptance is not the take-away message being promoted excessive dieting and cosmetic surgery seem to be the new normal for this population. Brown and Bobkowski (2011) dove into the cycle of media and youth affirming “studies designed to articulate the mechanisms involved in the effects of media exposure to thin and muscular body ideals on disordered eating behavior point to a kind of vicious cycle especially for young media users. Early exposure to the thin body ideal contributes to body image disturbances that then increase vulnerability to subsequent thin-ideal media images” (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011, p. 102). Girls with body and eating problems seek out thin ideal and adolescent girls who are motivated by social comparison and are more likely to internalize the thin ideal, which over time can lead to disordered eating. The role media, including social media, play promote immediate gratification with “selfies” and posting status updates, getting “likes” and showing off material gains is creating a narcissistic and unrealistic society. Of that unrealistic society are young

women determined to look and perpetuate the lifestyles of the models, actors and “reality TV” stars they follow, continuing the need for altering body weights and appearance at alarming rates and choosing not to accept themselves as they are. “The media’s chief role is helping to create a social environment that (1) normalizes dieting and excessive thinness, and (2) encourages young people to repeatedly evaluate their bodies, to find them wanting, and to engage in extreme dieting, over-exercising, and other health-compromising behaviors in an effort to relieve perceptions of inadequacy” (Harrison & Hefner 2008, p. 382). Statistics from the National Eating Disorder Association further validated Harrison and Heffner, and Brown and Bobkowski’s respective, studies reporting in 2006 that in the past 70 years, national rates of incidences of all eating disorders have increased dramatically. From 1988 to 1993, the number of reported cases of bulimia in women between the ages of 10 and 39 has more than tripled. Body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem put women, including adolescents, at high risk for developing eating disorders, coupled with the pressures from peers and bullies alike to reach and maintain the “thin ideal” that is portrayed in every avenue of the media.

Reporting of body dissatisfaction has increased for both sexes, however a study by Ricciardelli and McCabe (2001) revealed that preadolescent girls report higher levels of dissatisfaction with their bodies, indicating that the unhappy thoughts, feelings of inadequacy, of not being good enough, and dissatisfaction with appearance are effecting females even younger than previously thought. “In Western societies at least, such dissatisfaction is most often expressed in relation to weight and shape. They reported specific estimates for the number of preadolescent girls who desire a thinner body size to range between 28% and 55%. Although an emphasis on reducing body weight may be necessary in some instances to improve health, in many cases those girls who desire to be thinner are classified as normal weight or even

underweight according to age-appropriate body mass index (BMI) scores” (Ricciardelli & McCabe 2001, p. 7).

According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS, 2013) report, 76,220 cosmetic surgical procedures were performed in the USA on teens aged 13 to 19 in 2012. Americans younger than 19 underwent plastic surgery, including liposuction, Botox injections, breast augmentation, and eyelid surgery. At this rate, youth are the fastest growing market segments to go under the knife. Marketing campaigns and ads are developed specifically for the youth sector (teens, tweens and under 25-year olds) promoting enchantments, alterations, and nonacceptance.

The technological era we are in is encouraging a “disconnect” from real people while “connected” around the clock. The rise of narcissistic mentalities and immediate fulfilment through social media sites are continuing the trend of self-hatred and dissatisfaction; distorted body image issues are widespread, with no one “starting the conversation.”

“Body image dissatisfaction and the pursuit of thinness among women and girls in western societies and its links with the promotion of a thin female body ideal, relatively few health promotion programs have been developed which attempt to prevent the negative health effects of these cultural expectations. The fact that unsatisfied body images is more or less synonymous with being a female, the alarms have not been sounded to right this wrong. Western cultures, including media portrayals have normalized body dissatisfaction and a female’s “rite of passage,” that nothing is being done to curb the problem of this deep rooted unhappiness and self-loathing that is unconsciously being passed down to new generations” (Moulding, 2007, p. 59). The reality is that the acceptance that women are supposed to be unhappy and weary about their weight is widespread. Alarms have not been sounded that such high rates of body image



dissatisfaction are not all right. It has somehow become normal. “Health promotion also tends to focus on the prevention of ‘disease’ and reduction of ‘risk,’ and negative body image is perhaps not seen as serious enough to warrant dedicated prevention efforts in these terms” (Moulding, 2007, p. 63).

The introduction of Beautiful You to the lives of these young susceptible participants can dissuade the perpetuation of body image dissatisfaction and promote acceptance. Moulding laments the lack of outreach programs to help adolescents, and women for that matter, understand the weight and reach body image dissatisfaction carries through the exposure of media. Beautiful You is designed primarily to fill this need. By deconstructing the media through a positive lens, the program will help motivate and boost self-esteem, body image and overall positive regard. Opening the dialog between participants will highlight that the issues they feel no one else is dealing with really are at the forefront of most women’s minds. Critiquing and reframing media portrayals through the related art portion will also reinforce the message that participants can critique industries, including the media, and see that it (the media) is a billion-dollar money-making machine.

### **Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem and body image are deeply intertwined. One of the factors attributed to low self-esteem is negative body image, and one of the factors attributed to negative body image is low self-esteem. The literature on body dissatisfaction is easily transferable to the self-esteem problems females’ encounter. Self-esteem is having confidence in one’s worth, skill set and abilities. If the message adolescents are flooded with is that they are the complete opposite, it is quite understandable why their self-esteem is compromised. The media, in addition to peer pressure and normal adolescent issues, has deprived them of a huge chunk of their self-esteem.

Constantly striving to fit in, be liked or popular, one can comprehend the tangled web of low self-esteem that these young girls are caught in. One of the components that lead to low self-esteem is self-hate. Self-hate is characterised by feelings of anger and frustration about who you are and an inability to forgive yourself for even the smallest of mistakes. Self-hate is bigger than “having a bad day” or being tough on oneself. It encompasses their personal worldview and taints their self-image in the most negative way. Self-hate is just one of the contributing factors that combined with other factors, leads to low self-esteem. Having a negative body image leads to the cycle of low self-esteem. Self-hatred can be so sabotaging that the adolescents are not capable of seeing or saying anything positive about herself. This inability can be linked to another component of the low self-esteem paradigm, perfectionism. Someone with low self-esteem tries to attain perfection. Perfectionists live with a constant sense of failure because their achievements, no matter how impressive, are never quite good enough. The reality that perfection does not exist is not in their vernacular. A perfectionist strives for flawlessness, at all costs, resulting in increased negative feelings, pressure and anxiety to reach their ideal. Compounded by these factors is that someone with low self-esteem begins to feel worthless. This deep-rooted sense of worthlessness comes from believing that somehow they are not as valuable as others are. Many times, someone with low self-esteem is a people pleaser. They are so afraid to say “no” for fear of future rejection or withdrawal of love or attention for the individual asking that they struggle to say “no” and most often do not. These factors can be present individually, they may not all flare up at once; however, once the boundaries of a person with low self-esteem is tested, multiple characteristics go into play. The negative thoughts are heaped on top of other negative thoughts effortlessly with someone with low self-esteem that in one small situation they are buried in self-hate, negative thoughts and self-loathing. The result of

navigating a situation with a person having low self-esteem is very different with positive self-regard. They are able to process the situation at hand without involving other factors or viewing themselves as failures. “Someone with high self-esteem is self-assured that they can speak up, advocate or challenge something and still be liked and accepted” (Moulding, 2007, p. 61).

Many participants do not recognize how susceptible they are to external influences, specifically when their worldview is jaded and intertwined with perceptions of others and the desire for acceptance. Desperately seeking reassurance that they are lovable, those with low self-esteem look outside themselves, to find answers to the question of being lovable. Peer pressure and different forms of risky behavior, promiscuity, drug, and alcohol use, mixed with low self-esteem play a crucial role in defining the types of activities, friends, and overall social circles these teens will select.

Raised levels of self-esteem increase productivity. One way this can be accomplished is by joining various groups, afterschool activities, and sports teams of interest. Participants will tend to have more secure and uplifting friendship circles that support and encourage them. Overall, positive self-regard, self-image and self-reliance will all be higher when self-esteem is raised. Lack of self-esteem is linked to body image dissatisfaction and depressive moods. When self-esteem goes up, body image satisfaction increases and depressive thoughts decrease (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011).

Improved levels of self-esteem affect every theme covered in the Beautiful You program. Higher levels of self-esteem will boost the participant’s confidence, self-regard, and overall view of themselves, including acceptance towards others. The benefits of the Beautiful You program are widespread. Helping young women see their value and accept themselves not only assists them but future generations; positive messages can be passed down as opposed to destructive

self-hate, negative self-talk, and harsh feelings about weight and acceptance. An anticipated outcome of the program is that the girls begin to increase their own self-esteem. Starting the conversation with members and encouraging them to open up to discuss feelings and concerns can also increase morale. By emphasising that the act of sharing is therapeutic, it helps release pent up thoughts and emotions. It can be perspective-gaining and can lead to an understanding and acceptance of situations as they arise in their lives. Moving forward in her life, the young girl possibly will not be nervous about seeking assistance via a psychologist, psychiatrist, counselor or specialist.

The benefits of higher self-esteem will be presented to participants in various ways, increased self-confidence, heightened sense of awareness, the ability to control emotions, both negative and positive; the participant will be more empathetic and altruistic, more open-minded and outgoing. The introduction of a supportive circle of friends will encourage participants to try new things and take risks in a nonthreatening manner (sports groups, theatre groups, leadership groups etc.). Members will be able to handle stressful situations better and will have learned the benefit of dialogue, articulating more efficiently, resulting in advocating for themselves and others, creating stability and being in control of their lives. Successfully steering and coping with tough situations in the adolescents' lives will boost their self-esteem, evoke pride and overall they will experience better feelings about themselves, feeding into the silo of overall positive self-regard (Moulding, 2007).

### **Diversity**

Montreal is a melting pot of religions, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Adolescents may be confused by their ancestry or be made to feel inferior or ashamed of their roots. Sometimes this is due to their social circle, neighborhood, or lack of community organizations to

promote the numerous accomplishments of members of their respective ethnicity. When underexposed to positive images about one's culture, it becomes challenging to discuss and or feel a sense of pride.

It is accepted that the teenage years are a confusing time, mostly because adolescents are trying to make sense of their unique identity. "Ethnic identity is recognized increasingly as a critical component of the self-concept and, like other aspects of identity is of particular importance during adolescence" (Roberts et al., 1999, pp. 301-302). Many times, nationality fuels their perception, shapes, and anchors their self-identity resulting in having a strong sense of character and the virtues that come with knowing their roots. Respecting diversity can also positively influence one's self-regard, self-esteem and respect for self and others. The intrinsic feelings of belonging and pride provide security to members.

Our global community has shrunk, it is not as distant as it was just a few years ago. Technologies are bringing us closer together. International students and economic exchanges with overseas business account for over 100 nationalities residing in Canada. Inclusion and sensitivity in the program are essential to its success, including helping individual members boost their self-esteem and self-regard.

Gross (1999) highlights the importance to be sensitive and welcoming to work alongside diversity. The guidelines of her chapter reference how to successfully manage and teach in classrooms. Note, these same principles can be used in the workforce to maximize efficiency from all levels of employees, decreasing employee turnover, raising commitment levels and general workplace happiness. When implemented consciously, the list below brings classroom, in this case the program, or workplace acceptance, builds trust and sets the tone for honest exchanges.

- Recognize any biases or stereotypes you may have absorbed.
- Treat each student as an individual, and respect each student for who he or she is.
- Rectify any language patterns or case examples that exclude or demean any groups.
- Do your best to be sensitive to terminology that refers to specific ethnic and cultural groups as it changes.
- Get a sense of how students feel about the cultural climate in your classroom. Tell them that you want to hear from them if any aspect of the course is making them uncomfortable.
- Introduce discussions of diversity at department meetings.
- Become more informed about the history and culture of groups other than your own.
- Convey the same level of respect and confidence in the abilities of all your students.
- Don't try to "protect" any group of students. Don't refrain from criticizing the performance of individual students in your class on account of their ethnicity or gender. And be even-handed in how you acknowledge students' good work.
- Whenever possible, select texts and readings whose language is gender-neutral and free of stereotypes, or cite the shortcomings of material that does not meet these criteria.
- Aim for an inclusive curriculum that reflects the perspectives and experiences of a pluralistic society.
- Do not assume that all students will recognize cultural, literary or historical references familiar to you.
- Bring in guest lecturers to foster diversity in your class.

- Give assignments and exams that recognize students' diverse backgrounds and special interests. (Gross, 1999, pp. 4-9).

The ability to be genuinely inclusive and welcoming to differences, regardless of one's value system, takes maturity, growth and open-mindedness. The Beautiful You program is centered on acceptance and tolerance; facilitators are to be mindful of this and practice these attributes, regardless of their opinions and possible trepidations.

### **Values, Boundaries, and Time Management**

**Values.** Values are a major motivational and normative basis of development of individual identity, belief systems, and behavior. Moreover, values guide social processes in interpersonal interactions. Similarly, religious beliefs and practices play a significant role in adolescent social behavior, relationships, and adjustment. Adolescent values and religiosity are typically related to cultural norms and models. Cultural factors affect what specific values and religious beliefs are endorsed by adolescents in the society and how value and religious systems direct their beliefs, decision-making, and actions during their development (Trommsdorff, Gisela Chen, & Xinyin, 2012). The excerpt above concisely identifies the role values have intertwined with culture and religion. For the basis of the Beautiful You program, religion is not a topic onto itself, while it is a huge component in respecting and accepting diversity. Culture and values like diversity are key components of the program resulting in higher levels of self-regard and internal satisfaction. One of the ways to ensure increased levels of overall satisfaction is to equip participants with the tools necessary to succeed as their respective journeys continue. Having a rooted value system creates security and lowers the opportunities youth may seek out to find acceptance. The methods in which they seek acceptance are mostly exhibited in unsafe behavior, promiscuity, drug, and alcohol abuse, etc. When youth have a sense of self, including belonging,

they have higher self-esteem, positive self-regard, and confidence, lowering their chances to seek out precarious pathways.

Having a dedicated session which animators discuss the importance of values, being firm in owning their thoughts and following their intuition including thinking about their core values and when they are being compromised, how that makes them feel and what they plan to do about it, will prepare the girls to stand up for themselves and speak up. This will give them the encouragement needed to start advocating for themselves and others. Many times the participants have such a low self-regard that they are not brave enough to speak up when they feel threatened, or if they are about to engage in something that challenges their values. By augmenting the targeted areas of the program, and making them aware that it is all right to speak up and voice concerns, the participants will be empowered.

**Boundaries.** Although boundaries have not been empirically researched for the program design and implementation of Beautiful You, a wealth of information gathered while researching the other topics comes into the forefront emphasising the need for youth to develop and honor boundaries. Values and boundaries tie in closely and I felt it was a good fit to introduce external boundaries using the participants' value system as a barometer to decisively set their individual parameters.

Without being naïve about the pressing issues youth face, as previously mentioned, young people today are seeking acceptance and the desire to fit in. This is not a new concept for today's generation; teenagers have long been pushing their boundaries, partly because of their intrinsic sense of rebellion and feeling of immortality for decades. Adolescence is equally a time of exploration and identity making; youth begin to develop their limits through experiences and



experimentation at this stage, therefore it is paramount that they have a solid structure and fixed boundaries.

Being rooted in a value system including clear boundaries allows youth to flourish and have a sense of security. Boundaries provide safety and clear expectations with consequences indicating that they and their actions are held accountable. The introduction of structure is what most participants are seeking. The establishment of boundaries in the group and encouragement for the girls to think critically about implementing their respective boundaries will help them navigate situations in which they otherwise would have been too intimidated or anxious, fearing the loss of friends or being ostracized.

Parental influence in most cases is not structured and or present. Having a program like Beautiful You which provides guidelines and addresses the importance of boundaries allows the participants to make informed decisions. The application of restrictions promotes healthy lifestyle choices and lowers risky behavior. Beautiful You is able to offer many, including a safe space, encouragement from animators and cohorts, and an outlet for the young girls to seek advice and be completely authentic with no fear of judgement. This encourages them to bring some of their situations into the group and process them and make decisions that are supported by animators to be healthy and beneficial. Once given the tools to make sound decisions, it is hoped that the young females will employ a lasting practice, that they will be able to continue to process and be mindful of their choices as they mature into adulthood.

**Time management.** Respecting the time of others and being punctual is one way the Beautiful You program emphasizes the importance of time management. Punctuality shows others that you respect yourself and what you have to offer, as well as what others have to offer. Cultural norms may influence a participant's rationale that being late is ingrained, acceptable,

and use it as a crutch. That false concept will be discussed openly with the intention that participants understand that punctuality is a mark of respect and cultivates a healthy lifelong practice.

Healthy time management builds personal and interpersonal skills, resulting in boosted self-confidence, self-reliance and positive self-regard. This is accomplished by having members set realistic timeframes. Understanding the need to schedule their lives, personal, social, academic and work, accordingly is helpful in seeking a healthy balance. The more harmonious and stable in their routine, the more able they will be to achieve, including being honest with themselves and others about their respective limits. They will experience greater levels of personal satisfaction and deeper connections in their social circles due to having adequate time to be with friends.

### **Group Dynamics**

Studies of group dynamics and human nature indicate that it is quite normal, and expected that individuals in a group will reach a level of dissatisfaction. Members may be less personally invested or unwilling to share, which can sabotage what is best for the group. Animators should be prepared for the inevitable, that conflict is not only a very common occurrence within group dynamics, but is expected. Animators will be better prepared and able to see signs of resistance immediately. They should proceed in facilitating the group, prepared that conflict will happen. The outcome and processing of the events and feelings can be very intense for the collective and, once the storm is weathered, the processing of the conflict moves the group along bringing an increased level of trust and solidarity. Those involved in the conflict will go through an interesting course; they will be challenged and they will ultimately grow through this experience.

Psychologists, human behavior specialists and counselors have been studying the process of group dynamics and the various stages of group development to for years. Formidable researchers have conducted studies on group work and various stages of group dynamics. Tuckman, Bion, Schutz, and Gibb are a few names leading the study of small group dynamics. Bruce Tuckman is possibly the most quoted for his Five Stages of Group Development: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning. These catchy headings discuss the normal trajectory of group development. Kass (2003, p. 134.) Theories of Small Group Development provided a synopsis of Tuckman's theory of group development:

Table 1

*Key characteristics of group development*

Group Development Stage	Key Characteristics	Useful Member Skills
FORMING	Hesitant participation. Exchange of functional information. Discovering boundaries and appropriate parameters. Orientation toward others and the situation.	Getting acquainted, networking. Goal setting, identifying resources. Contracting, clarifying.
STORMING	Multi-directed resistance. Formation of conflicting factions. Fluctuation of feelings. Lack of unity.	Perspective taking, assertiveness. Conflict management. Active listening, flexibility. Giving information. Giving opinions. Mediating-harmonizing.
NORMING	Development of cohesive structure. Brief indulgence in playfulness. In-group consciousness. Acceptance of others and respect for individual differences.	Feedback, encouragement. Seeking opinions, giving opinions Discernment, playfulness. Acceptance of differences. Defining the problem. Coordinating, exploring.

	Establishment of roles and relationships.	
PERFORMING	Task activity overshadows emotionality. Group becomes a sounding board off which task gets played out. Role flexibility and role distribution. Support and opportunity for experimentation and discovery. Development of interdependence of task goals and interpersonal relationships.	Decision making, problem-solving. Openness to new ideas. Role flexibility. Testing of feasibility. Supporting, encouraging. Following. Orienting and facilitating.
ADJOURNING	Nostalgic overview of events. Increased emotionality and disintegration. Expression of learning and insights. Acknowledgement of roles and contributions. Termination of duties and responsibilities.	Letting go, evaluating. Reviewing. Linking activities to outside situations, celebrating. Coordinating, giving opinions. Defining the problem.

*Tuckman's five stages of small group development (Kass, 2003, p. 134).*

### Checking-In

It is paramount that facilitators understand the various developmental stages the group will seamlessly be moving towards. One way of staying abreast with the group formation and not rigidly focusing on the stages of development is implementing a checking-in process. Checking-in provides stability to the group is by emphasizing that animators are present and equally invested in the group's development. Simply, checking-in is exactly as it sounds, taking the temperature of the group, evaluating how things are going for each individual member and the progress of the sessions. It is suggested that facilitators implement this process (as is listed in the Beautiful You program design manual) every time they meet. Checking-in can be done at

the start of every session to review and or discuss anything new arising, including and not exclusive to feelings, questions and comments from the previous week. Being consistent with the process allows group members to build trust. They will begin to feel comfortable sharing and eventually come to facilitators with ideas, comments, concerns, questions, etc. Checking-in can also be done spontaneously, uncoerced; it forces animators to stay in the present, catching nonverbal cues and intimidations, if any.

The act of checking-in creates a safe environment for the vulnerable member's; and over time, participants turn to animators and cohorts for guidance, advice, and opinions. Initially checking-in may be met with resistance; this might be one of the first times participants have adults in their lives demonstrating consideration and showing care without judgement. The program length is eight weeks intentionally because there is the possibility that questions or concerns raised may indicate that more detailed discussions are needed, resulting in more sessions.

### **Safe Environment**

A major part of the Beautiful You program is to create a safe space for members, one where they are free to express thoughts, share ideas, bring up issues and feel heard, thus leading to participant empowerment. If there are in-member intimidation, a lack of structure, or no rules in place, the membership will not move forward, impeding group and individual development. Being consistent, open and honest leaders will resonate with the girls. It is fundamental for animators to stay in the present and tuned into their sessions, creating the momentum needed to move the group forward.

## **Group Norms**

The first session, after introductions, some background information about what brings the animators to the program, the goal of the Beautiful You program will be outlined and animators should give time for participants to make a list of acceptable actions and or expectations called norms. Having the girls create the group's norms emphasizes that the program is a safe place and gives ownership of the group to the participants.

Common examples of norms include punctuality, respecting all members, and allowing participant's to speak one at a time. There will be reassurances that what happens in session, stays in session. They can expect honesty and no side-conversations. Group norms help move the collective along as they are rules that are agreed upon by the membership. Group norms can be fixed or flexible. The rules can be implemented as the group begins to navigate uncharted waters and new rules can be introduced to keep the group from derailing.

Norms may appear to be simple, however as the group moves forward, they become key to the process, protocol, cohesion, and procedure of the group.

**Goal of group work.** The overall goal of the program is to offer support to group members and give them autonomy in creating boundaries. A central objective of group work is usually to bring about change; for Beautiful You participants, changes are both intrinsic and extrinsic. The group creates the norms and develops cohesively over time, with gentle guidance from facilitators resulting in positive self-regard and an uplifting attitude towards themselves and others. It is expected, as mentioned above, that some internal conflict will occur, therefore when norms are followed to, the group is able to push through and process its differences and maintain a level of respect and unity. Individual goals will also be reached they are personal and unique, much like the respective members. Therefore, facilitators must stress the importance that the

girls be actively engaged and willing to try new things; they will be challenged and get the most from the program.

### **Adolescents and Risky Behavior**

There are myriad reasons why youth engage in risky behavior. It is a time of notable rebellion and identity-seeking, and youth at this stage also feel a level of immortality because they are “in the prime of their lives.” One risky activity young girls usually engage in is unsafe sexual practices. The “concept of low self-esteem is frequently used by youth to explain the reason(s) some ‘other’ youth engage in unsanctioned sexual behavior (e.g., promiscuity). The line of reasoning follows that youth who engage in risky behavior must naturally possess lower self-esteem, otherwise they would behave more positively (e.g., remain abstinent) or at least behave more safely (e.g., use condoms). We found that youth frequently applied the self-esteem discourse in selective ways--that is, girls and youth of lower standing (e.g., poor or unpopular youth) who engaged in risky sexual behavior were more likely to be labelled as having low self-esteem than were boys and those youth who were perceived to be of higher social standing (e.g., popular, attractive, wealthy)” (Shoveller et al., 2004, p. 54).

Attractiveness plays a role in the level of self-esteem of youth. The question of nature versus nurture is raised, regardless of the upbringing. Society favors more attractive adolescents; they are less likely to report having lower self-esteem or self-confidence. An emphasis on “self-esteem demands that the explanations for objectionable sexual behavior (e.g., sex at too early an age, sex with multiple partners, unprotected sexual intercourse) be stated in terms of risky persons (e.g., low self-esteem, self-concept, self-respect), as much as in terms of risky behavior” (Shoveller et al., 2004, p. 54).

There is a problem. The problem is seeping into the perceptions of today's youth and questioning everything they have to offer this world. We, as a society, especially in the Western world, are preoccupied with appearance and material gains without much emphasis on virtues, qualities, and personality. The problem is cyclical. The overarching tree of media, including the branches of the industry, advertising, magazines, social media, for example, all help to create the notion that we are not good enough. Seeing this problem, I wanted to do my part to help curb some of these misconceptions, and repair some of the damaged souls. These shells of young girls trying to fill themselves up to be liked and not accepting that they are good enough, made me want to take action. Being able to educate others in a way that is relevant drove me to design Beautiful You, because once the education and information is passed along, the adolescents have the opportunity to make changes, think critically and inform others.



### **Animator's Guide**

Beautiful You has been designed to delve into the various topics, as listed in the accompanying manual, to support and encourage participants to discuss the issues and express their thoughts in the mixed media art pieces intended to complement the respective topic. The goal is to invite participants to think critically and express themselves creatively. Beautiful You is also a platform for animators to be positive role models, boosting participants to create healthy relationships with other females. A major goal is to leave participants feeling empowered and celebrated to see themselves as beautiful just the way they are.

The extensive research on the topics and the schedule were carefully crafted to allow group members the chance to become accustomed to the collective, identify their individual stake in the group, and build trust with animators and fellow members.

Art pieces were chosen carefully to adhere to the conventions of group dynamics and the sensitivity of some subjects. In the Animator's Manual for the Beautiful You Program, the art pieces selected are listed including the empirically researched benefit of the respective medium. It was intentionally included in the manual and not the literature review so animators will be able to access the necessary information and tips as they prepared for the corresponding session.

Choosing a mixed-media arts program as opposed to a fixed form of expression was intentional, exposing participants to several art forms. This introduction will give the teens an opportunity to try new things—hopefully unlocking a talent and or a means of communication, expression and self-exploration.

Being open-minded helps bring new perspectives to life's situations and under the guise of discussing the particular art creation, processing and reflecting, participants will subconsciously begin the process of “meaning making,” engaging in critical thinking, resulting

in more informed decisions, creating a new pathway away from risky behaviors and one of self-expression using artistic intellectual property.

**Note to Animator**

An animator's role is to gently guide the teenagers along. The animator should permit flexibility and fluid exchanges. This is not a classroom and the teenagers are participating on their own time. While there will be a structure, as outlined below in the facilitation manual, they are not to feel any rigidity. Facilitators are to be approachable and transparent, not stern and cold.

By preference, the animators should not be teachers. Participants may be more resistant to opening up, fearing that they may be "outed" to other teachers and or administrators for the content shared. It is a fine balance, however it can be done. Many schools are restricted financially and want to run outside programs but they face a dilemma nevertheless, a successful program can be run if teachers are mindful of some elements. Suggestions for teachers to transition to facilitators include using a room that is not their classroom; the physical change can have an impact on participants. To be effective, teachers may permit students to call them by their first name during Beautiful You; this will change their role and relationship with participants. In an effort to show commitment to the group, respective facilitators may want to up a contract highlighting confidentiality. These elements will help the buy-in of the program for members. It is paramount that facilitators interact effectively and mirror women as positive role models. This strengthens their view of the role of women in their lives and encourages positive relationship building.

It is important for facilitators to communicate to participants that while art is being used as a means of expression, neither the facilitators nor the participants have to be art majors in

order to participate. Using art as a tool releases emotions and can be a unifier for the group dynamic to move forward. Truthfully, this is not a program exclusively focusing on the creativity of the participants. The spirited animations and mirrored role modeling is what will be key over the creativity of the facilitator, though it does not hurt to have a creative eye.

The following information can be turned into a flyer to advertise the Beautiful You program to schools and or community organizations. It can also be used as a helpful quick tip guide for facilitators to understand the design elements and overall scope of Beautiful You.

### **What is Beautiful You?**

Beautiful You is designed as a girls-only, mixed-media, arts-based, after-school program. Facilitators hired from outside the respective high school where it is being offered can offer it. Community centers that have many participants in the desired age range can run Beautiful You. There are a number of programs for youth, however many do not focus on augmenting young women's outlook and self-confidence. As the research indicated, societal pressures are at an all-time high and risky behaviors are flourishing resulting in a distinct need for a girls-only program.

Beautiful You is an encouraging environment where participants can share thoughts, experiences and build their personal network. The program is designed to have females emerge as leaders and turn away from potential gang affiliations or negative behaviors.

Participants may not have healthy family structures and very often turn to the streets resulting in negative peer pressure. The introduction of Beautiful You offers another option, a positive alternative to the streets and negative influences, coupled with the opportunity to express and discover themselves through new art media. Beautiful You can successfully redirect positive energy by marrying education and art expression with an end goal that participants be armed with the tools to make informed decisions and exercise critical thinking.

**Beautiful You and the Community**

The Beautiful You program fits the various missions and needs of most organisations, schools, cultural associations, and community centers by providing tools to strengthen participant's social adjustment skills through media arts and personal expression. Most organizations that run Beautiful You have a mandate that incorporates and is not exclusive to an overall intention to support and provide educational and recreational activities that build self-esteem, awareness and friendship.

**Overall Goal of the Program**

Upon completion of the Beautiful You program, participants will be equipped with the tools and techniques to make informed decisions based on the topics covered. (A detailed list of topics and accompanying artwork is presented below.) Participants would have been introduced to new means of expression and will be able to hone their skills.

Participants will realize that they are valued and not alone, recourses are available, and optimistically make strong allies that they can turn to for guidance and friendship. Many overarching goals come through the cathartic process of group sharing. Intrinsic changes come over time, upon reflection. The therapeutic process of artwork can help accelerate the internal reflection component. Objectives are attached to each topic and Short Lecture. They will be, but are not exclusive to, self-confidence, empowerment, values and boundaries, respecting diversity and being proud of cultural heritage. The program celebrates differences by highlighting the fundamental similarities we share. Acquiring new social skills and tolerance for differences are also key objectives that will be developed.

**Projected Benefits upon Completion of the Beautiful You Program**

- Sensitize girls to the dangers of gangs, hypersexualization, and other risky behaviors

- Promote critical thinking, self-awareness and assertiveness
- Build confidence and empowerment
- Strengthen goal setting and time-management skills
- Strengthen community ties
- Encourage initiative-taking to support those within their community (e.g., peer mediation, Big Sisters, volunteering.)

### **Beautiful You Program Design Elements**

**Duration:** Sessions will be two hours once weekly after school between 3:30 and 5:30 PM.

**Participation Mix:** Beautiful You is an open group. This means that there will be a sign-up sheet to participate. Beautiful You is open to teenage girls between 12 and 15. Adjustments can be made to accommodate different population age ranges if interested. The ages of 12 to 15 years can be a time of experimentation when teenage rebellion is common, compounded with hormonal changes, puberty and body changes that may be difficult to understand and cope with. At this age, many young girls can be targeted, ostracized and manipulated by older crowds, accosted, abused, sexually, physically and or mentally. The young women are susceptible to being victims of various exploitations under the pretext of “love” or “protection.” The primary focus is on positive self-image, healthy lifestyle choices and awareness. Please note, there is a section below that covers recommendations.

**Gender:** Female

**Economic Status:** Inner city, mainly social-economically challenged

**Cultural Background:** Open to all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds

**Number of Participants:** The goal is to have no fewer than six girls per session and a maximum of 12 per animator. If the interest is greater than 12, running two separate groups and or having a second animator is recommended.

**Setting:** Preferably a large space, an art room if available. There should be an area, coined The Lounge, where participants can retreat to if they need a minute and or would like to discuss privately with animators.

Should there be enough space; the warm-up and ice-breaker activities can be held in this space. In addition, follow up discussions can be in this area. Note: If space is limited, a corner can be dubbed The Lounge and the animator will know if a participant needs assistance. In an ideal situation, there is a Lounge as well as an equipped Art Room. This room should have a large table with benches where the art activities can be done, with a sink for clean-up.

**Recommendation:** If Beautiful You is held in a school, school guidance counselors, administrators, school social workers, teachers, and resource workers can recommend participants. Participants will be recommended based on prevention, as they are displaying signs of issues that may further develop into severe problems, for example, hypersexualisation, body dysmorphia, prostitution, early sexual activity, or gang initiation.

### **Parental Support**

Many participants are at risk because there is a breakdown of parental support in the household. There can be various reasons for the breakdown some include single-parent dwellings, divorce or separation proceedings, illness, shift work, the needs of another sibling trumping that of the participant, for example, illness, condition (Autism, Asperger's, assorted handicaps, etc.), parents also caring for an aging population; all these factors can lead to isolation for the student who then becomes at risk. The list provides a glimpse of some reasons

youngsters may feel isolated or unwanted. The purpose of this program is to focus on the youth. Support groups and outlets for the parent-child relationship are available, however that is not the purpose of Beautiful You.

The literature review covered many contributing factors for risky behaviors today's youth are engaged in. The role of the parents was not mentioned intentionally; the focus is on the exasperated state youth are in. Beautiful You is a youth-centered and not a family-orientated program.

### **Beautiful You Detailed Session Program Manual**

**Session 1** 110 minutes, 10 minutes for clean-up = 2-hour session

**Welcome** Beautiful You Introduction

#### **Objective of Session**

The objective of this session is to welcome participants. The format will be explained, types of activities planned, purpose of the sessions, length of sessions and desired outcomes.

#### **Note for animator**

Participants will create an art piece to see what the format will be moving forward. It is recommended that the organisation have pizza and drinks to help create a “buy in” for the program.

#### **Material Required**

- Construction paper
- Bristol Board
- Markers (assorted)
- Scissors
- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Glue and tape

#### **Physical Climate**

Lounge Area. The discussions, specifically the first session, will be held in this area. The girls will be seated comfortably, mostly in a U or L shape.



**Note to Animators**

Seating participants in a U, circle or L shape helps create an environment of trust and one without rigid leaders.

**Welcome 5 Minutes**

Introduction of facilitators, if it is a group larger than 12. Sign-up sheets will indicate the attendance. Facilitators will talk a bit about their experiences, passions, academic background and why they are motivated to work with young women.

**Introduction 5 Minutes**

Introduction of Beautiful You Program and its objectives. Show samples of art projects animators plan on making with participants. Go over the time line for the sessions.

**Group Norms Activity 10 Minutes**

In explaining the process and group expectations, we will start by setting group standards that are decided by the group. These norms will first be brainstormed on flip chart paper and recorded by the facilitators. As a group activity, the norms will then be printed onto stars that facilitators will have already cut out and taped to a Bristol Board. It can be called the “Reaching for the Stars” norm grid. If possible, leave hanging in the room at all times, otherwise put the grid up at the beginning of every session and read the norms aloud at the top of each session.

Remind participants that norms can be revisited and edited weekly.

**Ice-breaker Activity 10 minutes**

Ask all members to form a circle. Instruct each player to think of three statements including a goal about themselves. Two must be true and one has not happened yet. They share the three statements. The goal of the ice-breaker is to determine which statement is still in the

works. The group votes on which they feel it is; at the end, the girl will reveal which one was in fact a goal yet to be obtained.

**Process Questions** 5 minutes

Did you learn anything about your group mates?

Write down the goals and make them visible.

Check in with members to see how their goals are going. Highlight that facilitator's care and believe in them.

**Short Lecture Being You** 10 minutes

The important thing is to highlight being You. How wonderful, dynamic, and unique that is. Discuss stress and pressures from friends or partners. That means taking time to make decisions about life that are best for you. Follow your intuition and have a support system and or people in your life that you can bounce ideas off without the fear of being judged. Ideally, these young women will form an alliance and be able to provide positive peer support for themselves.

Discuss that the decisions made should be based on their own beliefs, value system and feelings. Their intuition is to be listened to and that we all have to set boundaries and limits for ourselves. Facilitators should interject that they too struggled or had to learn to balance friends and individuality. It normalizes the animators and creates an open dialogue with participants.

**Break** 15 minutes

Pizza is shared

**Activity** 15 minutes

Distribute Papers and markers. Group members are invited to share their definition and words that come to them for the term beauty.

Have group pass out the papers randomly and then have them read them aloud while they are recorded on flip charts by the facilitators, then have a co leader read the official definition of Beauty according to the Webster's dictionary.

Is there a flaw in this definition? What can be added? Can a new definition be made by the group?

**Activity**      20 minutes      WE IS Beautiful-1st collage

\*For details on Collage, please see Session 3

Have various magazines from a range of sources for the girls to cut from, images of people, animals, objects, places and make into an individual collage.

**Process** 10 minutes

What do you like about the collage you made? What makes them beautiful according to you and the definition we came up as a group? What feelings were triggered while you took part in this activity?

\*Inform members of the anonymous suggestion box and invite comments, concerns, questions they may have; ensure that they will be addressed.

\*Point out that the first art piece has been made.

**Closure Process Questions** 5 minutes

What did you enjoy or dislike about the first session?

How do you feel about the objectives of the program?

What did you learn or realise about today's session?

Thank the participants for coming and express how awesome they were, how unique they are and that their contribution was valued and welcomed to the group.

**Session 2** 110 minutes, 10 minutes for clean-up = 2-hour session

**Topic** Peer Pressure (focus on bullying)

### **Objectives**

Address being individual is difficult especially when other sources are encouraging them to do something or be someone they are not comfortable being. This session is designed to get a dialog going to create a sense of cohesion and trust within the group, always adhering to the norms that were established.

### **Note to Animator**

The literature review illustrate the effects of peer pressure, including cyber-bullying, has a lasting negative impact on the lives of the victims. The participants of the Beautiful You program can be selected by the school (administrator, teacher, psychologist, therapist, advisor and social workers are able to submit recommendations for participant). Therefore, some of the participants can be victims of peer pressure and or bullying. Conversely, participants can be recommended to join the group because they are the bully and or the source for negative peer pressure. Managing both bully and victim in a group requires a delicate balance. Often the bully is also holding onto a negative or traumatic experience that has led her to react and or behave in a destructive manner.

**Physical Climate** Seated in The Lounge.

### **Material**

- Construction paper
- Bristol Board
- Markers (assorted)
- Scissors

- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Glue and tape
- Pens
- Ink
- Pastels
- Paint
- Art journals

**Welcome** 15 minutes

Welcome everyone back. Ask the girls if they have any questions regarding the previous session. If there are any comments from the suggestion box, they will be addressed at this time. Ask the girls how they are feeling. Let them know what the agenda and topic is for this session.

**Ice-breaker** 10 minutes

Ask the participants to close their eyes, relax. Invite them to think about the previous week and name one or two good things that happened. After everyone has finished ask them how that made them feel.

**Process Questions** 5 minutes

How does it feel to say an accomplishment aloud? Many times, and beginning at this age, young girls start to lose their voice and may not be vocal about the good things happening. No matter how big or small, if they feel good about it, members will be there to hear and support fellow participants. This will continue to build group cohesion and trust.

This exercise also gives leaders an opportunity to get to know the participants.

**Activity** Creative Writing.

**Short Lecture** 30 minutes

High school is a tough time, in general. Teenagers are beginning to explore in a variety of outlets, creatively, sexually, academically, socially. Messages are confusing and pop culture defines trends. Mixed messages are everywhere, defining what or who is cool, mixed sexual messages, pressures to fit in and some dangers. They feel the pressure to laugh at jokes even though they are embarrassed. Television glorifies pressures, yet it is still very intimidating.

Cyberbullying is at an all-time high and awareness programs are not well advocated. Where do high school students draw the line? Do you know whom to see for help? (Distribute a list of resources). How do you say no to pressure? What are your boundaries? Why do some people bully? How can you speak up without jeopardizing your own safety?

Please note that the emphasis is to have an open discussion and focus on the content. If the conversation goes over the designated 30 minutes, be flexible. Getting participants talking is of utmost importance.

**Break** 10 Minutes

**Artwork** 30 Minutes

**Journaling**

The proposed art piece to accompany the topic of peer pressure focusing on bullying is individual journal writing. This is the first week together and group trust is not built yet. The group can be mixed with victims and instigators, resulting in tension or the fear to speak up. This is fine; the role of the animator is to navigate this carefully. Be mindful of the mix and understand if some do not want to share or speak up. It is a good time to take note of this mix, it will be indicative to some of the participants that have previously experienced bullying. Conversely, the participant that has bullied may begin to control the group. Therefore, to begin the art process, journal writing will be best suited.

**Journaling as art.** For many, journal writing is not an expression of art but for the program it is. The reason is that it is an open-writing exercise. While participants are asked to write about their experiences around bullying, they are open to artistic interpretation and can develop their writing style. Writing reveals secrets and thoughts. The intense emotional process comes when the participants begin to open up, even to themselves, and dig deeper.

**Benefits of journaling.** Journal writing can be a cathartic experience for the writer. It is a safe and private place in which thoughts and experiences can go. The various emotions participants have experienced on the topic and how they have dealt with the issue or kept it a secret can allow them to release it and move forward. The freedom of journaling might also be new for participants; the ability to freely write thoughts with no fear of it being read or graded can be initially intimidating. However, the more participants are encouraged to write, the more willing they may be to share their thoughts.

The journal entry can also be used as a foundation for another art piece; it can be developed into a poem, rap, or song. Another benefit to journaling is that participants can

explore other topics allowing them to critically think about how they can navigate challenging situations.

Animators might want to prepare questions for participants in case they are not comfortable with freely putting pen to paper and need prompts. Sample questions include, have you ever been bullied? Have you ever been a bully? How did you feel? What did you gain from that experience? If you saw someone being bullied, what would you do?

**Process 10 Minutes**

What did you learn about yourself today? Did you learn anything specific or new today? Were you able to feel that after today's discussion, you know that there are resources for you to turn to? Do you feel that you might use them, or refer someone to them?

**Closure Process Questions 10 Minutes** During the clean-up, discuss the following:

How do you feel after today's session? If you have ever bullied, someone would you think twice before it happens again? Are there other ways of communicating a possible issue? Will you be able to respect or accept the fact that not everyone has to get along? How will you deal with that?

Thank the girls for their time and let them know that you cannot wait to see them next week.



**Session 3** 110 minutes, 10 minutes for clean-up = 2-hour session

**Topic** Body Image

**Objectives**

Perfection does not exist; media images and society are force-feeding us to feel inadequate. Anorexia and bulimia are on the rise in the youth sector. More and more young people are seeking out cosmetic surgeries.

The session is structured to blow the top off “what is socially accepted.” The purpose is to highlight that each individual girl is beautiful and has amazing traits to be proud of. We will be celebrating the diversity of women, and the beauty we represent.

Facilitators are requested to be as transparent as possible, speaking about their own situations, highlighting that the girls are not alone and that we have all had to work on respecting, loving and accepting ourselves.

**Materials Required**

- Construction paper
- Bristol Board
- Markers (assorted)
- Scissors
- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Glue and tape
- Chalk
- Magazines

**AV Equipment**

\*Inquire if there is access to a SMART board; otherwise have audio-visual equipment on hand

- Screen
- Projector
- Laptop

### **Physical Climate** The Lounge

At the beginning of the session, everyone will be seated in a circle, but later, participants will work individually at separate desks to complete their projects.

#### **Welcome** 15 minutes

Welcome everyone. Ask the girls if they have any questions regarding the previous session. If there are any comments from the suggestion box, they will be addressed at this time. Ask the girls how they are feeling. Let them know what the agenda and topic is for today.

#### **Ice-Breaker** 10 minutes

Form a circle with the girls. We will have a soft rubbery ball that we will throw, in no particular order, at a random girl in the circle. They have to say something about themselves that we would not otherwise know about them.

#### **Process Questions** 5 minutes

Ask how they felt about that ice-breaker. Was it more fun than they previously thought? Did they hear anything about their friends that they did not know before?

#### **Short Lecture** 10 minutes

Body image is how people feel about their own physical appearance. Sometimes the way you think other people are judging your appearance can influence your body image. Poor body image comes from negative thoughts and feelings about your appearance, and a healthy body image is made up of thoughts and feelings that are positive. Body image is a major influence of

self-esteem, which is the way you think and feel about yourself as a person. Self-esteem is all about how much people value themselves, the pride they feel in themselves, and how worthwhile they feel. Individuals who have high self-esteem will make friends easily, are more in control of their behavior, and find pride in their actions.

**Art Activity** 20 minutes

Play Dove's Campaign for Real for Real Beauty, then show the images collected that you facilitators think are "beautiful." It is useful to show pictures of various cultures and different body types. Show the various cultures and what is considered beautiful. Highlight that our backgrounds and diversity make us unique and beautiful in themselves. Mainstream media does not acknowledge diversity to be beautiful and or socially acceptable here in North America.

Such media representations appear to have an effect on adolescents' satisfaction with their own bodies. The Beautiful You program acknowledges the constant pressure youth are subjected to via the media, pop culture and their respective peer group. A major focus on the program design is acceptance.

**Note to Animators**

The program encourages animators to divulge their struggles about acceptance and their own esteem, body image perceptions and or story for a myriad of reasons. (a) By opening up, this normalizes the animator. (b) By sharing in this experience, they are highlighting that this is a normal journey in one's life, a rite of passage. (3) Animators are there to support the teens; they can be beacons of light to offer hope, help, positive affirmations, and advice. (d) Sharing removes isolation and normalizes the group. (e) The cathartic sharing experience at the beginning of the session will build trust. Participants will feel secure in opening up to facilitators

and, over time, speaking about issues they are dealing with. (f) Transparency and sharing experiences begins a level of mentoring between the participant and animator.

The Dove Self-Esteem Project is a beneficial tool for this topic. Screened as a group, it permits easy transitions from watching the video to expressing members' own thoughts and desires.

Screening the associated online video clips from the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty can be the only art form used for the topic. It is suggested, if time permits, to possibly spread this topic over two sessions. The first can be more of a group process, discussing the Dove videos, how participants feel, and jot down on a SMART board or flip chart paper, words that are used. Please note that the flip chart paper can be displayed as art in itself.

### **Tip for Animators**

This can be a very emotional group process session; it is important that animators do check-ins with each participant. Examples include: How is the overall temperature of the group? Are there common concerns coming up that can be developed into another topic? How are the girls interacting? Are there any presenting issues? How is the overall group's cohesion developing?

It is paramount for animators to stay present and observant of body language, nonverbal and verbal cues.

### **Process on Art Activity**      10 minutes

Do you see beauty differently than the way media portrays it?

How do you wish media portrayed women differently?

### **Break** 10 minutes

### **Art Activity** 20 minutes      Collage # 2

**Collage**

The creative piece associated with the topic of body image is collage. There is no right or wrong way, however the reflective element to collage making is crucial. Ultimately, the animators want to emphasize the deconstruction of popular media's version of beauty by having the girls cut and paste what they perceive as beautiful. Animators can bind the collages into a collective magazine. The collage can be used as motivation for a poem or creative-writing piece that can further explore and describe the participant's feeling surrounding beauty. The goal of this topic, tying into the title of the program, allows the participants to see that they are absolutely beautiful the way they are.

**Benefits of Collage**

Collage-making reduces depression, releases repressed feelings and helps to navigate a story or situation that might be hard to identify or articulate. This creates connections between feelings, experiences, and communication. The act of seeing a tangible item also motivates members and is a window to one's story.

Other benefits of collage are that it requires little to no creativity or specific skill. It is a simple exercise and inexpensive. Collage-making can use different textured paper, fabric, and items that are no longer of use (flyers, magazines, etc.)

Each participant is asked to make a collage of what they consider the ideal body type and whom they consider as beautiful. They will do this by cutting out pictures from a magazine and gluing them on construction paper. Next to each picture, they will scribble a brief note explaining why they consider this person's body ideal or beautiful.

**Process Questions**    20 minutes

How do you see yourself? Do you like the way you look? Do you see people who look like you in the media? Does the media play a role in how you feel about your appearance? Does your collage look like you? If not, why not? Do you see yourself as being beautiful?

**Closure Process Questions** 10 Minutes

How can you change the way media represents us? How do you feel so far? Have things started to seem different to you?

Point out that even though media seems mostly one-sided and nontransformative, highlight the push for plus-size models, and real-size people on TV shows.

Specifically, talk about this at the end so that there is a positive reinforcement to the media. Can also leave them with an assignment to think about the ways representations of women are changing.

**Activity** Before leaving, have participants stick a piece of blank paper on their back. Have Post-its for everyone. Each participant has to walk around and put something complimentary or positive about each other. Proceed in a round-robin format. Each student has to take the paper off her back and read the words.

This is a powerful and quick activity. The format strengthens cohesion within the group by having participants read positive words from their cohorts.

**Session 4** 110 minutes, 10 minutes for clean-up =2-hour session

**Topic** Self Esteem Phenomenal Woman

**Objectives** Celebrating “Beautiful You”

Each woman is unique, beautiful, and perfect in her own way. We have to celebrate our flaws and learn to love them, because everyone is unique and beautiful for being them. It is not an easy journey but we will be using the topics that we covered in the previous sessions and highlight that the women are phenomenal in the way that they are.

**Material Required**

- Construction paper
- Bristol Board
- Markers (assorted)
- Scissors
- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Glue and tape
- Pens
- Art journals
- 5 packs of colored candies (Gummy Bears, Life Savers, M&Ms, Skittles, Jolly Ranchers)

**Welcome** 15 minutes

Welcome the girls. Ask the girls if they have any questions regarding the previous session. If there are any comments from the suggestion box, they will be addressed at this time. Ask the girls how they are feeling. Let them know what the agenda and topic is for today.

**Ice-Breaker** 10 minutes

Distribute the Gummy Bears, Life Savers, Jolly Ranchers, Skittles, M&Ms. Instruct them not to eat their candy yet. After they have chosen their candy, inform them what each candy type and color represents. The activity can be adjusted, use coloured pipe cleaners or ribbons instead of candy if there are dietary restrictions (allergies, diabetics, etc.)

On the chalkboard, write what each color represents.

Red--Favorite hobbies

Green--Favorite place on earth

Blue--Favorite memory

Yellow--Dream job

Orange--Wildcard (tell us anything about you!)

Each girl takes a turn introducing herself, beginning with her name and then saying one fact for the candy she has chosen.

**Process Questions**    10 minutes

Did you have anything in common with your classmates? Did the dream or hobby go with the perception you had of this person? If yes why? If not, why not? Are you seeing your group members differently? What has been an eye-opening experience for you? Do you feel closer to the group?

**Short Lecture**            30 Minutes

How you feel about yourself will come across in how you advocate for yourself. How you go after things in life, how far you let things go and the boundaries you set for yourself. Knowing that you are the only person that has the right to set boundaries for as far as you want to go for things in life is all about how you see yourself and how you feel. Being honest with your feelings and knowing that there is somewhere for you to go, and that one of the beautiful things



about being human is that we all desire being valued and are unique. Seeing ourselves in a high regard may not always be easy; we may think higher of ourselves for certain reasons or in specific areas but lack the balance to be overall happy with who we are.

Discuss the legacy of Dr. Maya Angelou; draw on her as a reference, her amazing story, and how accomplished she is.

**Art Activity** 5 minutes      Read Phenomenal Woman (Attached)

### **Poetry Writing**

Many artistic approaches can be used for this topic. Beautiful You's focus is to raise positive self-regard and awareness of self and treatment of others, therefore it is recommended to read Dr. Maya Angelou's Phenomenal Woman Poem.

It is paramount for the girls to see that they are not isolated and that everyone deals with something that they are not satisfied with. The key is highlighting what can be done for self-acceptance and positively change the framework the girls see themselves in. Phenomenal Woman is a powerful poem, a well-crafted piece of acceptance and confidence in verse and prose.

**Note to animators:** The poem is written very clearly from a woman's perspective addressing a male audience. The intention is not to isolate or silence members, therefore discuss bisexuality, being a lesbian, transgender, etc. When they are writing their verse, it is perfectly fine if they want to address a female audience.

Dr. Angelou's inspiring story is one that gives hope, teaches love, acceptance and understanding. Her legacy is humility personified. Sharing her story acts as a unifier. The poem is powerful because all members can relate to it. Participants should be encouraged to research Dr. Angelou on their own time.

After hearing the poem, the participants will be asked to write their own verse or poem of Phenomenal Woman. It will unlock their creativity, encouraging students to celebrate their flaws and unique qualities. That is the first step to acceptance. Reading their work aloud will connect the group further. It is recommended that the animators also participate in this writing exercise, normalizing facilitators and opening the channels of communication.

### **Benefits of Poetry**

Writing poetry is a way to grow emotionally and intellectually, as language articulates and frames experience figuratively. Writing poetry is also a natural process, serving people's instinctive need to explain themselves, their lives, their opinion and their view to the reader. A desire to be understood is particularly strong during adolescence. Writing poetry is concrete, producing a source of pride and recognition. It opens the door to questions about life's meaning.

Writing poetry is free and can remain a private expression or shared. It gives the writer creative control and does not require grammatical rules or conventions to be followed. It is timeless, helping those who use the tool of poetry writing continue self-exploration, and healing. The following is a detailed list of benefits on writing poetry:

- Poetry provides a cultural context and expressive model that supports openness and emotional honesty.
- People who write poetry feel listened to and not judged.
- People who write poetry exercise insight and sensitivity, sometimes in profound and illuminating ways.
- The act of creating poetry reinforces ego strengths, including realizations about who I am, what I think, what my life has been like, what I want, and what I can accomplish.
- Writing poetry is a natural process for people in pain.

- Writing poetry is a natural process for people who are developing an identity and/or seeking understanding.
- Poetry provides a safe and private experience, with individual control over the outcome.
- Poetry provides a basis for greater interpersonal communication about personal issues and for stronger relationships.
- People who write poetry use a variety of cognitive skills.
- In an appropriately structured program, poetry can be used by individuals with severe emotional difficulties and/or poor cognitive skills.
- Writing a poem is a concrete accomplishment.
- A person's purpose in writing a poem can be altruistic, educational, inspirational, etc.
- The accomplishment of a poem can be publicly recognized by saving, sharing, reading, posting, publishing, etc.
- The act of creating poetry is joyful and self-reinforcing, even when the content is about a sad or traumatic event.
- People who write poetry can become more in touch with larger issues of life's meaning and connectedness, developing a spiritual appreciation of life. (Pongo Teen Writing, 2009, website)

The act of writing a poem is a skill that people can use to help themselves over and over again throughout a lifetime.

**Break** 10 Minutes

**Art Activity** 30 minutes

The girls will be writing their own verse to Phenomenal Woman. They have the choice of writing an additional verse or adapting it to the poem. Participants can write in their art journals and transfer the piece onto single art sheets. Facilitators will copy and laminate the sheets to collate a mini magazine. Participants will be given a copy at the end as a keepsake.

**Process on Art Activity**      5 Minutes

How do you feel about writing how phenomenal you are? What stands out in your mind about this activity? Did you like it?

**Mid-session evaluation** (see attached)

Take the opportunity to take the pulse of the group. Upon review, changes can be made to better accommodate group needs.

**Closure Questions** Ask if there is anything members would like to add. Due to the evaluation, the process and closure portion will be done in tandem. Have they ever heard Phenomenal Woman before? What stood out when it was being read? How can you relate to the poem?

**Session 5** 110 minutes, 10 minutes for clean-up =2 hour session

**Topic** Diversity Celebrate Beautiful You and all the differences that make us different

**Objectives** Celebrating “Beautiful You” and the differences that make us different. Our differences, various backgrounds, experiences, all make us uniquely beautiful and we need to know where we come from in order to know where we are headed.

**Material Required**

- Construction paper
- Markers (assorted)
- Scissors
- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Glue and tape
- Tissue paper
- Beads
- Hot glue gun with glue sticks
- Bristol Board or stretched canvas
- Pastels
- Oil paints
- Paints
- Ink
- Tissues and fabric

**Physical Climate** The lounge area for the teens is where we will have the ice-breaker and discussion.

**Welcome** 15 minutes

Welcome the participants. Ask the girls if they have any questions regarding the previous session. If there are any comments from the suggestion box, they will be addressed at this time. Ask the girls how they are feeling. Let them know what the agenda and topic is for today.

**Ice-Breaker** 10 minutes

The String Game is an introduction icebreaker game and conversation starter that allows people to tell others about themselves. Choose any piece of string. Have the member pull on it and separate it from the other pieces of string. Ask them to introduce themselves as they slowly wind the piece of string around their index finger. The fun part of this ice-breaker game is that some of the strings are extremely long, so participants have to talk about themselves for a long time. This is a good way to get everyone to start talking. The girls might find out something interesting or new.

**Process Questions** 5 minutes

Did you learn anything about your group members? Did you have a good time with the activity?

**Short Lecture** 30 minutes

What does it feel like to be you? What is your background, and how does that make you different, unique, and special? Can you tell us some things about where you come from? Are there some customs that you really like? What foods represent your country? Have you ever visited your home country? How did it feel? What clothing or special outfits come from your

culture? Have you ever worn them? For what occasion? Did it make you feel closer to your community?

**Art Activity # 1** Print out the flags of the various countries the participants come from. Also, print out the Canadian flag. Stick the Canadian flag in the center of the Bristol Board. Stick the other flags around it. Highlight that this is what makes Canada so unique and special, that we are all welcome, celebrated, which makes us all respect our diversity, and is what makes Canadian identity.

\*This art piece is very simple and straightforward. This session concentrates more on the celebration of differences and the global community we are a part of. The shared experience brings the participants closer. It is not a very private topic or one that brings shame or unwillingness to share, as some other topics may, therefore take the opportunity to build, connect and share with the girls. Ultimately, it unifies that their differences are what makes them uniquely Canadian. It is a good time to connect the members through gender, speak about having a shared female experience. This is a universal unifier.

## **Art Activity # 2**

### **Mandala**

The art piece that is associated with this topic is Mandala. The Sanskrit word “Mandala (pronunciation mon- dah- lah) means, “circle.” A Mandala represents wholeness, a cosmic diagram reminding us of our relation to infinity, extending beyond and within our bodies and minds. Mandalas are circular designs symbolizing the notion that life is never ending. Many mandalas have spiritual significance to an individual or group of individuals. Hindus were one of the first people to use a mandala as a spiritual tool, but the mandalas most individuals are familiar with, are ones made by Buddhists” (Diker, *n.d*).

**Benefits of Mandalas** the circular nature of Mandalas are calming, “creating mandalas as art therapy can be a wonderful activity for centering, meditation, emotional expression, and self-soothing. Many people find the process of drawing and filling in the mandala to be very calming. In addition, the structure of the circle serves both to provide a sense of containment and to decrease anxiety. Seeing a blank, rectangular sheet of paper can for some people stir up anxiety around expectations that they make a “good” picture or cause them to feel that they do not know where to start. The circle gives you a starting place and reminds you that this is not a typical drawing” (Mehlmakulu, 2012. <http://creativityintherapy.blogspot.ca>). Upon discussing the process of making their group mandala, the members should be inspired. The tangible piece brings a sense of accomplishment.

**Mandalas and diversity.** Members will work in groups of four, creating a mandala. The objective is to incorporate everyone’s creativity, on a harmonious piece of artwork. This collective piece is a way to highlight working together with diversity. As with most art therapy, it is not about the final product but about the journey. Members will be asked to discuss what the process was like and what they are taking away from it.

### **Process Questions**

How was it like to create something in a group? Were you all heard? Were you invited to share your thoughts? How were you able to express your individuality in the piece?



**Session 6** 110 minutes, 10 minutes for clean-up = 2-hour session

**Topic** Values and Boundaries

**Objective** What are values? How important is it for us to have certain standards and set boundaries for ourselves? Who determines how valuable we are? Is it society, our families or our friends? We will be looking at the understanding of valuing ourselves not by others' standards but by our own. We will look at setting boundaries, my space, your space, empty space or common space. In knowing our values and respecting ours and others' boundaries, together we will be able to build a degree of trust for one another.

**Material Required**

- Construction paper
- Bristol Board
- Markers (assorted)
- Scissors
- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Glue and tape
- Pens
- Magazines (Assorted)

**Welcome** 10 minutes

Welcome participants. Ask the girls if they have any questions regarding the previous session. If there are any comments from the suggestion box, they will be addressed at this time. Ask the girls how they are feeling. Let them know what the agenda and topic is for today.

**Ice-breaker** 15 minutes

**Trust Walk** Members pair up. One girl will be blindfolded and led for a walk by her partner.

Switch and do the same.

**Process Questions** 10 minutes

How did that make you feel? On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the highest, what was your level of trust? Did you trust your leader?

**Short Lecture** 10 minutes

What are values? How you value yourself will be the determining factor that others will use to value who you are. The perception you have of yourself might not necessarily be the perception that your peers will have of you. We will look at how we can convey to others our true value without being pushy and demanding. What are boundaries? It is important to respect each other's boundaries; first, we have to set boundaries for ourselves as a benchmark. As we grow older, they will be reinforced.

**Break** 10 minutes

**Art Activity** Free Art Expression 30 minutes

Students will have the opportunity to pick the medium of their choice. They can choose to write in their journal or create a poem. They will have access to magazines and can make a collage of images they associate with the discussion or how they interpret the lecture. Paintings and drawings can also be made for this activity. The freedom to pick their respective medium furthermore shows them that they are capable of expression and should be permitted to do so as they see fit. This liberty is fitting at this stage of the program. The students have tried new media and it is possible that they would like to do an activity again and or try one that they have not done yet (e.g., painting, drawing).

During the art activity, facilitators should discuss that their intuition should never be silenced or ignored. Participants should be encouraged to have a circle of people that will not pressure them, and accept them as they are, to strengthen and uplift them, not put them down or make fun of them. This also ties in together with previous session topics.

**Process on Art Activity**      5 minutes

How important is it to have values?

Do you believe values determine who we are?

What is the importance of setting boundaries?

**Closure Questions**

What did you discover about yourself during this session? What affected or influenced you the most about this session? What will you take away with you from this session?

Prior to leaving, begin to talk to members about the final session. Prepare for the adjourning phase. If the participants are interested, they can bring in foods and music from their home country as a sample for a closure party. Let them know that final arrangements will be sorted out next session, participant ideas are welcome, and decisions will be made as a group.

**Session 7** 110 minutes, 10 minutes for clean-up = 2-hour session

**Topic** Time Management

**Objectives** It is important for us to know and understand the importance of time in everything we do. This is never an easy tool to work with, but, with practice, we can make it perfect. We will look at time with schoolwork, for friends and family, on time for appointments.

**Material Required**

- Construction paper
- Bristol Board
- Markers (assorted)
- Scissors
- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Glue and tape
- Pens
- One day stencil or planner

**Welcome** 15 minutes

Welcome the participants. Ask if they have any questions regarding the previous session. If there are any comments from the suggestion box, they will be addressed at this time. Ask the girls how they are feeling. Let them know what the agenda and topic is for today.

**Ice-breaker** 15 Minutes

Set up chairs in a circle. Members will be rotating in a round robin format. Like a speed-dating concept, they are to share something of interest that made them feel beautiful or proud of what happened through the day or week. The challenge is to say something different every time.

**Process Questions** 5 minutes

How did that make you feel? What did you enjoy most about sharing? Did you have enough time to learn anything about your partner?

\*Facilitator writes some of these things on the SMART board or flip chart paper. Let participants see the words they use.

**Short Lecture** 10 minutes

Time management is an effective way to work with a schedule. We are all familiar with a schedule. We have one for school, to balance work, appointments, and our social lives.

However, are we being honest? Has being late become accepted? How do you feel when someone has you waiting? Do you allocate enough time for travel? Are you honest with how much you can handle in one-day, the week or weekend? Are your needs being met or silenced so you can be with others? Can you say no?

We will look at ways to manage time, to feel less pressured and more in control.

Highlighting that being on time shows huge levels of respect for self and others. Being punctual makes for a more cohesive and productive meeting, even if it is leisurely. Being on time shows friends that the time you spend together is valuable and respected.

Animators discuss the importance of cultivating positive habits. Refining time management skills will be useful in social circles, work and academic activities.

**Break** 10 minutes**Art Activity** 20 minutes

Schedule making. Everyone will be involved in this activity including animators. Transparency is key to mirroring and modeling. Creating a schedule gives participants insight that adults also have to be prepared and be forward thinking.

**Process on Activity** 10 minutes

Review the individual schedules. Can changes be made to have a more comprehensive and practical schedule? Open the discussion for feedback from the group.

**Closure Questions**

What did you learn about time management? Is making a schedule something you could do on a regular basis? Did you find it easy to make a schedule? What did you learn from this session?

Leave some time for the details of the final session to be finalized. Will the event be closed, exclusive to the group or open? Teachers, friends and family can be invited. Or will the girls prefer to have a session to process their learnings and share thoughts?

The membership takes ownership by deciding how to reflect on the program. It is also possible to split the time, members only at first and invite guests for a certain time. Regardless of the decision, the collection of art pieces will be displayed. The display allows for reflection, conversation and highlights the depth and volume of material they were able to cover.

**Session 8** Closure no artwork, discussion, process and feedback =2 hours,

**Topic** End of the Road

**Materials Required**

- Pens
- Post-It
- Flip chart paper
- Tape
- Food (It can be pot-luck style if the group prefers to have a cultural bazaar or pizza. Pizza is easy to share and two different types will be able to feed the group).

\*Note: organizations or school may have small budgets for the closure party. Inquire if they will be able to absorb the costs. If not, encourage members to bring in items.

**Icebreaker** 10 minutes

Have participants once again tape a piece of paper to their back. On Post-it paper, have the members stick one thing that they learned or admired about the person on their back.

Proceed in a round robin format.

**Process of Activity** 20 minutes

Each participant reads her paper. How does reading messages like this make you feel? Do you believe them? Do you also see yourself that way?

Before moving forward invite participants to share thoughts or comments that, they would like to share about others. Facilitators should start by going around and sharing something they learned or appreciated from their time with each member.

\*Note: this might be an emotional piece for members and facilitators. Many have never heard positive uplifting qualities about them. Allow the membership to share, do not rush.

**Break** 10 minutes

It is important to leave them to process the things being said about them.

**Return to Group** 30 minutes

Pizza or other food is shared. This is a light time. Encourage the students to walk around and revisit their artwork. Music can be played.

**Process Questions** 10 minutes

How does it feel to see everything? Do you like certain pieces more than others? Will you continue to create? Is there an art medium you prefer?

**Closure Discussion** 20 minutes

This is the end of the road. As a collective, a safe space has been created. Thoughts and feelings have been shared. Traditional views were challenged and an emphasis on creating genuine and uplifting relationships was stressed. This program is meant to change you. Did it? Do you see things a bit differently? If so, what? How? Will you continue to challenge conventional stereotypes of beauty? What is different about how you see things? Are there any differences in your friendships?

There are a lot of topics and sub-topics that are present. Individual groups have a myriad of unique issues to process. If there were a known conflict, animators can use their judgement. Is it a good time to bring it up, process it? What inside jokes or learning's did the group go through together, reminisce.

The take home message for facilitators is to take the time to process and leave each member feeling valued and that their input made Beautiful You what it was.

**Departure Activity** 10 minutes

Sit in a circle. Pass out two pieces of paper. On one paper, instruct participants to write something that they are discarding after participating in Beautiful You. Examples include a



misconception, feeling, experience that they are consciously not taking with them any longer. On the other, write one thing that they are keeping from this experience. Examples include a feeling, a message, an art experience, a discussion.

Place a trash can in the center of the circle. Each girl has to get up and toss the paper they are leaving behind. They should keep the paper they want in a safe place. (Examples include a wallet, purse, or agenda).

**Process and Final Words** 10 minutes

What was that like? How does it feel to let something go and replace it with something so positive? Is there anything that you would like to add or share?

Thank the participants again and animators can let the girls know how this experience has influenced, changed or stretched them.

Distribute the pieces or collections of work that the members get to keep.

\*Note: if it is an open closure session, invite the guests to share their feelings. Have they noticed a difference in the participants? Did their relationship evolve, or change? How?

### Resource List for Beautiful Participants

Some books are useful for teens. The following is a small sample that can be useful. It is suggested that facilitators have some references or books on hand every session. If the program is run in, a school inquire if the library has any of the books. If it is an organization inquire if they can get a collection to be displayed in a public space.

Note, if the program is run longer than eight sessions, a field trip to a library is a great way to explore how members can unlock the knowledge of books and using public services. A field-trip permission form is attached.

### Suggested Readings

1. Espeland, P. (2003). *Life lists for teens: Tips, steps, hints, and how-to's for growing up, getting along, learning, and having fun*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.
2. McGraw, J. (2000). *Life strategies for teens*. Whitby, ON: Fireside.
3. Carlson, R. (2000). *Don't sweat the small stuff for teens*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
4. Graham, S. (2000). *Teens can make it happen nine steps for success*. Whitby, ON: Fireside.
5. Bachel, B. (2007). *What do you really want?: How to set a goal and go for it! A guide for teens*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.
6. Leslie, R. (2003). *Success express for teens: 50 life-changing activities*. Houston, TX: Bayou.
7. Covey, S. (2006). *The 6 most important decisions you'll ever make: A guide for teens*. Whitby, ON: Fireside.
8. Lewis, B. (1998). *What do you stand for? For teens: A guide to building character*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.
9. Covey, S. (1998). *The 7 habits of highly effective teens*. Whitby, ON: Fireside.

**Participant Evaluation Form**

Outcome-Evaluation: Goals and objectives of the program

Were the goals and objectives of Beautiful You clear?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ somewhat \_\_\_\_\_

Did the program meet its objectives?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ somewhat \_\_\_\_\_

Impact-evaluation (Think about the impact Beautiful You has had on you)

Did you learn anything new from this program?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ somewhat \_\_\_\_\_

Do you notice a change in your behavior after participating in this program?

If yes, what is the change \_\_\_\_\_

If not, why not \_\_\_\_\_

Did Beautiful You meet your expectations?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ somewhat \_\_\_\_\_

### Co-Facilitator Evaluation

Knowledge of the program

\_\_\_\_\_ :    Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :    Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

Punctual and efficient

\_\_\_\_\_ :    Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :    Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

Willingness to help

\_\_\_\_\_ :    Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ :    Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

## Beautiful You

### Animator Weekly Session Log

Date:	Theme:
Location:	Participating school or organisation:
Animator(s):	Number of students present:
Guest speaker(s):	Outing:
Artwork:	Ice-breakers:

### Process Questions

Successes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Challenges: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Unexpected outcomes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did the participants demonstrate their learning of the theme?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was it a safe space for all participants? \_\_\_\_\_

What, if any, intervention(s) were necessary, and how was this addressed?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Activity Logistics

Preparation time

Enough time for session

Adequacy of materials

Participants seemed . . . ? Please be descriptive and feel free to elaborate:

<b>Inattentive</b>
<b>Indifferent</b>
<b>Interested</b>
<b>Engaged</b>
<b>Inquisitive</b>
<b>Excited</b>
<b>Helpful</b>
<b>Other</b>

<b>Group Dynamics</b>					
	<b>1 (low)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 (high)</b>
<b>Group Effort</b>					
<b>Group Cohesion</b>					
<b>Participation &amp; Engagement</b>					
<b>Beginning</b>					
<b>End</b>					
<b>Overall</b>					
<b>Respect</b>					

<b>For others</b>					
<b>For rules</b>					
<b>For animators</b>					
<b>For guests</b>					

Additional comments:

### Resource List

- CLSC [www.santemontreal.qc.ca](http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca)
- Kids Help Phone [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- Boys and Girls Club [www.bgccan.com/EN/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.bgccan.com/EN/Pages/default.aspx)
- Children's Hospital [www.thechildren.com](http://www.thechildren.com)
- Carrefour Jeunesse [www.cjemontreal.org](http://www.cjemontreal.org)
- Santé Montreal [www.santemontreal.qc.ca/en](http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/en)
- LGBTQ Youth Center [www.lgbtqyouthcentre.ca/resources/](http://www.lgbtqyouthcentre.ca/resources/)
- Project 10 [www.p10.qc.ca](http://www.p10.qc.ca)
- Sun Youth Organisation [www.sunyouthorg.com/](http://www.sunyouthorg.com/)
- Therapists <http://therapists.psychologytoday.com>
- Girls Action Foundation [www.girlsactionfoundation.ca](http://www.girlsactionfoundation.ca)
- Batshaw Youth Protection [www.batshaw.qc.ca/en](http://www.batshaw.qc.ca/en)

School Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Local CLSC: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Animator's Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Contacts (1): \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Contacts (2): \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Contacts (3): \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Contacts (4): \_\_\_\_\_



**Phenomenal Woman**

Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size.

But when I start to tell them, they think I'm telling lies. I say, it's in the reach of my arms the span of my hips, the stride of my step, the curl of my lips.

I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me.

I walk into a room just as cool as you please, and to a man, the fellows stand or fall down on their knees. Then they swarm around me, a hive of honey bees. I say, it's the fire in my eyes, And the flash of my teeth, The swing in my waist, And the joy in my feet.

I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me.

Men themselves have wondered. What they see in me. They try so much but they can't touch my inner mystery. When I try to show them they say they still can't see. I say, it's in the arch of my back, the sun of my smile, the ride of my breasts, the grace of my style.

I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me.

Now you understand just why my head's not bowed. I don't shout or jump about or have to talk real loud. When you see me passing it ought to make you proud. I say, it's in the click of my heels, the bend of my hair, the palm of my hand, the need of my care,

'Cause I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me.

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