



**Changing Worlds**  
**Changing Bodies**  
Youth Health  
**TOOLKIT**

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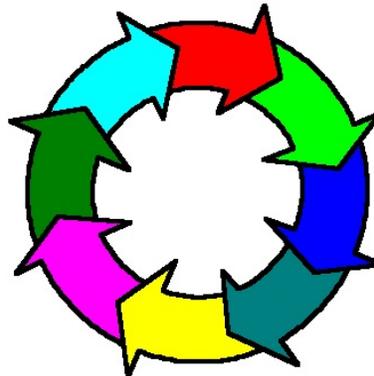
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## Introduction



Adolescence is a transitional period of human development, wherein youth leave the realm of childhood and emerge as growing adults. Adolescents' bodies, families, friends, schools, and the larger society, of which they are a part, demand that they change and mature. The great levels of expectation coupled with their natural physical, emotional, and social development can make adolescence a confusing period. For immigrant and refugee youth, the additional stress of learning a new language and finding one's place in a new society compounds the confusion of adolescence. Recognizing the scope and significance of these developmental changes is the first step in facilitating healthier adolescents.

Through committed dedication to empowering youth to take control of their health, this Youth Health Toolkit was created to assist immigrant and refugee adolescents in their exploration of what it means to be healthy. This toolkit contains information and pedagogy concerning those aspects of life that carry significance in adolescence: mental, physical, and social health. The activities in this toolkit should be performed *with* youth at their level, on their journey toward self-realization. Use them to offer adolescents guidance and support, not mere proscriptions.

Be open and kind. Compassion is often more helpful than facts and information. Validate youths' autonomy. Respect their ideas, values, and decisions, but do not shy away from sharing your knowledge and experience. Treating adolescents as equals in this way will maximize their learning and your efficacy as a facilitator. Keep learning. Ask questions and practice empathy. Seeing the world from their perspective will give the activities and education more depth and reason. Lastly, have fun! Do not be afraid to be silly, goofy, or flamboyant. Youth will respond to your candid nature.

This toolkit includes dynamic, interactive, and fun activities that you can use to empower youth to make better decisions and lead fuller, healthier lives!

## How To Use This Toolkit

The sections of this toolkit are meant to guide you as you choose the activities for your youth group's lesson plan. They are grouped according to topic to help you assemble a lesson plan that suits your adolescents' needs and experiences. The following is an example lesson plan with suggested lesson plan divisions. You may follow this template, but we encourage you to adapt it to your group's unique needs. See the appendix at the end of this toolkit for an example lesson plan.

### Title

This is the topic on which you would like to focus the lesson plan.

### Set Up

Arrive at least 30 minutes before you expect the first adolescent to arrive. This will give you the chance to set up any activities and materials as well as deal with any issues if they arise. Most importantly, because you will already be set up when the youth arrive, you will have more opportunities to greet them individually and informally talk with them as they arrive.

### Arriving

As the teens arrive, set the tone of the group. Play music in the background that the teens enjoy. Have snacks ready for them to eat. These kinds of preparations help the teens transition into the group setting.

### Breaking the Ice / Warming Up

Using the "Building Community" section of this toolkit, choose one or more icebreaker games or bonding activities to warm the adolescents up for the lesson plan activities that follow.

### The Lesson

This should be the main focus of your lesson plan. Using the various topic-sections of this toolkit, choose the activities that you feel adequately address the topic of the lesson plan.

### Reflection

Using the "Wrapping Up" discussion template from each of the topic-sections in this toolkit, use this time to reflect on the day's activities with the teens.

### Conclusion

This is the final section of the lesson plan. Say goodbye to the youth and remind them when the group will meet again. After they have left, or with the teens' help, clean up the materials you used for each of the lesson plan's activities.

## Section One: Building Community



The topics that follow in this health toolkit can be taboo and uncomfortable to openly talk about, especially for adolescents for whom avoiding embarrassment in social situations is of the utmost importance. Compounding this inevitable awkwardness are the cultural differences that make adjusting to life in the United States all the more difficult for refugee and immigrant youth.

One way to alleviate young participants' social anxiety is to create an open, fun, safe, and respectful environment of their peers. This can be a difficult goal to reach. It may take several sessions for the adolescent participants to feel comfortable enough to honestly share their feelings and experiences. During those introductory sessions, it should be the active goal of the facilitators to build a safe and nurturing environment conducive to the youths' learning and sensitive to their potential awkwardness.

### Icebreaker Games

Icebreaker games are those that help young participants feel more comfortable in their situation and environment. While fun, active, and engaging, these general games encourage participation and creativity, helping youth take the risks necessary to join a new social setting. It should be noted that many of these games involve participants physically touching one another. For some immigrant and refugee youth, touching members of the opposite sex in public is culturally prohibited. Facilitators should be aware of their youths' cultural restrictions as they participate in the following games.

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#### **Big Booty**

*Materials: None*  
[5 – 10 minutes]

Objective:

- ❖ An active and exciting rhythmic icebreaker game

Instructions:

1. The participants should stand in a circle. The participant standing directly to the left of the facilitator will be “Number 1,” the next participant to the left “Number 2,” and so on until each participant has a number. The facilitator is “Big Booty.” Before each round begins, the participants should state their number aloud in turn around the circle.
2. The facilitator should begin the four-count beat for the game: 1 two-handed pat on the thigh, 1 clap, 1 two-handed pat on the thigh, 1 clap. Each participant has to simultaneously keep the rhythm.
3. The facilitator should begin the chant in time: “Big Booty, Big Booty, Big Booty, Oh Yeah!, Big Booty”
4. The facilitator should begin each round by saying: “Big Booty, Number X,” inserting the number of the participant the facilitator to whom wishes to pass the turn.
5. That participant then says his or her own number followed by the number of the participant he or she wishes to pass to: “Number X, Number Y.”
6. If a participant cannot maintain the rhythm or calls out an incorrect number, he or she is out. The “out” participant moves to the position at the end of the circle; the spot directly to the right of the facilitator. The other participants should then move up along the circle, renumbering themselves so that the “out” participant is the last number. At this point, the group repeats the process that began at Step 2. The participants are trying to become “Big Booty” for the longest amount of time.

Potential Concerns:

- ❖ If any of the participants are uncomfortable with being called “Big Booty,” the game can be changed to “Big Beauty,” “Big Cutie,” etc.

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**Build-a-Groove**

*Materials: Boom Box, Dance Music*  
[10 – 15 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An active and creative team-building, icebreaker game
- ❖ Participants practice effective communication and collaboration in order to create an original dance

Instructions:

1. This game requires a large open space. The participants should break into small groups of two (three, if necessary).
2. The facilitator should instruct each pair (or threesome) to come up with a four-count (or eight-count) dance move to the music.
3. After practicing the steps a few times, the facilitator should direct the pairs to join with one other pair to make small groups of four (or five, etc.). Each pair must teach the other pair in their small group their dance move, creating a longer and more elaborate pattern.
4. After the small groups have practiced their dance moves, the facilitators should direct the group into two large groups. The participants in the groups should teach each other their dance steps.

5. After some time to practice, the facilitator should direct the entire group into a large circle. Each of the two groups should present their dance to the rest of the participants, a kind of “show down” of dancers.

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### **The Handshake**

*Materials: None*

[5 – 10 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An active and creative team-building, icebreaker game
- ❖ Participants practice effective communication and collaboration in order to create an original handshake

Instructions:

1. The participants should break into small groups of two (three, if necessary). Each pair should create an original handshake.
2. After practicing the handshake a few times, the facilitator should direct the pairs to join with one other pair to make small groups of four (or five, etc.). Each pair must teach the other pair in their small group their handshake, creating a longer and more elaborate handshake.
3. After the small groups have practiced their handshakes, the facilitators should direct the group into a large circle.
4. In turn, the small groups should share their handshake with the rest of the group in a kind of “show down.”

Potential Concerns:

- ❖ For those participants whose culture prohibits touching members of the opposite sex in public, they may be paired with another, same-sex participant.

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### **The Human Knot**

*Materials: None*

[10 – 15 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An active team-building, icebreaker game
- ❖ Participants must effectively communicate and negotiate in order to untangle themselves
- ❖ Close physical proximity stretches participants’ comfort zones

Instructions:

1. The participants should stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder.
2. Each participant should hold out her or his right hand and grab the right hand of another, non-adjacent participant.
3. Each participant should then hold out his or her left hand and grab the left hand of another, different, non-adjacent participant.

4. The participants must then negotiate their positions in order to untangle themselves without releasing hands, forming one large circle or a few small circles.

Possible Variations:

- ❖ Follow the instructions as written above except that the participants are not allowed to speak while negotiating their positions. This exercise can then illustrate the importance of nonverbal expression in communication.

Potential Concerns:

- ❖ For those participants whose culture prohibits touching members of the opposite sex in public, they may be paired with another, same-sex participant.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did it feel to be so close to the other participants? Were you uncomfortable? How did those feelings help or hurt you as you tried to untangle yourselves?
2. How did you talk to each other during the activity? Did some ways work better than others?
3. If one person tried to figure the knot out by him- or herself, could it work? Why is teamwork so important in this activity?

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### **Non-Competitive Musical Chairs**

*Materials: Boom Box, Music, Chairs*

[5 – 10 minutes]

Objective:

- ❖ An active icebreaker game with a new, non-competitive twist to an old game
- ❖ Find out how few chairs can accommodate SAFELY all the participants in the game

Instructions:

1. There should be one less chair than the number of participants. The chairs can be set up in a circle formation, or in two long rows, chairs back to back.
2. The participants should walk around the chairs while music plays.
3. The facilitator should stop the music at random intervals. When the music stops, the participants have 10 seconds to find a place on the chairs so their feet are not touching the ground. This may mean sitting on each others' laps, standing on the chairs, or standing on the rungs of the chairs. The facilitator should encourage the teens to work together to get everyone's feet up off the floor in 10 seconds.
4. After each round, the facilitator should remove one chair but ALL the participants should remain in the game.
5. When the facilitator starts the music again, the participants walk around the chairs (repeat steps 1 – 4).
6. The facilitator should monitor the safety level of the game and end it when it appears that the minimum number of chairs that can accommodate the number of participants has been achieved

Discussion Questions:

1. How did this version of Musical Chairs compare with the traditional version?
2. Which game was more fun? Why?

**Please, Baby, Please**

*Materials: None*

[5 – 10 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A creative icebreaker game
- ❖ Signature phrase stretches participants' comfort zones
- ❖ Highlights each participants' smile

Instructions:

1. The participants should stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. The facilitator should start in the middle of the circle as the "it" person.
2. The "it" person must choose someone in the circle, walk up to him or her, and say to that chosen person: "I love you baby! Would you please, please smile?" The "it" person should try to make the chosen person smile while saying the phrase. The "it" person has freedom of movement, but cannot touch the chosen person.
3. The chosen person must respond: "I love you baby, but I just can't smile." The chosen person must stand still in their spot and try not to smile. The rest of the participants should serve as the judge for what constitutes a smile.
4. If the chosen person does indeed smile, he or she becomes the "it" person and the former "it" person joins the circle. If the chosen person does not smile, the "it" person must choose another participant in the circle and attempt to make him or her smile.

Possible Variations:

- ❖ Follow the instructions as written above except that the "it" person's phrase is changed to: "I love you [chosen person's name]! Would you please, please smile?" To which the chosen person should respond: "I love you too ["it" person's name], but I just can't smile." If either the "it" person or the chosen person says the wrong name, they would remain or become the "it" person, respectively. This exercise can then be used as a name learning activity as well as a fun icebreaker game.

Potential Concerns:

- ❖ If participants are not comfortable saying the game's signature phrase to others of the same or opposite sex, this game can lead to some gender and sexuality discomfort.

**The Techno**

*Materials: None*

[5 – 10 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A creative team-building, icebreaker game
- ❖ Participants work together to adjust to each other's rhythms and sounds

Instructions:

1. The participant should stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder.
2. A volunteer participant begins by making a rhythmic sound. That participant continues to make that sound until the end of the activity.
3. Other participants join in whenever they wish with a sound of their own (snaps, claps, stomps, etc.). Each new sound should be something that fits with the sounds the other participants are making. The goal is for the entire group to make a coherent rhythm together.
4. The facilitator should let the beat continue for a moment or two before calling time.

## Bonding Activities

Bonding activities are those that help young participants build closer and more intimate relationships with each other and the facilitators. While fun, active, and engaging, these games are often emotional and thought provoking. Practicing these general activities with the youth in adolescent programs will aid their smooth transition into a cohesive group meant to discuss what can be emotionally- and culturally-sensitive topics.

### All Aboard

*Materials: Masking Tape*  
[5 – 10 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A team-building and bonding activity
- ❖ Participants physically join a shared small space, emphasizing their growth as an intimate group

Instructions:

1. Using tape, the facilitator should create a small, enclosed space (a square or rectangle) on the floor. The space should be small enough to make the activity difficult, but not so small that it is impossible.
2. The only instructions for the participants are for the entire group to fit into the space on the floor at once.
3. Once the group is in the space, the facilitator should walk around its perimeter, making sure that all of the participants' feet are inside the tape borders. Before the facilitator calls time, the participants must count to three (or some other short activity like singing a short song, etc.).

Possible Variations:

- ❖ Follow the instructions as written above, except create another, smaller tape-enclosed space on the floor. The participants must move from the first space to the second without touching any floor that is not bounded by tape. This exercise can then illustrate the stress that intimate groups can sometimes face while participants model the teamwork and negotiation skills necessary to work through such problems.

## **Come to the Center!**

*Materials: None*

[5 – 10 minutes]

### Objectives:

- ❖ A team-building and bonding activity especially for those groups who do not already know each other well
- ❖ Highlights participants' shared characteristics or experiences
- ❖ Participants physically emphasize their commonalities by the shared activity in the middle of the circle

### Instructions:

1. The participants should stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle.
2. The facilitator should read statements from a prepared list of 20-25 statements that describe characteristics, interests, or experiences most likely found within the youth group. Samples of such statements include:
  - a. I have friends and family who live in another country.
  - b. I can speak more than one language.
  - c. I like to play soccer
  - d. I like to listen to hip hop music.
3. If a statement applies to any of the participants, they must step (or skip, etc.) into the middle of the circle and perform an activity (the facilitator can choose this activity: high-five, hug, do a short dance, yell a chant, etc.).
4. Participants return to the outside circle and the next characteristic is read. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until all the statements have been read
5. (Variation) Invite the participants to make up their own statements for the group's response.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How did it feel to celebrate your similarities with friends?
2. What are some of our most common similarities?

## **Fear in a Hat**

*Materials: Note Cards, Writing Utensils, Hat or Box*

[10 – 15 minutes]

### Objectives:

- ❖ A team-building exercise that promotes unity, bonding, and group cohesion
- ❖ Highlights participants' shared emotions, facilitating bonding
- ❖ Participants practice empathy and perspective taking, two vitally important social skills.

### Instructions:

1. The participants should sit in a circle on the floor or around a single table. The facilitator should give each participant a note card.

2. The participants should anonymously write one of their personal fears on their individual note cards, being as honest and specific as possible, but not in a way that identifies them. After writing, the participants should drop their note cards into the hat or box.
3. The facilitator should collect the box, mix up the note cards, and pass the box around. Each participant should take one of the note cards.
4. The participants should take turns reading aloud the fear on the card they selected. Each reader should attempt to explain what the person who wrote the fear means by the statement on the note card. The facilitators should not allow any sort of judgments about what the reader said, only explanations of why the statement on the card would be frightening for someone.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do your fears have in common?
2. Did you notice any patterns or similarities between the fears?

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### **The Spider Web**

*Materials: Ball of Yarn or String*

[10 – 15 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A team-building activity
- ❖ Highlights and physically represents participants' growing connections based on shared and unique experiences

Instructions:

1. The participants should sit on the floor in a circle, with a person-sized space between them. The first person (a volunteer participant) should hold the end of the yarn ball and answers a question read aloud by the facilitator.
  - a. What is one constructive thing you can do with your hands?
  - b. What is something you care about that no one else knows of?
  - c. What do you hope to get out of this group?
2. After sharing their answer to the question, the first person should call out the name of another participant then throw them the yarn ball while holding their end of the string.
3. The receiver catches the yarn ball and says, "Thank you, [person's name]." The receiver should then answer the same question as the first person.
4. After sharing, the receiver should call out another name and throw the yarn ball to that person (a participant cannot throw the yarn to the person who threw it to them).
5. The yarn ball should go around the whole circle before the question / topic of discussion changes.
6. Finish the activity by reversing the order in which the ball of yarn was thrown and rewinding the ball of yarn in the process. Each participant should toss the ball of yarn back to the person who threw it to him/her, saying that person's name and adding some positive feedback (eg. "I think it's really awesome that you can play the trombone.")

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the string between us represent? What does it mean for the group?

## The Power of Choice

Though facilitated with good intentions, teen programs can at times adopt a condescending or belittling atmosphere where adolescents may feel as though they are being lectured to about their lives. Adolescents have the necessary tools to direct their own learning, especially when the topics of discussion involve the sensitive materials that this toolkit includes. The following activities are meant to facilitate adolescents' decision-making concerning the content of youth programs.

### **Creating the Content**

*Materials: Note Cards, Markers, Tape, Easel Paper*  
[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A decision-making activity
- ❖ Provides participants with anonymity sometimes necessary for honest expression
- ❖ Facilitates negotiation and teambuilding skills as the participants work to order their thoughts

Instructions:

1. The participants should sit around a single table. A long piece of easel paper should be laid on the table.
2. The facilitator should give each participant 3 – 5 note cards. Make more note cards available and within reach of the teens.
3. The facilitator explains that the program is created for and by the youth, and will be conducted according to the issues and concerns raised by the youth. The purpose of this exercise is to determine the concerns of this particular group by reflecting on the following question; “What makes teens sad or makes them ill?”
4. The participants should anonymously write their ideas on the note cards. The ideas that participants brainstorm can be regarding any topic as decided by the facilitator.
5. After writing, the participants should tape their note cards to the piece of easel paper.
6. The participants should look at all of the note cards and, as a group, decide which ideas are similar and most often repeated. Combine the cards. Those themes are probably the most important to the teens. Also review what themes reflect significant risks to the teens' health. The participants should move the note cards into a pattern that conveys the order of importance they have collectively decided upon.

## Wrapping Up

Group processing is members' reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group's goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is

important to process after each activity. Though the following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths' processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group's needs and experiences.

This group was created for you. This should be a SAFE SPACE for all of you, one where you feel like you belong and are surrounded by supportive people. I have noticed that all of you are working hard to be close to one another. That is going to be important as we move forward.

Does this group feel like a fun and safe environment to you?

What can we do in the future to make sure that everyone feels that way?

You all have worked extremely hard to build this community. I am proud of you and I am glad to be a part of it. I am excited to see what you all do next!

### For More Information:

For more fun icebreaker and bonding games:

#### [Group Games](#)

<http://www.group-games.com/index-of-all-group-games>

"A collection of the best group games and icebreakers!"

#### [Games & Icebreakers](#)

<http://www.thesource4ym.com/GAMES>

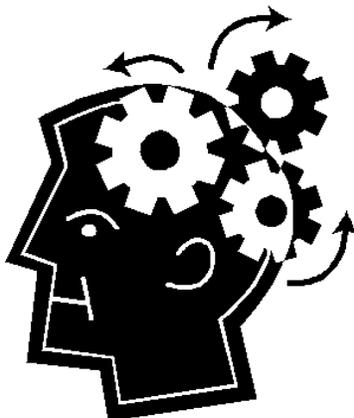
"Are you tired of game resources that don't deliver? Here's a bunch of proven, tested good ones!"

#### [Improv Games](#)

<http://improvincyclopedia.org/games/index.html>

"These are improv games, game handles, warm-ups, icebreakers, and improv exercises."

## Section Two: Psychological Health



Adolescence, the transition from childhood to adulthood, marks a period of social change that can at times seem overwhelming and lonely for youth. Struggles with self-image and identity, acceptance from friends, and a growing desire for independence are just some of the social changes that can feel extremely important to teens. Youth is fun and exciting, but it can also be a time of inner confusion and conflict. Further compounding these common adolescent issues are the cultural differences that make adjusting to life in the United States all the more difficult for refugee and immigrant youth.

Open, safe, and respectful conversation about the issues that affect adolescents' thoughts, feelings, and behavior is an important part of their healthy development. Facilitators' active listening and emphasis on discussion in the following activities importantly imparts a respect for youths' opinions and decisions while reminding them that they are not alone as they adjust to becoming adults in new environments of which they are now integral members.

### **Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem, regarded as an enduring personality trait, reflects a person's overall self-appraisal of his or her own worth, influenced by one's need for respect from others and need for self-respect. During the adolescent years, a time of rapid development in many domains of life, learning how to manage one's self-esteem can stabilize a young person's beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. The activities that follow aid development of the behaviors that reinforce youth's self-concept and self-esteem maintenance.

#### **Act It Out!**

*Materials: Two Chairs*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity

- ❖ Participants practice making decisions and performing behaviors that affirm one's self-esteem

Instructions:

1. The participants should sit in a large half-circle. Two chairs facing the participants should be placed in the large space in the middle.
2. The facilitators should act out a hypothetical situation where choices are made that lead to personal outcomes that negatively affect self-esteem. The facilitators should discuss with the participants what happened in the hypothetical scene, emphasizing the behavioral choices that lead to the negative outcome and those behavioral alternatives that could lead to more positive outcomes.
  - a. What happened in the scene? How did [the facilitator] feel about her- or himself at the end?
  - b. What did [the facilitator] do that made him or her feel badly at the end? What could she or he have done differently to lead to a better ending?
3. The facilitators should ask some of the participants to come into the scene (one at a time) in order to perform those discussed alternative choices that exemplify self-affirming behaviors that lead to positive outcomes.

Example:

This is just one example. Other scenes can be written that better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other behavioral choices can be made to highlight different social skills that affirm one's self-esteem.

Scene #1: "Will you go to the dance with me?"

1. One facilitator, Mickal, sitting in a chair facing the participants, gives a short monologue about liking a boy:
  - a. "I like this boy, his name is Aaron. He's, like, totally hot and awesome... he's in my class. We sit together. He's *really* nice. There's, like, five other girls who like him. I really don't know what to say to him. I really like him, but I don't know if I'm good enough for him. I'm going to ask him out. Maybe he'll say 'Yes!' Oh, oh! Here he comes!"
2. The other facilitator, Aaron, walks over to Mickal and sits down on the other chair.
3. As Aaron and Mickal talk, Mickal should emphatically insult herself a lot, being quite negative, and demonstrating poor behavioral choices.
4. Aaron should be disappointed at Mickal's negative behavior. Because Aaron is put off, he should reinforce Mickal's negativity by catastrophizing the situation:
  - a. "You have to be the most negative person in the world!"
  - b. "This dance would be absolutely disastrous with you!"
5. When Mickal asks Aaron to go to the dance with her, he refuses – she's just too negative.
6. Mickal feels sad and reinforces the negative comments that she said to Aaron, and those that Aaron said about her.

7. After the scene, the facilitators should ask the participants to identify the negative behavioral choices that both Mickal and Aaron made. The participants should brainstorm some possible behavioral alternatives for either of the actors.
8. The facilitators should invite some of the participants to replace them in the scene, demonstrating the alternative behaviors that would affirm the actor's self-esteem.
  - a. Instead of catastrophizing, Aaron could refute and deflect Mickal's negative self-image: "I think you're really fun and I would have fun with you at the dance."
  - b. Instead of dwelling on her negativity, Mickal could accept Aaron's compliments and normalize her own comments as nervousness: "Thank you. I'm nervous about telling you this, I really want to go to the dance with you."

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever felt bad about yourself? What made you feel that way? Could you have made other choices that would have led to a different outcome? What did you do to stop feeling bad? How do you respond to negative criticism?
2. What can you do to help others better about who they are?
3. Because you are a wonderful, beautiful, and uniquely talented, you should do things to celebrate the person that you are! How can you reward yourself for just being yourself? (Take a walk in a garden, Listen to my favorite music, Go to the beach, etc.)

## **Self Recognition & Personality Development**

Personality is the deeply ingrained and relatively enduring patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that characterize a person, distinguishing him or her from others. Learning to recognize one's unique and distinguishing characteristics, especially for adolescents, can lead to greater self-awareness and understanding; developments that can buffer what can be a tumultuous time of personal change. The activities that follow facilitate youths' recognition of their unique personalities.

### **Who I Am & Who I Want To Be**

*Materials: Markers, Pencils, Easel Paper*

[10 – 15 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants identify and affirm their positive personality traits
- ❖ Participants set personality goals for the future

Instructions:

1. The participants should sit at desks arranged in a circle, or around a single table.
2. The participants should form pairs. With their partners, the participants should trace their heads (in pencil to avoid coloring on faces) onto a piece of easel paper.

The pencil lines can be retraced with marker for colorful effect. The participants can draw and color their traced heads to represent themselves.

3. The participants should draw a vertical line down the middle of their traced heads. The left side will be for positive traits that participants recognize in themselves, and the right side for traits they wish to develop in the future.
4. The participants should individually identify and write down (at least) three traits for the left column and three in the right column.
5. Next, the facilitator should instruct the participants to ask their partners to identify positive traits about the other person.
  - a. “[Partner’s name], what is the one thing that you like about me?”
  - b. The participants should write down their partners’ affirmation in the left column with the other positive traits.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. How did it feel to have your partner compliment you? Do you think your partner’s suggestion is correct? If not, why do you think your partner believes that quality applies to you?
2. What do you do to demonstrate your positive qualities?
3. How can you practice demonstrating those qualities that you want to learn?

### **Recognizing Role Models**

Role models, whether peer or elder, are those people who occupy the social role to which individuals aspire. For adolescents, role models can offer advice, support, and examples of socially adjusted behaviors. The activities that follow facilitate adolescents’ further emulation of the positive behaviors that characterize their identified role models.

#### **Reflecting Admiration**

*Materials: Markers, Easel Paper*

[10 – 15 minutes]

#### Objectives:

- ❖ An identification and brainstorming activity
- ❖ Participants identify role models in their lives
- ❖ Participants list the positive qualities and behaviors of their identified role models, encouraging further emulation

#### Instructions:

1. The participants should sit at desks arranged in a circle, or around a single table.
2. The facilitator should ask the participants to name people that they admire, those whom they would consider role models. The facilitator should write the names of the listed people on a piece of easel paper and underline each of the names.
3. The facilitator should ask the participants to describe why they admire those people, emphasizing their positive traits. The facilitator should write the traits on the easel paper underneath the names of the people they characterize.

4. The participants should draw an outline of their heads on a piece of paper (like a silhouette), with a vertical line down the middle. One side is for those listed traits that characterize the role models. The participants should write down those traits that they find most admirable. The other side is for behaviors that demonstrate the corresponding traits.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do the people that you admire know that you admire them? Do you think people should know? If so, how can you show people that you admire them?
2. What does it mean to write the role models' traits in an outline of your own face? How do you see your role model's qualities working in your own life?
3. How can you become a role model for people that you know? What qualities and behaviors would your admirers identify in you?

## Signs of Stress

Stress affects everyone's life, and refugee youth feel the additional stress their own and their families' task of acclimating to a new country, culture, and language. From the daily stressors that we all face to more traumatic instances that affect people's lives for years, stress can significantly affect people's thinking and behavior. Adolescents generally face constant change (biological and social) and pressure. Though not all teens experience resultant mood changes to the same degree, they are a normal part of development. The activities that follow facilitate youths' recognition of the major changes in mood and behavior that mark overwhelming stress and mental illness, an important aspect of maintaining youths' health.

### **Why Am I in Such a Bad Mood?**

*Materials: Note Cards, Markers, Easel Paper*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify the signs and symptoms of depression
- ❖ Participants learn methods of handling bad moods

Instructions:

1. The participants should begin this activity in a cluster.
2. The facilitator should distribute note cards to each of the participants. The note cards should display a sign or symptom of depression. The participants should not show their note cards to anyone else!
  - a. Impatience
  - b. Anger
  - c. No Interest in Fun Activities
  - d. Tiredness
  - e. Difficulty Concentrating
  - f. Memory Loss

- g. Guilt
  - h. Difficulty Making Decisions
  - i. Pessimism
  - j. Restlessness
3. After receiving the note cards, the participants should walk around the room, greeting and interacting with one another. The participants should act out the sign or symptom displayed on his or her note card.
  4. After the participants have met one another, they should gather around a single table, or sit in a circle on the floor. The participants should attempt to identify which of their peers might be clinically depressed and which are not based on their behavior. The participants should also try to guess the symptom on their peers' note cards.
  5. As participants are named as depressed or not, they should move into two groups. After each participant has been grouped, he or she should read his or her note card.
  6. The facilitator should then reveal that all of the cards displayed signs or symptoms of depression.
  7. The participants should discuss ways they could handle the symptoms on each of the cards since most people have experienced one or more of the symptoms at some time. The facilitator should also explain the difference between “just feeling down” and clinical depression (see References for more information). The facilitator should write these ideas on a piece of easel paper.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Everyone from time to time feels down or sad. What is the difference between being clinically depressed and just feeling bad? How can you know the difference?
2. What are some ways that you can help someone you know feel better when they are dealing with any of the symptoms we saw?
3. Who are (at least) three people that you can talk to when you are feeling down or sad?

### **Values Clarification**

Values change over time in response to changing life experiences. As adolescents discover who they are, where they fit in, and who their friends are, what they believe in is also changing. Refugee youth in particular may feel conflicted as the values of their country of origin may seem to be at odds with the perceived values of their new home. The following activities facilitate youths' recognition and understanding of their changing values and beliefs and the resulting effects on their actions and behaviors. The facilitators should emphasize that they are not telling the youth what their values should be; they are simply providing them with the means to discover what their values are.

#### **Advice from Dear Abby**

*Materials: Past columns from Dear Abby (or other similar advice columnists), Pens, Paper*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants identify and negotiate their own values in comparison to those promoted by Dear Abby

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should choose and cut out several Dear Abby letters (the issues raised in the letters should be fairly controversial as to provoke discussion, but should also mirror those issues that the youth are concerned with: sexuality, parents, etc.)
2. The portion of the letter where Dear Abby responds to the writer should be cut off (remember which letters Abby's responses match!)
3. The participants should be broken into small groups of three or four (if the group is not big enough for at least three groups, this activity can be done with the entire group).
4. In their small groups, the participants should read their Dear Abby letter and identify the kind of problem the writer is having (parents, sexuality, etc.). As a small group, the participants should write a response that is in agreement with their values.
5. After they have drafted a response, each small group should read their letter for the rest of the participants and offer their advice. The facilitator should discuss the participants' responses.
  - a. Who or what has influenced the advice that you are giving to the writer? Your parents? Your friends? Your place of birth? Your age?
  - b. Do you all agree with this group's advice for the writer? Why or why not?
6. After the short discussion, the facilitator should give each small group the response that Abby wrote.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think that Abby's advice is something that most people would do? Why? Why not?
2. How is your advice similar to Abby's? How is it different? Why do think your advice is different?
3. If you had to give advice to a friend, would you rely on your own values or would you think about the kind of advice that Abby gives?

## **Wrapping Up**

Group processing is members' reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group's goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is important to process after each activity. Though the

following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths' processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group's needs and experiences.

Talking about the issues that we did is difficult. It is hard to open up to other people, showing them the sensitive and sometimes vulnerable parts of us. I noticed how honest and compassionate all of you were. Those are important qualities to show when we are discussing how each of us can feel sad or lonely at times. Remember how you acted today because it will help you or someone you love in the future.

Did we address the emotional issues that are most important to you?  
How can we better address those needs in the future?

You all have worked extremely hard reflecting on your emotions. I am proud of you and I am glad that we had this chance to share how we feel. I am excited to watch you all grow into emotionally sensitive and aware young adults!

## **For Parents**

While your youth group is making strides in promoting the healthy development of your teens, it takes changes and activity in the family environment to make lasting changes. In order to keep the parents of the youth involved in their children's health education, a letter or a phone call introducing the group and its content should be a priority. The following letter is solely a template toward that end.

Dear Parent,

Your child has the opportunity to participate in workshops designed in cooperation with Heartland Alliance Refugee Health Programs. These workshops incorporate culturally sensitive physical, mental, and social health educational lesson plans with some emphasis on those issues that especially affect refugee and immigrant adolescents.

In this unit, your child will discuss psychological health, including issues such as self-esteem, self-recognition and personal development, recognizing role models, signs of stress, and values clarification.

The obstacles teenagers face are difficult, so it is important as parents to create and maintain positive communication with your adolescent regarding this topic and many others. We encourage you to discuss your own experiences and beliefs regarding mental health with your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [organization's name] at [organization's number].

Thank you!

### **For More Information**

For more information on any of the topics discussed in the Psychological Health section of this toolkit (and more!):

#### [Cool Nurse – Mental Health](http://www.coolnurse.com/mental_health.htm)

[http://www.coolnurse.com/mental\\_health.htm](http://www.coolnurse.com/mental_health.htm)

“Today there is a huge focus on physical well-being. However, if we are to consider our overall well-being, we should not draw a line between our bodies and our heads, our minds are more complex than we even realized.”

#### [Teens Health - Your Mind](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/)

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/)

“Being healthy means dealing with the changes in your body – and your mind. Relationships, body image, families, emotions ... sort it all out in this section.”

#### [Teen Health FX - Emotional Health](http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Emotional/index.php)

<http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Emotional/index.php>

“For all the answers to questions about your moods and emotions, this is the place to look.”

## Section Three: Building & Maintaining Friendships



As adolescents grow to become more independent from their families, their friends and peers play a greater role in their lives. Adolescents' friends, those peers with similar experiences and interests, influence each other's choices and behaviors as they spend more and more time together outside of the home and away from family. Creating and sustaining positive, encouraging, and supportive friendships is a necessary social skill that can help all adolescents, especially those who have arrived here as refugees, adjust to their new and emerging social roles, environments, and responsibilities.

While friendships are important social systems for adolescents facing challenges, it can be difficult to initiate, maintain, and develop lasting friendships. Facilitators' active listening and open-mindedness in the following activities facilitate adolescents' friendship skills and encourage respect and personal responsibility regarding their relationship choices while reminding them of the profoundly positive impact good friendships can have on their lives.

### **Initiating Social Relationships**

Initiation can often be the most difficult aspect of building friendships. From thinking of conversation starters to rehearsing what to say, the following activities facilitate adolescents' introduction to new people and potential friends.

#### **Eye Connect**

*Materials: None*

[5 – 10 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A reflective activity
- ❖ Participants explore what it is like to make and not make connections with other people in a variety of contexts

Instructions:

1. The participants should stand in a circle, keeping their heads down, looking at the floor.
2. When the facilitator gives a signal (a word, a clap, a snap, etc.), each participant should look up and across the circle, trying to meet the eyes of another participant. The participants should be quiet during this activity.
3. When participants make eye contact, both people should move toward each other and take each other's place in the circle. They should not lose eye contact until they have arrived in the other participant's place. Caution the participants to move slowly and carefully to avoid accidents in the middle of the circle. If a participant does not make eye contact with someone else, they should remain in their place.
4. Once participants arrive in their new positions, they should put their heads down again until the facilitator starts another round.

Possible Variations:

- ❖ Follow the instructions as written above except that each participant should cover one of their eyes with a hand. When the participants arrive in their new places in the circle, they should switch which eye is closed. This exercise can then illustrate what it is like to move through the world with limited vision or perspective due to cultural differences, discrimination, etc.
- ❖ Follow the instructions as written above except that the participants should take two steps backward, significantly widening the circle. The participants should stand with their backs facing the middle of the circle so that they cannot see anyone else. At the facilitator's signal, the participants turn around and try to make eye contact with others. This exercise can then illustrate the difficulties of making and maintaining connections with people who are far away.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did it feel to connect with someone? How did it feel to not make eye contact with anyone?
2. Did you tend to connect only with certain people? Did people avoid eye contact altogether? Why?
3. What did it feel like to maintain eye contact with someone for such a long period of time? What positive and negative associations do people have with making eye contact?

**Act & React!**

*Materials: Markers, Note Cards*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify and practice methods of initiating a friendship in various situation

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should introduce the scenes to the participants, the primary actors as the facilitator narrates the action. As the participants hear the facilitator's narration, they should act out what they hear.
2. One participant is the protagonist of the scene. Other participants should act as the other characters. If participants are not acting, they should be the audience.
3. When each scene reaches its climax, the facilitator should stop the action. The facilitator should instruct the participants to individually write possible behavioral solutions on a note card.
  - a. What should [the protagonist] say?
  - b. What tone of voice should [the protagonist] have?
  - c. What gestures or actions should [the protagonist] do?
4. The facilitator should collect the note cards and read the suggestions back to the participants. The participants should discuss and collectively determine the best course of action for the protagonist.
5. After a decision is made, the protagonist in the scene should perform the selected course of action as the narration is read again (from one or two lines before the STOP).
6. New participants should be chosen to act as the characters in each new scene.

Example:

This is just one example. Other scenes can be written that better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other behavioral choices can be made to highlight different social skills that are related to initiating social relationships.

*Scene #1: A New Group of Friends*

1. The facilitator should read the following paragraph, leaving pauses after actions that the participants are meant to act out.
  - a. "Sara is at a new school where none of her friends go. Sara walks through the hallways looking at the floor – she's very shy and nervous about being in a new school. Sometimes she looks up and smiles at people. Simbiat, Yasmine, and Ally are really good friends. The three girls sit together at lunch everyday. They love to talk. They also laugh a lot about everything they like to do. In the lunchroom, Sara stops and watches the girls everyday, wishing she had friends just like them. Sometimes she pretends to talk like them. Sometimes she pretends to laugh like them. Simbiat, Yasmine, and Ally have noticed Sara – they think that she's nice – but they haven't made an effort to talk to her. They look at her from across the lunchroom sometimes, but they never say anything. Sometimes, the three girls point at Sara. Then they whisper to each other. Sara has noticed that the girls look at her sometimes. She doesn't know what they think about her. She wants them to like her very much so she'll have someone to sit and talk to. Sara stands up and walks over to their table." STOP!

2. At this point, the facilitator should stop the action. The participants should be instructed to write their solutions on their note cards, with special attention to the protagonist's behavior.
  - a. What should Sara do to make friends with Simbiat, Yasmine, and Ally?
  - b. What should Sara say?
  - c. What kind of gestures can Sara use?
  - d. What tone of voice should Sara have?
  - e. What other things can Sara do to make friends with Simbiat, Yasmine, and Ally?

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways that you can introduce yourself to new people? What can you do to make yourself feel more comfortable when you meet new people?
2. How did you meet your group of friends? Where did you meet them? What did you say?
3. Would someone new feel comfortable meeting your group of friends? What can you do to make other people feel comfortable introducing themselves to you?

## **Social Maintenance**

While friendships are central relationships in adolescence, they are dynamic systems that change over time. Identifying and practicing the factors that affect the maintenance and strengthening of friendship ties allows adolescents to cope with the minor interpersonal stressors that can occur between friends. The following activities facilitate adolescents' use of problem-focused coping and lower reliance on passive, avoidant coping strategies.

### **Act & React!**

*Materials: Markers, Note Cards*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify and practice methods of helping friends in need

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should introduce the scenes to the participants, the primary actors as the facilitator narrates the action. As the participants hear the facilitator's narration, they should act out what they hear.
2. One participant is the protagonist of the scene. Other participants should act as the other characters. If participants are not acting, they should be the audience.
3. When each scene reaches its climax, the facilitator should stop the action. The facilitator should instruct the participants to individually write possible behavioral solutions on a note card.
  - a. What should [the protagonist] say?
  - b. What tone of voice should [the protagonist] have?
  - c. What gestures or actions should [the protagonist] do?

4. The facilitator should collect the note cards and read the suggestions back to the participants. The participants should discuss and collectively determine the best course of action for the protagonist.
5. After a decision is made, the protagonist in the scene should perform the selected course of action as the narration is read again (from one or two lines before the STOP).
6. New participants should be chosen to act as the characters in each new scene.

Example:

This is just one example. Other scenes can be written that better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other behavioral choices can be made to highlight different social skills that are related to maintaining social relationships.

Scene #1: Helping a Friend in Need

1. The facilitator should read the following paragraph, leaving pauses after actions that the participants are meant to act out.
  - a. “Latisha is a high school student. Latisha has not been feeling very happy lately. Her mother is very upset with her. Latisha has been staying out late with friends this week dancing. Keisha is also a high school student. Keisha is very good friends with Latisha. Keisha and Latisha love play soccer. They also love to go swimming. Keisha has noticed that Latisha has been feeling sad lately. It makes Keisha sad to see her good friend feeling sad. Keisha asks Latisha to talk at lunch. They sit down at a table. Latisha feels very sad because her mother is so angry with her. Latisha starts to cry.” STOP
2. At this point, the facilitator should stop the action. The participants should be instructed to write their solutions on their note cards, with special attention to the protagonist’s behavior.
  - a. What should Keisha do to help her friend Latisha feel better?
  - b. What should Keisha say?
  - c. What kind of gestures can Keisha use?
  - d. What tone of voice should Keisha have?
  - e. What other things can Keisha do to help Latisha feel better?

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have more than one group of friends? Do you act differently with each group? Why?
2. What do you do with friends to make your friendship stronger?
3. What do your friends do to make you feel appreciated?

## **Conflict Management**

When friends are caught in an argument or conflict, how an adolescent deals with the problem can be considered a possible element in the continuation or dissolution of the friendship. Youths’ management significantly affects the impact of peer conflicts:

conflicts managed through negotiation and mitigation lead to more positive outcomes than those managed by power assertion or coercion. The following activities facilitate adolescents' use of problem-focused resolutions in managing peer conflicts.

### **Act & React!**

*Materials: Markers, Note Cards*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify and practice methods of dealing with and resolving a conflict with friends

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should introduce the scenes to the participants, the primary actors as the facilitator narrates the action. As the participants hear the facilitator's narration, they should act out what they hear.
2. One participant is the protagonist of the scene. Other participants should act as the other characters. If participants are not acting, they should be the audience.
3. When each scene reaches its climax, the facilitator should stop the action. The facilitator should instruct the participants to individually write possible behavioral solutions on a note card.
  - a. What should [the protagonist] say?
  - b. What tone of voice should [the protagonist] have?
  - c. What gestures or actions should [the protagonist] do?
4. The facilitator should collect the note cards and read the suggestions back to the participants. The participants should discuss and collectively determine the best course of action for the protagonist.
5. After a decision is made, the protagonist in the scene should perform the selected course of action as the narration is read again (from one or two lines before the STOP).
6. New participants should be chosen to act as the characters in each new scene.

Example:

This is just one example. Other scenes can be written that better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other behavioral choices can be made to highlight different social skills that are related to managing and resolving conflicts.

Scene #1: An Argument

1. The facilitator should read the following paragraph, leaving pauses after actions that the participants are meant to act out.
  - a. “Kwame is a ridiculously good-looking high school boy. Kwame has a very attractive swagger about him. Kwame is also a very good singer. All the girls in school really like Kwame. Issa is a girl who goes to school to Kwame. Issa really likes Kwame. Issa has a friend named Ekene. Ekene also likes Kwame. One day,

Ekene secretly whispered to Issa that she likes Kwame. Issa flirts with Kwame. She touches his arm and bats her eyes at him. Ekene sees Issa flirting with Kwame. Ekene is very hurt. She is angry with Issa for betraying her trust. Ekene walks over to Issa and starts to yell at her. Ekene starts to cry as she argues with Issa.” STOP

2. At this point, the facilitator should stop the action. The participants should be instructed to write their solutions on their note cards, with special attention to the protagonist’s behavior.
  - a. What should Issa do to resolve the conflict with Ekene?
  - b. What should Issa say?
  - c. What kind of gestures can Issa use?
  - d. What tone of voice should Issa have?
  - e. What other things can Issa do to resolve her argument with Ekene?

#### Discussion Questions:

1. How do you feel when you have arguments with friends? How do you resolve those arguments?
2. Have you ever been angry with a friend? What did you do to let your friend know that you were upset? Could you have done anything differently?
3. How would you want a friend who was upset with you to tell you?

## Wrapping Up

Group processing is members’ reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group’s goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is important to process after each activity. Though the following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths’ processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group’s needs and experiences.

Having close friends is so important; they are integral parts of our support networks. It is because close friends are so important that making them is so difficult. It is hard to open up to other people, sharing everything with them. I noticed how encouraging and compassionate all of you were. Those are important qualities to show when we are discussing the ways we can all make good friends like the ones we are surrounded with. Remember what we learned today because it will help you or someone you love in the future.  
Did we address the friendship issues that are most important to you?  
How can we better address those needs in the future?

You all have worked extremely hard reflecting on the kind of friend you are and the kind of friends you want to make. I am proud of you and I am glad to be your friend. I am excited to watch you all chat and hang out with your best friends in the future!

## **For Parents**

While your youth group is making strides in promoting the healthy development of your teens, it takes changes and activity in the family environment to make lasting changes. In order to keep the parents of the youth involved in their children's health education, a letter or a phone call introducing the group and its content should be a priority. The following letter is solely a template toward that end.

Dear Parent,

Your child has the opportunity to participate in workshops designed in cooperation with Heartland Alliance Refugee Health Programs. These workshops incorporate culturally sensitive physical, mental, and social health educational lesson plans with some emphasis on those issues that especially affect refugee and immigrant adolescents.

In this unit, your child will discuss building and maintaining friendships, including issues such as initiating social relationships, maintaining social contacts, and conflict management.

The obstacles teenagers face are difficult, so it is important as parents to create and maintain positive communication with your adolescent regarding this topic and many others. We encourage you to discuss your own experiences and beliefs regarding the importance of positive and encouraging friendships with your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [organization's name] at [organization's number].

Thank you!

## **For More Information**

For more information on any of the topics discussed in the Building & Maintaining Friendships section of this toolkit (and more!):

[Teen Health FX - Friends](http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Relationships/subcategory.php?subsection=21)

<http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Relationships/subcategory.php?subsection=21>  
“Answers to your friendship questions are posted here.”

## Section Four: Romantic Relationships & Sex



As adolescents develop into adults, their ability to feel romantic love develops as well. New and emerging feelings of passion, sexual attraction, and deep emotional connect can be exciting for adolescents, but also confusing. The relationships in which adolescents engage have a great effect on their overall health. From learning how to intimately relate to others, to making collaborative decisions, romantic relationships can offer youth new modes of social development in critical areas of experience.

While romantic relationships can offer teenagers important relational experience as well as advanced social and emotional development, there are risks involved in behavioral choices, especially concerning sexual activity. Facilitators' active listening, open-mindedness, and empathy in the following activities facilitate adolescents' decision-making skills while encouraging the open and respectful communication that is necessary for building strong and healthy romantic relationships. Furthermore, the following activities offer adolescents the social tools and objective knowledge necessary for negotiating sexual activity.

### **Assertive Communication & Negotiation**

Communication and trust are the foundation of any romantic relationship. Especially in adolescent relationships wherein youth are making their first attempts at forming intimate relationships, talking about and expressing expectations, emotions, and frustrations is vitally important to maintaining health, safety, and their budding romance. The following activities facilitate youths' communication skills in romantic contexts.

#### **Effective Communication**

*Materials: Markers, Paper, Tape, Easel Paper*

[20 – 25 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identity and practice passive, aggressive, and affirmative modes of communication in the context of romantic relationships

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should already have the description and explanation of the three modes of communication written onto a piece of easel paper for this activity (see below). Also, the facilitator should have a piece of paper that reads “Passive,” one that reads “Aggressive,” and one that reads “Assertive.”
2. The participants will be the actors in each of the hypothetical scenes that follow. The facilitator should read the scene for all of the participants.
3. One of the characters is requested to communicate with his or her partner in the scene. The facilitator should tape one of the modes of communication (written on the three pieces of paper) to the shirt of the participant playing the protagonist.
4. After a short discussion with the rest of the participants, the protagonist must model the selected mode of communication and act to resolve the problem with the other participant in the scene.
  - a. What should I say to be passive/aggressive/assertive?
  - b. What should I do to be passive/aggressive/assertive?
5. The facilitator should rotate the protagonist of the scene as the mode of communication changes, each time taping the paper displaying the mode onto the participant’s shirt.

Examples:

These are just two examples. Other scenes can be written that better reflect the concerns and experiences of the participants in your youth group. In any case, interpersonal communication should be the focus of the situation.

Scene #1: A Crush

Mary’s had a crush on Christopher for several weeks. She finds him very good-looking as well as friendly and sociable. Everyday they travel to school together. She would like to ask him out one evening and tell him how she feels. How will she do this?

Scene #2: The First Time

Sylvia and Mark have been going out for several months. They are talking about the day they plan to have sex for the first time. Sylvia explains that they will have to use a condom. Mark disagrees since there is no danger of an STI. He insists that Sylvia find herself a contraceptive. How would Sylvia react to this?

Modes of Communication:

Passive Communication

- These individuals do not assert themselves
- They give others priority, at their own expense
- They succumb to other’s people’s wishes
- They keep their concerns to themselves
- They apologize profusely

#### Assertive Communication

- These individuals stand up for their rights without denying other people's rights
- They respect themselves as well as others
- They know how to listen and talk
- They express their emotions, both positive and negative
- They know how to exude self-assurance without seeming arrogant

#### Aggressive Communication

- These individuals stand up for their rights with no regard for others
- They think of themselves first, at the expense of others
- They dominate others
- They reach their goals with no regard for others

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the modes of communication best reflects your own behavior?
2. If you were in any of the situations that we acted out, what would you say?

### **Sexual Health & Choice**

Adolescents who engage in sexual activity have a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections as well as unplanned pregnancies. However, because of the cultural taboos surrounding sexual activity and sexual identity, many teens are not exposed to the information that they need in order to protect themselves and their sexual partners. Especially in the case of youth who are not heterosexual, learning about one's sexuality is an arduous task. The following activities introduce adolescents to the safe and practical sexual information for those who are sexual active, and offers alternative intimate behaviors for those who choose not to have sex.

#### **Handing Out STIs**

*Materials: Six different colored note cards, enough of each color for each participant to have 5 cards, Paper, Pens, Pins, Boom Box, Music Selection*  
[15 – 20 minutes]

#### Objectives:

- ❖ An identification and role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants learn how sexually transmitted infections spread and how to maintain their health if sexually active

#### Instructions:

1. Each participant is given a sheet of paper, writing instrument, and a pin. On the sheet of paper, the participant is to write his or her name, and 5 things about himself or herself. They can write where they go to school, their favorite music group, a favorite school activity, etc. Then each participant should pin the sheet to his or her shirt.

2. Each participant should receive a set of 5 note cards of the same color..
3. Next, the facilitator plays the selected music, stopping it frequently. When the music stops, the participants should find a partner. The participants read the personal characteristics of his or her partner, and if desired, can exchange colored cards.
4. After a few minutes and a few rounds of trading note cards, the facilitator should stop the music and instruct the participants to take note of the different colors they hold.
5. The facilitator explains to the participants that each color represents a different STI. (The colors are examples; change according to the colored cards available.)
  - a. Red = Chlamydia: Red has been experiencing a discharge from the urethra, and has been feeling pains while peeing.
  - b. Yellow = Pubic Lice, Crabs: Yellow has been experiencing intense itching around their crotch.
  - c. Blue = Syphilis: Blue has discovered a small open sore, like an ulcer, in the genital area
  - d. Green = HIV: Green has been feeling tired and run down, and seems unable to get over a recent viral infection
  - e. Orange = Gonorrhea: Orange has been experiencing a discharge around the urethra where the pee comes out and some lower abdominal pain.
  - f. Purple = Venereal warts: Purple has discovered some small wart-like growths in the crotch area
6. The participants should count the number of note cards they have collected in each of the colors. Those participants with each color should raise their hands. The facilitator should inform the participants that those students with their hands raised have caught the corresponding STI.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. How many people would have been “infected” if those six colors had used sexual protection like condoms? What other ways can people keep themselves safe when engaged in sexual activity?
2. How can you know if the people you are sexually involved with have STIs?

### **Homosexuality**

*Materials: Markers, Easel Paper, Tape*  
[15 – 20 minutes]

#### Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants negotiate and identify their perceptions of homosexuality

#### Instructions:

1. The facilitator should write the following statements onto a piece of easel paper.
  - a. Homosexuality is normal.
  - b. Having a gay friend or neighbor is OK with me.
  - c. It’s OK for gay people to be teachers, including children’s teachers.

- d. Families with gay parents should be portrayed in children's books.
  - e. People who are gay should be allowed to serve in the military, including combat divisions.
  - f. It's OK for people who are gay to get legally married, and receive the legal benefits of being married.
  - g. It's OK for gay couples, or even single gay people, to raise children.
  - h. It would be OK with me if on or more of my children were gay.
  - i. It would be OK with me if I found out that one of my parents was gay.
2. The participants should break into small groups of three or four (if the group is not large enough for at least three groups, this activity can be done with the whole group).
  3. In their groups, the participants should discuss each statement.
    - a. How does the statement make you feel?
    - b. Do you think that the statement is right or wrong? Why?
  4. After discussing each statement, the group should vote as to whether their group (1) agrees with it, (2) disagrees, or (3) cannot reach a decision.
    - a. "Agree" means everyone thinks the statement is right (with only one person thinking that it is wrong)
    - b. "Disagree" means everyone thinks the statement is wrong (with only one person thinking that it is right)
    - c. "Cannot reach a decision" is everything else
  5. After reaching a decision, one participant from each group should walk up to the easel paper and place a circle numbered 1, 2, or 3 near the statement.
  6. As the groups share, the facilitator should write each group's response on the easel paper near the appropriate statement.

Discussion Questions:

1. What or who has influenced your personal beliefs about homosexuality? How does U.S. society generally view homosexuality? Does this influence your beliefs?

**The Traffic Light Activity**

*Materials: Markers, Note Cards or Strips of Paper, Tape, Easel Paper*  
[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants negotiate and identify positive and negative relationship behaviors

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should draw three columns onto a piece of easel paper. There should be a red octagon, or "Stop" sign, drawn or taped to the top of one of the columns, a yellow triangle, or "Yield" sign, on top of another, and a green circle, or "Go" sign taped on top of the last.

2. The participants should sit around a single table. The participants should receive note cards or strips of paper (differently colored for each participant) with various relationship behaviors written on them.
  - a. People know what you want and need without your telling them.
  - b. Arguments can be a positive relationship activity.
  - c. You should use a condom every time you have sex.
  - d. All romantic relationships require sex.
  - e. You should have sex only to make your partner happy.
  - f. A person's nonverbal signals are more accurate than the words that they use.
  - g. If you're using lubricants and condoms, only oil-based lubricants should be used.
  - h. Masturbation is a natural way of exploring your sexuality.
  - i. Presents make up for a lack of presence in a relationship.
  - j. Hidden agendas do not harm a relationship.
  - k. Saying "I love you" means that you're ready for sex.
  - l. Your ability to love others is directly related to your self-love.
  - m. Expressing your true feelings is an important part of every relationship.
  - n. A girl cannot get pregnant if a boy withdraws his penis before he ejaculates.
  - o. You should always tell the complete truth in a relationship.
3. If the participants think the answer to the statement is "no," or if the statement is false, then they should tape the statement in the red "Stop" sign column. If the participants think the answer to the statement is "yes," or if the statement is true, then they should tape the statement in the green "Go" column. If the participants are unsure of their answer to the statement, then they should tape the statement into the yellow "Yield" sign column.
4. After the participants have placed their statements, the facilitator should read statements that are in each column. The facilitator should discuss the implications of the statement's position with the participants.
  - a. Why could this statement be true/false?
  - b. What are situations in which it would be true/false?
5. For those statements that have definite answers, the facilitators should offer the participants the correct answer after each has taped their statements to the columns.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Why did you put each statement in the column that you did? Are your choices similar to or different than those of your peers?
2. Did any of the statements make you feel uncomfortable? Why?

### **Sexual Roles**

Teenagers may face a great deal of pressure regarding sexual activity. Teens are bombarded with sexual imagery and stereotypes from movies, music, television, and their friends. In many instances, sex is falsely portrayed – glorified, glamorized, and

romanticized. For many refugee youth viewing this imagery is a whole new experience. Youth who are daily exposed to this material may internalize false images of sexual activity and behavior. The following activities facilitate youths' social skills in sexual contexts, helping them to deconstruct false sexual imagery and replace stereotypical models with healthier, open, and respectful behavioral roles.

### **Act & React!**

*Materials: Markers, Note Cards*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify and practice methods of negotiating sexual relationships

Instructions:

1. The participants should sit in a large half-circle. Two chairs facing the participants should be placed in the large space in the middle.
2. The facilitators should act out a hypothetical situation where choices will need to be made that would lead to a positive outcome. The facilitators should discuss with the participants what happened in the hypothetical scene, emphasizing behavioral choices.
3. What happened in the scene? How did [the facilitator] feel?
4. Did [the facilitator] do anything that made the situation worse?
5. What can she or he do differently to lead to a better ending?
6. The facilitators should stop the scene at the climax.
7. The facilitators should ask some of the participants to come into the scene (one at a time) in order to perform those discussed alternative choices that would lead to positive outcomes.

*Example:*

This is just one example. Other scenes can be written that better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other behavioral choices can be made to highlight different skills that are necessary for negotiating sexual relationships.

Scene #1: "Don't you love me?"

1. One facilitator, Mickal, sitting in a chair facing the participants, gives a short monologue about liking a boy:
  - a. "So I've been dating Aaron for a year now. He's really a great guy: he's smart, he's nice, and he's funny. But lately he's been pressuring me to have sex. He's been giving me hints. I always try to brush him off, or change the topic, but he's been more forward about it. I don't know what to do. I don't want to have sex, but I don't want to lose Aaron. Aaron's the first guy that really understands me. I don't know what to do."
2. The other facilitator, Aaron, walks over to Mickal and sits down on the other chair.

3. Aaron and Mickal should talk as if they were a couple.
  - a. A: “Hey, how are you? That test was so hard, wasn’t it?”
  - b. M: “Yeah it was; I’m so glad that it’s done. I was studying so much.”
  - c. A: “Now we have a chance for a break!”
4. Aaron should eventually touch her and put pressure on her to have sex.
  - a. “I love you so much Mickal. We should do something special to prove our love.”
  - b. “We’ve been together for so long now. I don’t want to be with anyone else.”
  - c. “I love you Mickal, don’t you love me?”
5. Mickal should respond, being exaggeratedly gingerly and hesitant.
  - a. “I don’t know if I’m ready. I think we should wait a little longer.”
6. Aaron should look upset and disappointed with Mickal, but should make more exaggerated attempts to pressure her further.
7. At this point, the facilitators should stop the action. The participants should be instructed to write possible solutions on their note cards, with special attention to the protagonist’s (Mickal’s) behavior.
  - a. What should Mickal do to tell Aaron that she does not want to have sex, but keep her relationship?
  - b. What should Mickal say?
  - c. What kinds of gestures can Mickal use?
  - d. What tone of voice should Mickal have?
  - e. What other things can Mickal do to make it clear that she does not want to have sex, but that she still wants to be with Aaron?

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What can you do if you do not want to have sex, but do not want to lose your significant other?
2. Can your significant other like you, but not love you? Can your significant other love you and not have sex with you? What are other ways that you can show your significant other that you love him or her?
3. When it comes to sex, whose job is it to set the limits? What kind of limits should be set? Why?

## Wrapping Up

Group processing is members’ reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group’s goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is important to process after each activity. Though the following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths’ processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group’s needs and experiences.

Getting older means acknowledging that we all have sexual thoughts and urges. It also means that we have to make some tough decisions about our sexuality and our sexual behavior. I noticed how willing you all were to engage in these hard conversations and how supportive you were of your peers' attitudes and opinions. Sexuality is a very personal thing and you all did a great job of talking about it in a group setting. Remember what we talked about and learned today because it will help you or someone you love in the future.

Did we address the issues about sex and significant others that are most important to you?

How can we better address those needs in the future?

You all have worked extremely hard reflecting on how you view sex and relationships. I am proud of you and I am glad that we had this discussion. I am excited to know that all of you have the information you need to make smart decisions about sex!

## **For Parents**

While your youth group is making strides in promoting the healthy development of your teens, it takes changes and activity in the family environment to make lasting changes. In order to keep the parents of the youth involved in their children's health education, a letter or a phone call introducing the group and its content should be a priority. The following letter is solely a template toward that end.

Dear Parent,

Your child has the opportunity to participate in workshops designed in cooperation with Heartland Alliance Refugee Health Programs. These workshops incorporate culturally sensitive physical, mental, and social health educational lesson plans with some emphasis on those issues that especially affect refugee and immigrant adolescents.

In this unit, your child will discuss romantic relationships and sex, including issues such as assertive communication and negotiation, sexual health and choice, and sexual roles.

The obstacles teenagers face are difficult, so it is important as parents to create and maintain positive communication with your adolescent regarding this topic and many others. We encourage you to discuss your own experiences and beliefs regarding sex with your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [organization's name] at [organization's number].

Thank you!

## **For More Information**

For more information on any of the topics discussed in the Romantic Relationships & Sex section of this toolkit (and more!):

### [Cool Nurse - Sex Stuff](http://www.coolnurse.com/sex_stuff.htm)

[http://www.coolnurse.com/sex\\_stuff.htm](http://www.coolnurse.com/sex_stuff.htm)

“Sexuality, sexual health, and everything you need to know about your body in case you slept through health class.”

### [I Wanna Know](http://www.iwannaknow.org/)

<http://www.iwannaknow.org/>

“Answers to your questions about teen sexual health and sexually transmitted diseases.”

### [Teens Health - Sexual Health](http://kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/)

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/sexual\\_health/](http://kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/)

“Learn the facts about sexual health with articles about puberty, menstruation, infections, and just about everything else you wanted to know, for guys and girls.”

### [Teen Health FX - Significant Others](http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Relationships/subcategory.php?subsection=28)

<http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Relationships/subcategory.php?subsection=28>

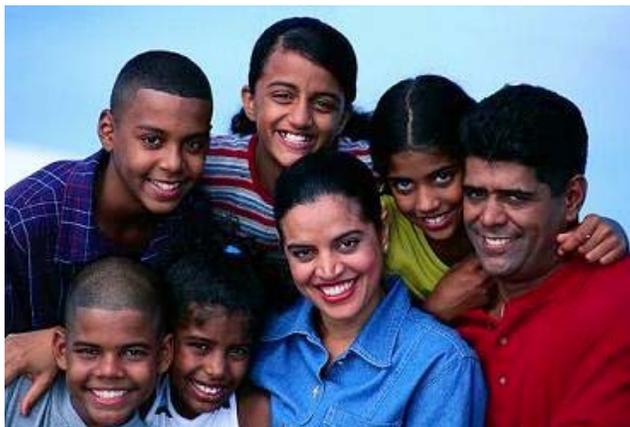
“Answers to your relationship questions are posted here.”

### [Teen Health FX - Sexuality & Sexual Health](http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Sexuality/index.php)

<http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Sexuality/index.php>

“Everyone has questions about their (or someone else’s) sexuality and this is the place to find the answers without being embarrassed. Really!”

## Section Five: Family, Parents, & Generational Conflict



As adolescents develop into adults, there may be a natural inclination toward independence from one's family. This developing independence may cause friction, stress, and perhaps even conflict at home. As adolescence can be a time of great change and stress, having a good relationship with adults, especially one's parents can significantly aid youth as they adapt to new, dynamic environments.

The relationship between a parent and his or her teenage child may take on a considerably new form from that when the child was only a few years younger. Adolescent parent-child relationships must work to develop new degrees of communication and understanding. Parents and their teenage children must work to develop this new relationship, not only teaching one another but also forging a stronger familial bond. The following activities facilitate adolescents' acknowledgment of their families' important role in their lives while offering them the opportunity to developing the lasting social skills that maintain loving and open familial relationships.

### **Sibling Relationships**

Relationships between siblings are often life's most influential and longest lasting relationships. As such, sibling relationships can play a crucial role in adolescents' development. Adolescents' greater sensitivity to the complex nature of sibling relationships, influenced by varying age, gender, age-spacing, and birth order, may aid their adjustment to varying degrees of stress in the greater family and cultural environment. The following activities facilitate youths' acknowledgement of the importance of sibling relationships.

#### **Family Order**

*Materials: None*

[5 – 10 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A discussion activity
- ❖ Participants discuss their family experiences based on their order of birth

Instructions:

1. The participants should break into four groups based on their birth order.
  - a. Oldest child
  - b. Youngest child
  - c. Any place in the middle
  - d. Only child
2. The participants should discuss their experiences based on their place in their families.
  - a. What family responsibilities did you have because of your birth order?
  - b. How did you relate to your other siblings? Were you close?

Potential Concerns:

- ❖ If any of the groups have only one participant, the facilitator should direct that person into another (the smallest) group.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you were growing up, what did you like about your place in your family? What didn't you like?
2. Looking back, would you prefer to have a different place in your family?

## **Assertive Communication & Negotiation**

Communication and trust are the foundation of any relationship. Especially in adolescent parent-child relationships wherein youth are taking their first independent steps, effectively expressing expectations, emotions, and frustrations is vitally important to maintaining a positive and encouraging relationship. The following activities facilitate youths' communication skills in familial contexts.

### **Functional Communication**

*Materials: Note Cards, Markers*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify and practice modes of communication in a variety of parent-child relational contexts

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should write five types of parental communication styles on five individual note cards.
  - a. Anger Response
  - b. Indifferent Response
  - c. Compassionate Response

- d. Evasive Response
- e. Nervous Response
2. The participants should be split into five groups, one for each of the five parental communication styles.
3. In turn, the facilitator should introduce each role-playing situation. The facilitator should be the parent character in each scene and recite a short monologue.
4. After the facilitator's monologue, the participants must decide which of the five communication styles the parent [facilitator] displayed.
5. The corresponding group should discuss how a child could respond to the parent. After reaching a decision, the group should send one participant to act alongside the facilitator.
6. The facilitator should recite his or her monologue again. The participant should respond in the manner chosen by his or her group. The group can send as many participants as they would like.

*Example:*

This is just an example. Other monologues can be written that better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other parental communication styles can be chosen to highlight different skills that are necessary for negotiating parental relationships.

Scene #1: "Can't You Ever Behave?"

1. The facilitator should give a short monologue, enthusiastically and emphatically portraying one of the five parental communication styles:
  - a. Anger Response: "You were kicked out of class! I can't believe you! Don't speak right now. I cannot believe that you would do this. Your education is important and you have to know that. Why can't you just behave yourself? "
  - b. Nervous Response: "You were kicked out of class? I don't understand. What's going on with you? I feel like I don't even know you anymore. The child that I knew doesn't fight in class and get himself kicked out."

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think parents should discipline their children? If you were a parent, how would you respond in the situations we just saw?
2. How should the children respond to their parents' discipline in order to keep the lines of communication open?

## **Wrapping Up**

Group processing is members' reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group's goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is important to process after each activity. Though the

following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths' processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group's needs and experiences.

As we grow up, we naturally become more independent. We drift from our parents somewhat as we find out who we are and what we want to do. Our families know this, but it can be hard to feel someone you love do things without you. But it is important to continue to have a strong relationship with your parents and friends as you grow; they have advice and wisdom that we can learn from. I noticed how open and honest you all were as we talked about some of the hardships of dealing with our families. Family life can be very personal, and you all did a good job connecting with one another and offering advice and help. Remember what we talked about and learned today because it will help you or someone you love in the future.

Did we address the family issues that are most important to you?

How can we better address those needs in the future?

You all have worked extremely hard reflecting on your relationships with your family! I am proud of you and I am glad that we had this discussion; it is almost like we are growing into a family! I am excited to know that all of you realize how important your family relationships are!

## **For Parents**

While your youth group is making strides in promoting the healthy development of your teens, it takes changes and activity in the family environment to make lasting changes. In order to keep the parents of the youth involved in their children's health education, a letter or a phone call introducing the group and its content should be a priority. The following letter is solely a template toward that end.

Dear Parent,

Your child has the opportunity to participate in workshops designed in cooperation with Heartland Alliance Refugee Health Programs. These workshops incorporate culturally sensitive physical, mental, and social health educational lesson plans with some emphasis on those issues that especially affect refugee and immigrant adolescents.

In this unit, your child will discuss family, parents, and generational conflict, including issues such as sibling relationships and assertive communication and negotiation.

The obstacles teenagers face are difficult, so it is important as parents to create and maintain positive communication with your adolescent

regarding this topic and many others. We encourage you to discuss your own experiences and beliefs regarding your relationship with your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [organization's name] at [organization's number].

Thank you!

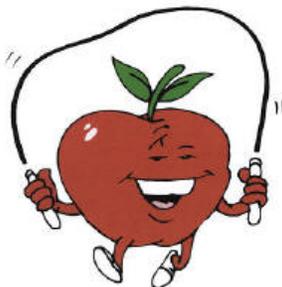
### **For More Information**

For more information on any of the topics discussed in the Family, Parents, & Generational Conflict section of this toolkit (and more!):

[Teen Health FX - Parents & Family](http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Relationships/subcategory.php?subsection=22)

<http://www.teenhealthfx.com/answers/Relationships/subcategory.php?subsection=22>  
“Answers to your family questions are posted here.”

## Section Six: Healthy Choices



As young people, adolescents have multitudes of options and opportunities available to them. From clothing styles to educational pathways, teenagers are given the chance to choose. With so many choices, the endeavor can seem overwhelming or confusing to some adolescents. While making mistakes on those decisions can sometimes lead to positive learning experiences for youth, many negative choices have dire consequences.

In order to help adolescents make better choices more often regarding those issues that may lead to such negative consequences, they must learn and practice the necessary communication and decision-making skills. Facilitators' empathy and role modeling in the following activities foster personal responsibility while empowering youth to take charge of their lives and the decisions they choose to act upon.

### Nutrition

Contemporary teenagers are busier than ever before. Food has started to catch up to its fast-paced consumer. However, fast food lacks the necessary nutrients to fuel developing young adults. The following activities facilitate adolescents' understanding of the proper components of a healthy and balanced diet.

#### **Pyramid Relay**

*Materials: Note Cards, Markers, Envelopes, Paper Bag, Easel Paper, The Food Pyramid*

[15 – 20 minutes]

#### Objectives:

- ❖ An active, identification activity
- ❖ Participants identify and categorize different types of food into their proper food groups

#### Instructions:

1. If a copy of The Food Pyramid is not available, the facilitator should draw it on a piece of easel paper, labeling each space with the proper food group name and the number of servings needed each day.
  - a. Grains Group, 6-11 servings
  - b. Fruit Group, 2-4 servings
  - c. Vegetable Group, 3-5 servings
  - d. Dairy Group, 2-3 servings
  - e. Protein Group, 2-3 servings
  - f. Oil Group, sparingly
2. The facilitator should tape an envelope to each area of the pyramid.
3. The facilitator should write the names of different types of foods on the note cards twice (two note cards should display the same food).
  - a. Bread, Pasta, Oatmeal, Cereal, Tortillas, Grits, Injera, Rice, Popcorn, Crackers
  - b. Apples, Bananas, Strawberries, Watermelon, Oranges, Peaches, Grapes, Mangoes, Raisins, Peaches
  - c. Broccoli, Spinach, Carrots, Yams, Okra, Corn, Potatoes, Cabbage, Green Beans, Onions
  - d. Frozen Yogurt, Ice Cream, Cheese, Milk, Yogurt
  - e. Beef, Chicken, Turkey, Eggs, Almonds, Cashews, Peanuts, Salmon, Crab, Catfish
  - f. Donuts, Cookies, French Fries, Cake
4. The two sets of note cards should be placed into two paper bags in the front of the room.
5. The participants should be divided into two teams. Each team should line up in a single file. When the facilitator indicates, the first participant in line should go to the paper bag in front of him or her, draw a note card, and place the card into the envelope in the correct food group of The Food Pyramid. After the first participant returns to the line, the second participant should do the same thing. This should continue until both teams have used all of their note cards. The team who finishes first should receive 15 points, the other team 10.
6. The facilitator should then check the envelopes to be sure that the foods are correctly categorized. Each team should receive 2 points for each properly placed food item. While doing this, the facilitator should review nutritional information with about the food groups with the participants.
  - a. Grains: Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. They are good sources of fiber, for a healthy digestive tract, helping to reduce cholesterol, and providing a “full” feeling. They are also good sources of carbohydrates and iron for energy, and other vitamins and minerals.
  - b. Fruits: Any fruit, canned, fresh, frozen, or dried, or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group. They provide minerals like potassium that reducing the risk of developing organ diseases.
  - c. Vegetables: Any vegetable, raw or cooked, fresh, caned, or dried, or 100% vegetable juice counts as part of the vegetable group. They provide

minerals like potassium that reducing the risk of developing organ diseases.

- d. Dairy: All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are part of the dairy group. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not. Most dairy choices should be fat-free or low fat. They provide calcium to build and maintain bone mass throughout the life cycle.
- e. Protein: All foods made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are part of this group. Most meat and poultry choices should be lean or low fat. Proteins function as the building blocks for bones, muscles, skin, and blood.
- f. Oils: Fatty foods like mayonnaise, certain salad dressings, margarine, and butter. Some oil intake is essential: those found in fish, nuts, and vegetable oils for example. However, the amount of oil consumed needs to be limited.

### Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to eat a variety of foods?
2. What can you do to eat healthier when you're out with friends or family?
3. How can you encourage your family to eat healthier too?

### Exercise

Teenagers face drastic bodily changes from growing taller and developing a deeper voice, to developing breasts and wider hips. In order to maintain health and proper physical development, daily exercise is a necessary activity for adolescents. The following activities inform youth about the benefits of exercise while offering possible sports, activities, and alternatives suited to their needs.

#### **Frisbee Horseshoes**

*Materials: Hula Hoops (or Ropes), Note Cards, Frisbees, Markers, Tape, Easel Paper*

[15 – 20 minutes]

#### Objectives:

- ❖ An active, identification activity
- ❖ Participants practice the skill of throwing a Frisbee
- ❖ Participants learn about the benefits of exercise

#### Instructions:

1. Before the activity, the facilitator should set up the field of play by dropping hula-hoops around a large open space. The hula-hoops should be placed about 20 feet from a line of tape on one side of the field.
2. In the middle of each hula-hoop, the facilitator should place note cards displaying assorted benefits of exercise from three categories. The note cards in each hula-hoop should be the same color, but a different color than the others:

- a. Increased Cardiovascular Fitness: Stronger Heart Muscle, Lower Heart Rate, Lower Blood Pressure, Improved Circulation, Reduced Chance of Heart Attack, Relief of Depression, Improved Sleep Habits, Fewer Stress Symptoms
  - b. Improved Strength and Muscular Endurance: Athletic Performance Improvement, Reduction of Muscular Injury, Decreased Fatigue Symptoms, Increased Social Interactions, Reduction of Body Fat
  - c. Improved Flexibility: Reduction of Joint Injury, Improved Relaxation, Improved Intake of Nutrients, Improved Posture, Improved Focus, Increased Range of Motion,
3. In pairs, the participants must throw their Frisbees from behind the line of tape, trying to land them inside of the hula-hoops. One of the participants should be standing near the hula-hoop. When their team's Frisbee lands in their hula-hoop, that participant should retrieve one of the note cards and run back to the line, switching positions with his or her partner.
  4. After the participants have collected all of their note cards, they should attempt to group their note cards based on the physical category of exercise (flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular). A piece of easel paper should be separated into three columns, one a heart, the other a bicep, and the last a pretzel (representing cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility). The participants must tape their note cards underneath the correct columns. The first group to do so wins!

Discussion Questions:

1. What activities or sports can you participate in to improve your flexibility, cardiovascular health, and strength?
2. If you could design your own exercise program, what activities would it include?

## Hygiene

In the early years of adolescence, youth may become more and more interested in hygiene as they are exposed to more messages and advertisements about hygiene products in television and magazine advertisements. The intricacies of hair, skin, and sex-specific care are vitally important information for teens to learn. The following activities inform youth about the important, and sometimes culturally specific, aspects of hygiene.

### **The Morning Routine**

*Materials: Samples of Shampoos, Soaps, Lotions, Deodorants, Dolls with Hair, Small Tubs (Tupperware) of Water, Washcloths, Towels, Easel Paper, Markers*  
[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants identify the key parts of the body to wash
- ❖ Participants learn about personal care products like shampoos, soaps, lotions, etc.

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should write proper showering/bathing techniques on a piece of easel paper.
  - a. Wash from top to bottom.
  - b. Use a dime-sized drop of shampoo and body wash.
  - c. Shower or bath everyday.
2. The facilitator should draw a silhouette of a person onto a piece of easel paper. As participants brainstorm, the facilitator should write the names of the important areas to wash, drawing arrows to those places on the body.
  - a. What parts of the body are most important to wash?
3. The facilitator should distribute a tub of water, washcloth, towel, and doll to each participant. The participants should demonstrate proper bathing techniques, verbalizing the procedure as they work.
4. After the participants have finished, the facilitator should demonstrate the use of lotions and deodorants, drawing arrows on the silhouetted person on the easel paper.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do people need to keep their bodies clean?
2. How do you know when you need a bath or shower?

## **Substance Abuse**

Adolescents may be curious about experimenting with alcohol and illegal drugs as glamorous images of drug use are habitual in the media and false information is prevalent among groups of friends. The information that young people hear about drugs and alcohol is often incorrect, leading them to poor decisions and alarming consequences. The following activities provide young people with correct and contextual information about drugs and alcohol while facilitating youths' communication skills in situations where substance abuse may occur.

### **Decisions & Influence**

*Materials: Cookies (Assorted Snacks), Pens, Note Cards*  
[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification and role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify external and internal influences that affect their behavior
- ❖ Participants explore how a variety of influences impact their decision-making on a daily basis

Instructions:

1. On the center of a table, the facilitator should set a plate of cookies (or other snack) marked "Wellness Cookies."
2. Five (volunteer) participants should act in the role-playing situation (the rest of the participants should sit in a semi-circle around the table). The facilitator

- should give each of the involved participants a note card displaying their instructions. The participants should not show their instruction card to anyone else.
- a. Three of the participants should get a note card that reads, “Take one wellness cookie, eat it slowly, and try to persuade everyone else at the table to eat a cookie.”
  - b. The fourth participant should get a card that reads, “Wait two minutes, then take a cookie.”
  - c. The fifth participant should get a card that reads, “Do not take a cookie, no matter what.”
3. The participants should act for at least five minutes.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. For participant #5: How did you feel being pressured to do something you were told not to? For entire group: What are some ways to combat that kind of pressure?
2. For participant #4: How did you feel when you gave in? For participant #5: How did you feel when participant #4 gave in? For entire group: Why do people give in?
3. For participants #1, #2, and #3: How did you feel persuading the others? For entire group: Have you ever pressured someone into doing something? How does it feel?
4. Who affects the decisions that you make? If this activity was about drugs or alcohol, instead of the “wellness cookies,” how would that change your answers to the previous questions?

## Wrapping Up

Group processing is members’ reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group’s goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is important to process after each activity. Though the following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths’ processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group’s needs and experiences.

Being healthy means taking care of our bodies as well. What we put into them and how we treat them is very important to our health and lives. I noticed how excited and open you all were to learning about these issues and their significant. You all did a good job considering how you can make changes in your lives, and how you can help the people around you make healthier choices as well. Remember what we talked about and learned today because it will help you or someone you love in the future.

Did we address the personal choices that are most important to you?  
How can we better address those needs in the future?  
You all have worked extremely hard learning how to make healthier choices in your lives! I am proud of you and I am glad to be a part of your new healthy selves! I am excited to see all of you grow into healthy and happy young adults!

## **For Parents**

While your youth group is making strides in promoting the healthy development of your teens, it takes changes and activity in the family environment to make lasting changes. In order to keep the parents of the youth involved in their children's health education, a letter or a phone call introducing the group and its content should be a priority. The following letter is solely a template toward that end.

Dear Parent,

Your child has the opportunity to participate in workshops designed in cooperation with Heartland Alliance Refugee Health Programs. These workshops incorporate culturally sensitive physical, mental, and social health educational lesson plans with some emphasis on those issues that especially affect refugee and immigrant adolescents.

In this unit, your child will discuss healthy choices, including issues such as exercise, nutrition, substance abuse, and hygiene.

The obstacles teenagers face are difficult, so it is important as parents to create and maintain positive communication with your adolescent regarding this topic and many others. We encourage you to discuss your own experiences and beliefs regarding healthy lifestyle choices with your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [organization's name] at [organization's number].

Thank you!

## **For More Information**

For more information on any of the topics discussed in the Healthy Choices section of this toolkit (and more!):

### [Teens Health - Food & Fitness](http://kidshealth.org/teen/food_fitness)

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/food\\_fitness](http://kidshealth.org/teen/food_fitness)

“Ever wonder if some diets are really safe? Or how you can excel at sports? Get the lowdown on healthy eats, dieting, strength training, eating disorders, steroids, and more.”

[Teens Health - Drugs & Alcohol](http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol)

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug\\_alcohol](http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol)

“Smoking, drinking, and doing drugs can really affect people's lives. Is your life affected? Discover the truth in this section.”

## Section Seven: Media Images



Culture, fame, glamour, and popularity can be at the height of adolescents' concern as they navigate their new social environments as emerging adults. The images that adolescents are exposed to in music, television, movies, newspapers, magazines, and advertisements glorify and glamorize harmful aspects of youth culture with false portrayals of activities as more fun and exciting than they actually are. These kinds of images can be significantly harmful to adolescents who may internalize the false portrayals and act out the behavior.

While the media can be a valuable tool for adolescents as they build social networks and acquire knowledge, gaining the ability to analyze, dissect, and evaluate the images shown therein is an important aspect of maintaining youths' health. The following activities facilitate adolescents' acknowledgment of the sometimes negative and harmful portrayals promoted by the media while offering them the opportunity to negotiate and clarify their own developing values.

### **Sexuality**

The media negatively illustrates images and words on sexuality. Adolescents may be confused with the mixed messages the media gives. It is vital to foster a healthy conversation on sexuality with teenagers as well as discuss the importance of sexuality that respects one another.

#### **Mixed Messages**

*Materials: Markers, Easel Paper, Pens, Paper*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A discussion activity

- ❖ Participants discuss the different messages about sexuality that family, friends, and the media offer them

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should write the word “sexuality” across a piece of easel paper.
2. The participants should discuss their definitions of the word “sexuality.” The facilitator should emphasize that there is no wrong answer, and should try not to influence the participant’s definition. As the participants share their definitions, the facilitator should write them on the easel paper.
3. After the participants offer their definitions, the facilitator should break them into three groups. One group should discuss and write down the messages about sexuality that their parents offer. One group should discuss and write down the messages about sexuality that their friends offer. One group should discuss and write down the messages about sexuality that the media offers.
4. The participants should present their written ideas to the rest of the group.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the similarities between the messages your family, friends, and the media give you about sexuality? What are the differences?
2. Do you believe any of the messages your friends, family, or the media tell you about sexuality?

## **Body Images**

In a world where beauty is often characterized by weight, skin color, and hair, it may seem impossible to overlook the importance of real beauty. Real beauty attributes traits of confidence, character, and attitude. Youth are constantly shown images by the media that give a false image of what beauty is. It is important to nurture an environment that shows real inner beauty.

### **The Ideal**

*Materials: Popular Magazines, Paper, Glue, Markers, Scissors, Easel Paper*  
[20 – 25 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants identify negative aspects of advertising
- ❖ Participants explore how their individual styles are defined and who influences them

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should instruct the participants to create the ideal woman and the ideal man using features (eyes, hair, noses, mouths, chests, etc.) cut out from popular magazines.
2. After the participants are done, the participants should individually list the features of the ideal man and woman on the back of their papers.

3. The facilitator should prompt the participants to share some of their ideas. The facilitator should write these on a piece of easel paper.
  - a. What are the features of the ideal woman/man?
4. The facilitator should prompt the participants to list celebrities (athletes, movie stars, musicians, models, etc.) that the media focuses on that they think qualify as ideal men or women.
  - a. What physical features (hair color, breasts, abs, butt, etc.) do these people have in common? Does the media focus on this?
  - b. What non-physical features (sense of humor, intelligence, kindness, etc.) do these people have in common? Does the media focus on this?

Discussion Questions:

1. How did your list of features of the ideal man and woman compare to those features focused on by the media? Are there similarities? What are the differences? Does the media affect how you picture the “ideal” man or woman?
2. Is your conception of a good woman or good man portrayed in the media? Where?
3. Are certain people held to different standards of beauty than others? Why or why not?
4. Can celebrities be good role models for young people? Why or why not?
5. How can we work to strengthen our own standards of beauty in spite of our being bombarded with images from the media everyday?

## **Stereotypes**

Stereotypes negatively affect an adolescent’s well being, causing barriers in their personal growth by reinforcing inaccurate portrayals of their lives. By reinforcing stereotypes on adolescents, their well being may become limited to their stereotypes. It is vital for facilitators to discuss the inaccuracy of stereotypes with adolescents.

### **Lyrics Matter**

*Materials: Boom Box, Music Selection, Copies of Song Lyrics, Paper*  
[10 – 15 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants identify and analyze the negative imagery in mainstream popular music

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should look up the most popular songs of the day (Billboard Top 100; songs that the youth are very familiar with) and their lyrics.
2. The facilitator should play at least two songs for the participants, leading short discussions after each song.
  - a. What was the song about?
  - b. What images go with this song?

3. The facilitator should distribute small squares of red and green paper to the participants. The facilitator should play the songs for the participants again. Whenever the participants hear lyrics that describe something that sounds fun or exciting to them, they should raise their green pieces of paper (the facilitator should mark these places on a copy of the lyrics). Whenever the participants hear lyrics that they think are negative, they should raise their red pieces of paper (the facilitator should also mark this on his or her copy of the lyrics).
4. After the participants have responded to the songs, the facilitator should hand out copies of the lyrics. The facilitator should go through the lyrics with the participants, recounting at which points participants rose either green or red sheets of paper.

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of lyrics or imagery is attractive to you? What sounds good to you?
2. Can hearing negative lyrics affect the way you think or your behavior? Why or why not?
3. Does the artist have an effect on the lyrics? If you heard another artist sing the lyrics we just heard, would you find them positive or negative?

**Pictures Worth 1000 Words**

*Materials: Paper, Pens, Easel Paper, Tape*  
[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants identify and analyze stereotypes

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should prepare (at least) five pictures of people who do not fit selected stereotypes (see Example). The chosen pictures should be ones that do indicate the persons' occupations.
2. The facilitator should tape the pictures to individual pieces of easel paper and post them around the room.
3. The participants should walk around the room and write three adjectives under each picture, describing the person it shows.
4. The participants should be given the titles for each of the people in the pictures. As a group, the participants must walk around the room and tape the correct titles to the pictures.

Example:

These are just a few examples. Other people can be researched and chosen to better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other people can be chosen to highlight different stereotypes that affect the lives of your participants.

1. Sidney Ribeau, University President
2. Arthur Fry, Chemist / Inventor

3. Cornel West, University Professor
4. Joe Moore, Chicago Alderman
5. Charley Pride, Country Singer
6. Harrison Ford, Actor
7. Bobby McFerrin, Jazz Singer
8. Warren Buffet, Businessman
9. Wole Soyinka, Poet / Novelist
10. Robert Jarvik, Doctor

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What were your initial responses to the pictures? What about the people in the pictures made you think what you did?
2. How did you make your decisions about who's who in this activity? Did the adjectives under the pictures help you or make your decision harder?
3. Are you surprised to find out the correct answers? Why or why not?
4. What are stereotypes? How do they affect the way people interact with each other?

### **Wrapping Up**

Group processing is members' reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group's goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is important to process after each activity. Though the following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths' processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group's needs and experiences.

What we see on TV and in the movies, what we hear in music, it all goes by us so fast that we can forget how it affects our thinking. Being aware of how the media packages information directed specifically at us will help us to digest only positive messages and images. No matter what the media says, all of you are special, talented, beautiful people with a lot to offer this community. I noticed how supportive and encouraging you all were as we examined the negative images promoted in the media. You all did a good job considering to how those images affect you, your friends, and your families. Remember what we talked about and learned today because it will help you or someone you love in the future.

Did we address the media issues that are most important to you?

How can we better address those needs in the future?

You all have worked extremely hard learning how to understand the media! I am proud of you and I am glad to know that all of you will think about what you are seeing and hearing in the media! I am excited to see

how all of you can be positive influences on each other despite the media's negativity!

## **For Parents**

While your youth group is making strides in promoting the healthy development of your teens, it takes changes and activity in the family environment to make lasting changes. In order to keep the parents of the youth involved in their children's health education, a letter or a phone call introducing the group and its content should be a priority. The following letter is solely a template toward that end.

Dear Parent,

Your child has the opportunity to participate in workshops designed in cooperation with Heartland Alliance Refugee Health Programs. These workshops incorporate culturally sensitive physical, mental, and social health educational lesson plans with some emphasis on those issues that especially affect refugee and immigrant adolescents.

In this unit, your child will discuss the media, including issues such as sexuality, body image, and stereotypes.

The obstacles teenagers face are difficult, so it is important as parents to create and maintain positive communication with your adolescent regarding this topic and many others. We encourage you to discuss your own experiences and beliefs regarding the influence of the media with your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [organization's name] at [organization's number].

Thank you!

## **For More Information**

For more information on any of the topics discussed in the Media Images section of this toolkit (and more!):

[Teen Aware - Sex, Media, and You](http://depts.washington.edu/taware/view.cgi?section=s1)

<http://depts.washington.edu/taware/view.cgi?section=s1>

“Media surround us--as big business, as art, entertainment, and propaganda. To understand the issues and concepts of our time, we must understand both its influence and inspiration.”

## Section Eight: Identity Development



Being a teenager is undoubtedly one of the hardest stages of life to live. On top of trying to successfully deal with parents, friends, and relationships, many adolescents come face-to-face with questioning their identity. Questions in regards to what they stand for, what friends they should have, and what choices they should make are all common when developing their identity.

Identity development may become most difficult with teenagers of two cultures. For many youth, being immersed into a different culture not of their parents may be confusing and upsetting. At many times, assimilation into a new culture occurs very quickly for youth. Understanding both cultures and choosing healthy and positive qualities of these cultures are necessary to ensure constructive growth in a teenager's identity.

### **Racial & Ethnic Identity**

Growing up in the United States, where various ethnic and racial groups subsist causes many adolescents to question their identity. In a world where racial stereotypes may wrongly misinterpret a person's character, it is vital for facilitators to encourage adolescents to celebrate their ethnicity and race, as well as provide active listening for youth who have experienced racial discrimination.

#### **Racial Profiling**

*Materials: Note Cards, Markers, Easel Paper*  
[10-15 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ A role-playing activity
- ❖ Engage students in a discussion of racial profiling

- ❖ Participants learn methods of handling bad moods

Instructions:

1. Prepare the room by creating three large signs. One should say “Agree.” A second should say “Disagree.” The third should say “Undecided.”
2. Place these signs in different areas of the room so that at the appropriate time, students can gather around or under them.
3. The facilitator will ask questions or statements to the participants regarding racial profiling.
4. The participants will answer the question or statement by moving to one of the three signs.
5. After the participants go to one of the signs, the facilitator will ask the participants to share why the participants choose that specific sign in relation to the question.
6. Some of the questions asked are as followed.
  - a. Police should be given a free hand to apprehend those who commit criminal acts.
  - b. Police officers should be able to only stop motorists of certain racial or ethnic groups because officers believe that these groups are more likely than others to commit certain types of crime.
  - c. It is okay for police to stop young drivers for no other reason than the fact that the driver is young.
  - d. In order to fight terrorism, law enforcement should be allowed to randomly stop people who may fit the profile of suspected terrorists.
  - e. Our constitutional rights are our only protection against the unlimited power of the police and other government officials.
  - f. Police should be able to hit other people in custody
  - g. Does it make sense to use race to make sure crimes are reported accurately?

Discussion Questions:

1. What is racial profiling? Have you ever felt like you were racially profiled? What did you do in that incident? How did you feel?
2. In a situation where you believe that you have been racially profiled, what do you do? What can be done to eradicate racial profiling?

## **Gender Identity & Roles**

For many youth with two cultural identities it is vital to negotiate and reconcile positive gender identities from their home country and from America. While living in the United States may harbor gender roles intact with American culture, it is important to not disassociate healthy lifestyles and gender roles from their home country.

### **Act Like a Man / Be a Lady**

*Materials: Easel Paper, Markers*

[15 – 20 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification and role-playing activity
- ❖ Participants identify gender stereotypes as promoted by the media

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should write “Act Like a Man” across the top of a piece of easel paper and record student responses/brainstorming.
  - a. What does it mean to “act like a man?” What words or expectations come to mind?
  - b. What does it mean to “act like a man” while on a date? While playing sports? In the classroom? At home? Etc.
2. The facilitator should then write, “Be a Lady” across the top of another piece of easel paper and record student responses/brainstorming.
  - a. What does it mean to “be a lady?” What words or expectations come to mind?
  - b. What does it mean to “be a lady” while on a date? While playing sports? In the classroom? At home? Etc.
3. The facilitator should then write the words “Music,” “Television,” “Movies” on a piece of easel paper and record the youths’ responses.
  - a. How does music/television/movies reinforce “acting like a man” and “being a lady?”
4. The facilitator should introduce a role-playing situation. Twice the involved participants should act out each situation: once exhibited the stereotypical behavior (“acting like a man” or “being ladylike”), and once as themselves.

*Example:*

This is just one example. Other scenes can be written that better reflect the concerns of the participants in your youth group. Moreover, other situations can be highlighted based on the participants’ concerns and interests.

Scene #1: A Date

1. The facilitator should introduce the scene with a short monologue:
  - a. “Marcus and Yasmine are on their first date. They are sitting across from each other at a nice restaurant. Both are a bit nervous; they really want the date to go well. As they finish eating, their server brings them the check.”
2. The facilitator should act as one of the characters in the situation, opposite the involved participant.
3. The participant should first exhibit the behaviors that conform to the stereotype of “acting like a man” or “being a lady” as the participants listed earlier.
4. The situation should be reset and acted out again, however, the participant should this time act as him- or herself.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where do we learn this kind of gender roles? How does the media (television, music, movies, etc.) affect the way we act?

2. What names or put-downs are directed at boys or girls who do not fit these kinds of gender stereotypes? How do these names reinforce the stereotypes? How can we work to alleviate that kind of name-calling?
3. In what situations may you be pressured to “act like a man” or “be a lady?” Do these stereotypes have any kind of negative consequences? Do they have any positive consequences?

## **Multiple Cultures**

Living in a country where teenagers have to deal with societal issues that are different from their parent’s culture is always difficult. These adolescents have to interact with family and friends who may have different perceptions of what qualities an obedient adolescent is to act in comparison to family and friends from other cultures. In addition to generational obstacles, the media, and the adolescent’s environment play a huge role in dealing with multiple cultures. It is important, as facilitators, to nurture a positive environment for adolescents to make positive decision when it comes to facing obstacles and choices that can affect their lives.

### **Overlapping Identities**

*Materials: Markers, Easel Paper*

[10 – 15 minutes]

Objectives:

- ❖ An identification activity
- ❖ Participants reflect on the cultural similarities and differences between the U.S. and their home countries
- ❖ Participants identify valued qualities of the U.S culture and of their home country
- ❖ Participants negotiate their position as culturally “in-between” their home country and the U.S.

Instructions:

1. The facilitator should draw a large Venn diagram (two overlapping circles) on a piece of easel paper. On the diagram, one circle should be titled ‘U.S. Qualities’ and the other “Home Country Qualities.”
2. The participants should brainstorm qualities that describe people from the U.S. and from their home countries. The facilitator should write the participants’ ideas in the appropriate circles. The middle, overlapping part of the Venn diagram is for those qualities that overlap between both cultures.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which part of the circle do you most identify with? Why? Is it possible for you to be in one part of the circle during different times or events?
2. How do people from both cultures demonstrate the overlapping qualities?
3. Are any of the qualities opposites? What does this mean for you?

## **Wrapping Up**

Group processing is members' reflection on their work and interactions, focused on refining and improving their efforts to achieve the group's goals and ensure positive effective working relationships. Especially in groups where members share information about sensitive topics, such as those discussed in this toolkit, processing streamlines the learning process and allows members to focus on the responsible and skillful actions that have learned and practiced. It is important to process after each activity. Though the following is just one short discussion template, this type of discussion should be conducted after each group meeting to facilitate youths' processing of the topics covered in this section of the toolkit. Feel free to modify it to suit your group's needs and experiences.

Answering the question, "Who am I?" is one of the important tasks of our lives. It affects our jobs, our religious lives, our family lives, our educations, and much more. Understanding how the people around us and the places that we come from shape our identities is an important part of answering that question. I noticed how supportive and encouraging you all were as we examined all the parts of ourselves that we find important. You all did a good job considering how all of those aspects are important parts of who we are. Remember what we talked about and learned today because it will help you or someone you love in the future.

Did we address the identity issues that are most important to you?

How can we better address those needs in the future?

You all have worked extremely hard learning to celebrate who you are! I am proud of you and I am glad that we had this chance to talk about the wonderful people that we are! I am excited to see you all grow and develop more parts of yourselves!

## **For Parents**

While your youth group is making strides in promoting the healthy development of your teens, it takes changes and activity in the family environment to make lasting changes. In order to keep the parents of the youth involved in their children's health education, a letter or a phone call introducing the group and its content should be a priority. The following letter is solely a template toward that end.

Dear Parent,

Your child has the opportunity to participate in workshops designed in cooperation with Heartland Alliance Refugee Health Programs. These workshops incorporate culturally sensitive physical, mental, and social health educational lesson plans with some emphasis on those issues that especially affect refugee and immigrant adolescents.

In this unit, your child will discuss their identity development, including issues such as racial and ethnic identity, gender identity and roles, and their belonging to multiple cultures.

The obstacles teenagers face are difficult, so it is important as parents to create and maintain positive communication with your adolescent regarding this topic and many others. We encourage you to discuss your own experiences and beliefs regarding race and gender with your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [organization's name] at [organization's number].

Thank you!

### **For More Information**

For more information on any of the topics discussed in the Identity Development section of this toolkit (and more!):

#### [Your Teen's Search For Identity](http://psychcentral.com/lib/2007/your-teens-search-for-identity/)

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/2007/your-teens-search-for-identity/>

“In the teenage years, young people begin their quests for identity.”