



IDENTITY, RELATIONSHIPS, AND MEDIA

AN ACTIVITY GUIDE FOR
CAMBRIDGE'S YOUTH-SERVING PROGRAMS



CAMBRIDGE COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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The Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women (CCSW) works to promote equality for all women and girls and advocates on their behalf with other City departments and officials, local organizations, and state government to increase their opportunities through policy recommendations, program development, and public education in key issue areas identified by the Commission as significantly affecting women and girls.

For more on the **Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women**, visit our website at www.cambridgewomenscommission.org or contact:

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Cambridge has had a long-standing commitment to exceptional programming for its youth, many of whom attend after-school programs hosted by City departments, non-profit agencies and community centers, as well as for-profit organizations. Each of these programs is guided by its own mission, yet many share common goals: to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of youth across the city through welcoming and engaging programming.

To meet the social and emotional needs of youth, many organizations have taken on the responsibility of discussing larger and sometimes difficult social issues that affect young people, including race, racism, gender, sexuality, and abuse in relationships. Many have expressed the need to discuss the particular topics of identity, relationships, and media literacy within their program environments and have asked for support to do so.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guide is to introduce youth workers in Cambridge to concepts and session outlines about identity, relationships, and media literacy with youth.

Our main goal here is to provide a basic set of activities focused on gender and gender stereotypes through the lens of identity, relationships, and media literacy. We know our identities are full of complex and intersecting experiences; this guide aims to be part of a holistic approach to incorporating gender-focused activities in your programs.

HOW TO USE

This guide includes three sections - **identity, relationships, and media literacy**. Each of these larger topics includes sub-sections with session outlines. Session outlines are categorized by three levels. The levels are not necessarily meant to denote difficulty, but instead the need for scaffolding. "Scaffolding" is a strategy for lesson planning to make sure everyone is comfortable before moving on to the next activity.

Since each of these topics is complex and relates to personal experiences, it is important to first support each participant's learning and safety by building a sense of community and a shared vocabulary. **We suggest beginning with Level One activities if you are forming a new group or if you are discussing a particular topic for the first time.**

We also suggest **building community agreements and being thoughtful about youth voice and participation** before having these conversations (see next section). Finally, it might be helpful to have a **co-facilitation model**, so that all of the responsibilities do not fall on one person in a given session. Responsibilities such as time-keeping, responding to challenging questions, addressing individual behavior, and debriefing might need some extra support.

Each of the activities is **gender neutral**, meaning they can be used with any group and all genders. We strongly encourage facilitation of these conversations across all genders, and leave it up to your program expectations and dynamics to determine whether groups should be separated by gender.

In the history of gender-focused programming, many of these conversations have happened in girls- or women-only spaces. However, it is important not to place the burden of discussing gender and gender stereotypes solely on girl- or women-identified people. Providers in Cambridge have recently added programming specifically for boys to examine masculinity. This is a critical step in moving away from hyper-prescribed masculine and/or feminine stereotypes and roles. We hope that all youth, including non-binary youth, are offered the spaces in Cambridge to have these conversations.

All activities included are **appropriate for middle school ages and above**. Each program will need to determine what makes the most sense for its structure, expectations, and group dynamics.

Each larger section (identity, relationships, and media literacy) ends with **Additional Resources**. Please use these resources to further your knowledge and vocabulary and to incorporate outside resources into your activities.

The final section in this guide includes a **list of gender-focused programs in Cambridge and a list of additional resources, including emergency phone numbers and professional development opportunities**. We encourage you to reach out to other organizations doing similar work or contact us with specific questions about the activities and resources included here.

LOGISTICS

To best support all participants, please think carefully about the preparation and logistics that make each activity possible. Each activity includes a timeframe, supplies needed, and objectives. Be sure to arrange the room in a way that encourages discussion, art-making, or whatever format an activity might need.

We suggest posting an agenda and any vocabulary terms to help participants understand your goals. Rather than expecting participants to pick up on these goals and language throughout an activity, we suggest being very clear and intentional. These concepts might be new for many participants, so bring clarity, consistency, enthusiasm, and organization!

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Building a strong, healthy community is the first step to having effective discussions and activities. **Before facilitating any of the activities included here, it is helpful to form group agreements.** Group agreements are simply a list of expectations that group members would like one another to honor. You can ask “What does everyone need to feel comfortable in this space?” or “What does everyone need to feel respected?”

SOME GROUP AGREEMENTS MIGHT INCLUDE ►►

ONE MIC Give your attention to one person speaking at a time.

CONFIDENTIALITY You can share what you've learned here, but not specifics about people in the group.

TAKE SPACE & MAKE SPACE Some people might be more inclined to speak than others. Make sure that everyone has an opportunity to share their thoughts.

ASK QUESTIONS Be sure to ask questions when you have them. You are probably asking a question that other people in the room were wondering about.

These agreements might seem obvious for some participants, but displaying them during an activity can continually reinforce their importance. The group can refer back to the agreements when they feel either successful or unsuccessful in following them.

A NOTE ON PRONOUNS

Since the English language lacks a good set of gender-neutral pronouns, we have chosen to use “them,” “they,” and “their” as both singular and plural gender-neutral pronouns throughout this activity guide. We suggest facilitators invite participants to decide which pronouns they prefer and ask the group to honor these decisions.

Finally, you might already have **youth voice and leadership** incorporated in the philosophy of your program. Youth voice is about uplifting young people's voices by giving them the space to share freely and take on leadership. We have included 10 suggestions for adults facilitating the activities.

TEN WAYS TO ENCOURAGE YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

1. **Be conscious of how often you speak.** Before you share an opinion or experience, ask a participant, "What do you think?"
2. **Avoid adultist language,** such as "You need to respect me because I'm an adult" or "You're young, so you wouldn't understand" or "You'll grow out of it" or "You're so smart/mature/insightful for your age."
3. **Use "listening" language.** Try to encourage expression of voice as much as possible. Avoid phrases such as "Be quiet." Instead, ask participants to listen and explain why. For example, "Can we all listen to Tony now? They want to share an idea for this activity."
4. **Include youth in program set-up and facilitation.** Invite participants to help you with tasks such as taking notes and handing out supplies. Some activities included here also suggest having a youth leader facilitate or co-facilitate discussions.
5. **Believe them and believe in them.** So often young people are questioned on their beliefs, experiences, ability to make judgments, etc. Believe in their ability to make decisions and remember that they are the experts of their lives.
6. **Listen rather than give advice.** Unless asking specifically for advice, people are often looking for someone to listen to them. You can think through different consequences together, but do not make a decision or judgment for them.
7. **Ask questions rather than assume.** For example, if two participants are talking together and not participating in an activity, reach out and ask why they are not interested. Maybe they just want to chat or maybe they do not like the activity. If they are not comfortable with the activity, offer them an alternative, if possible.
8. **Challenge hurtful language.** If you notice that a participant says something hurtful to another participant, acknowledge it fully and explain. Say "I heard you say this to them and I did not like it. That kind of language can really hurt someone. I think they would appreciate an apology."
9. **Have fun!** Incorporate laughs, games, and fun activities. Enjoy having fun and being yourself and give youth the space to express themselves and get to know each other!
10. **Tune in.** Read body language and do not push if you notice that someone is not interested in talking about a certain topic. Give them the ability to make a decision about how much or how little they would like to share.

EVALUATION

If you would like to evaluate learning outcomes for each session, each unit has a set of overarching goals, and each individual session outline includes two to three objectives for learning. You can gauge participants' learning after each session by asking them to explain what they have gained from each objective. It is helpful to post these objectives at the start of each session, so participants know what to expect and what to take away.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY MONTH

Even if you do not have a full program focused on these topics, you can include activities around holidays or days of remembrance to spark conversations around identity, relationships, and media.

WINTER	SPRING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Black History Month (February)Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (February)One Billion Rising - Solidarity Against Exploitation of Women (February 14)Women's History Month (March)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GLSEN Day of Silence (April 15)Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April)Mental Health Awareness Month (May)Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (May)
SUMMER	FALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">LGBQ/T+ Pride Month (June)Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Day of the Girl (October 11)National Coming Out Day (October 11)Bullying Prevention Month (October)Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20)Native American Heritage Month (November)



Identity

IDENTITY is what makes us who we are. It can be as simple as our personality traits, or our interest in a music genre, or it can be a larger social identity that we share with others. We know that our social identities - race, ethnicity, class, gender identity/expression, sexuality, ability - impact our experiences of the world and shape the privileges and/or the oppressions in our lives.

In this section, we introduce session outlines focused on: **personal identity**, **gender** and **gender stereotypes**, and **sexuality**. Each section begins with basic introductory conversations around each of these topics. With each level, session outlines become more in-depth. We encourage the sequencing of activities based on levels and suggest that facilitators check for an understanding of the concepts from prior activities before moving on to new ones.

Beginning around pre-adolescence, youth are forming their self-concept and identity. They are working on understanding their place in the world, the importance of their social groups, and what makes them unique.

AS A FACILITATOR, THERE ARE FEW IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND BEFORE LEADING A SESSION IN THIS SECTION ►►

RACISM Belief in superiority or inferiority based on race. These beliefs can lead to discrimination, prejudice, or antagonism. Racism is a system of advantage based on race; it can come from individuals and it is also rooted in institutions.

SEX Based on physical traits (genitalia and sex hormones) and typically assigned by a doctor at birth. This includes male, female, and intersex. Sex is often conflated with gender. For example, the doctor assigns a baby male at birth, and the parents say they have a boy.

GENDER A social and/or cultural identity/construct. Some gender identities include woman/girl, man/boy, gender non-conforming, gender fluid, transgender, etc. Each person has a gender and each person has the right to define what their gender means to them.

SEXUALITY Sexuality is complex and can include who someone is attracted to, how they behave, and how they identify. Each person has a sexuality and each person has the right to define what their sexuality means to them.

Identity



We encourage the inclusion of outside resources to supplement activities. Though not exhaustive, there are additional resources listed at the conclusion of this section.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES In this unit, participants will:

- Reflect on their personal identities and be able to identify a few qualities that make them unique
- Understand how individual identities and personalities contribute to their learning community
- Begin thinking about societal issues, such as sexism, racism, and homophobia
- Identify gender stereotypes and expectations, and think critically about how they impact individuals and groups

PERSONAL IDENTITY: LEVEL ONE

LENGTH: 60 minutes

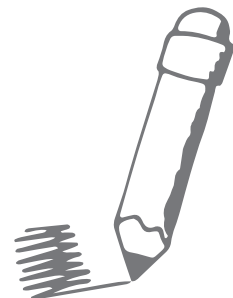
MATERIALS: Art supplies (markers, pencils, collage materials, etc.) and posters for each participant

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify core aspects of their identity that make them unique
- Learn about other participants' identities

Identity Posters

- 1** Explain to participants that the group will be thinking about each of their unique personalities, identities, and values. Write five categories for everyone to see.
[5 minutes]
 - **Values** - What do I care about?
 - **Dreams** What do I see in my future?
 - **Personality** What do I show the world?
 - **Fears** What am I afraid of?
 - **Me** What is one thing that makes me unique?
- 2** Ask participants to design a poster describing themselves in these categories.
[35 minutes]
- 3** To close, ask each person to share one question they answered within their poster. Wrap up the conversation by highlighting how many unique individuals make up this group and how valuable that is to the community. *[15 minutes]*



PERSONAL IDENTITY: LEVEL TWO

LENGTH: 50 minutes

MATERIALS: Paper, mask cut-outs (optional), art supplies (markers, pencils, collage materials, etc.)

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify stereotypes that have impacted their lives
- Identify positive qualities of their personalities and identities
- Think critically about how to challenge negative stereotypes and language

Identity Masks

- 1** Ask participants to write down things people have said about them that are not true. This can include stereotypes, misconceptions, hurtful language, etc. Emphasize that they will not need to share if they are not comfortable. ***[5 minutes]***
- 2** Ask participants to write down the positive qualities that they have. It can be their personality, interests, identities, culture and/or family traditions, etc. ***[5 minutes]***
- 3** Provide either sheets of paper that can be used on both sides, or a mask cut-out.
- 4** Ask participants to create one side that represents the untrue qualities they have listed, and one side that represents who they really are. ***[30 minutes]***
- 5** Lead a discussion and ask participants to share at their comfort level. Some potential discussion questions include... ***[10 minutes]***
 - a. What did everyone think about this activity? How did it make you feel?
 - b. How can you challenge negative stereotypes, including when they are directed at you and when you see them directed at someone else?
 - c. What did you learn about your strengths?

PERSONAL IDENTITY: LEVEL THREE

LENGTH: 90 minutes

MATERIALS: None required

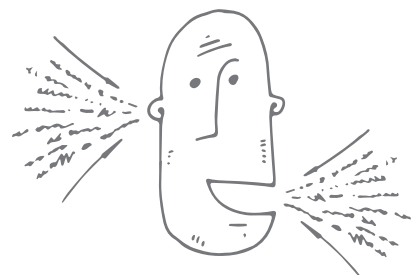
OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Define racism
- Engage in a thoughtful and respectful conversation with their peers, by listening to different experiences and opinions

Note: It is essential to be very thoughtful about the group dynamics, facilitator identity(s), and discussion questions when choosing this activity.

Race & Racism Discussion

- 1** Determine a method for creating discussion questions. This could include: 1) An anonymous space for youth participants to leave ideas; 2) Questions created by youth leaders in the group; 3) Questions created by an experienced facilitator; or 4) A combination of these options.
- 2** If the group has not already created group agreements, create group agreements for this discussion (see page 7). **[10 minutes]**
- 3** Facilitator(s) will lead the discussion, leaving most of the space for youth participants to respond. Facilitator(s) should respond to harmful language/stereotypes and provide facts when the conversation is moving in a problematic direction. **[60 minutes]**
- 4** To wrap up, provide the opportunity for each person in the group to share a personal reflection from the conversation. **[20 minutes]**



GENDER & GENDER STEREOTYPES: LEVEL ONE

LENGTH: 90 minutes

MATERIALS: Chalkboard/whiteboard or flipchart paper and markers

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify gender stereotypes in society
- Think critically about how gender stereotypes impact individuals
- Understand the difference between gender and sex

Note: This activity should be introduced before moving on to other activities in this unit.

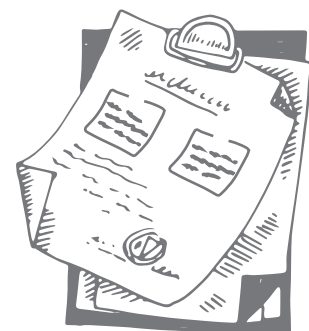
Masculinity and Femininity Boxes

- 1** Draw a box and label it "masculinity box." You can also explain it as what it means to "act like a boy."
- 2** Ask participants to identify qualities that go inside the box - attributes that are stereotypically associated with masculinity. Try to get as many responses as possible. **[10 minutes]**
- 3** Ask participants to identify qualities that go outside the box - attributes that are not typically associated with masculinity.
- 4** Ask participants to think about what happens when boys/men step outside of that box, and write them outside of the box. **[10 minutes]**
 - a. How do other people respond?
 - b. What are the social consequences?
 - c. How do they feel?
- 5** Repeat the first four steps, applying them to the "femininity box." You can also explain it as what it means to "act like a girl." **[20 minutes]**
- 6** Lead a discussion to reflect on the activity as a whole. **[50 minutes]**
 - a. Ask participants if the stereotypes inside the box are referring to sex or gender? What is the difference?
 - **Sex** Based on physical traits - genitalia - and typically assigned by a doctor at birth. This includes male, female, and intersex.

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GENDER & GENDER STEREOTYPES: LEVEL ONE

- **Gender** A social and/or cultural identity/construct. Some gender identities include woman/girl, man/boy, gender non-conforming, gender fluid, transgender woman, etc.
 - The stereotypes inside of the box are referring to gender stereotypes. Sex is often understood as synonymous with gender, but they are different.
 - Gender and sex are often seen as binary descriptions (male/female; man/woman; masculine/feminine). However, not everyone identifies within these binaries.
 - Allow time for questions about the difference between sex and gender.
- b. Ask participants if the stereotypes inside the box are referring to sex or gender? What is the difference?
- c. Where have you learned the qualities listed inside of the box? Where are these ideas reinforced?
- d. Why do you think masculinity and femininity are restricted like this?
- e. Have you ever felt personally restricted by these boxes?
- f. How do people respond when others step outside the box? Why? Do you see this applying to other parts of identity - race, class, sexuality, religion, etc.?



GENDER & GENDER STEREOTYPES: LEVEL TWO

LENGTH: 50 minutes

MATERIALS: Printed worksheets

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Take away 2-3 examples of how gender stereotypes can lead to discrimination
- Find a creative solution to the issues that stereotypes can cause

Responding to Stereotypes

- 1** Provide examples of how gender stereotypes can have harmful effects on people, such as discrimination, exclusion, lack of confidence, and more. Offer examples of creative solutions people are designing to meet the needs of those impacted by these stereotypes. Acknowledge that while these solutions might not eliminate the stereotype completely, they are working toward equity.
[15 minutes]

Some potential examples include:

STEREOTYPE	Girls and women are not naturally talented in science.
CONSEQUENCE	When girls reach sixth grade, they feel less confident and interested in science.
SOLUTION	Learning opportunities and tools available specifically to girls, including programs (Science Club for Girls, Black Girls Code) and technology (GoldieBlox).

...continued on next page

GENDER & GENDER STEREOTYPES: LEVEL TWO

STEREOTYPE	Boys and men should not cry.
CONSEQUENCE	Boys and men might feel angry or isolated because it is not socially acceptable to express their sadness.
SOLUTION	Provide awareness and emotional acceptance through educational tools (Mask You Live In film) and programs where boys can discuss it (example on page 45).

- 2 Ask participants to create their own solution to a stereotype and consequence, using the following chart. *[20 minutes]*
- 3 Allow time for participants to share their example with the group for feedback. *[15 minutes]*

STEREOTYPE	
CONSEQUENCE	
SOLUTION	

GENDER & GENDER STEREOTYPES: LEVEL THREE

LENGTH: 45 minutes

MATERIALS: Three large sheets of paper and writing materials

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Understand the impact of derogatory words
- Think critically about how to use language positively

Note: This activity might not be appropriate if you are uncomfortable with or have policies prohibiting swearing in your program..

Words Hurt

- 1** Divide the group into three smaller groups. Ask each group to make a list of words they have heard from others (peers, teachers, family, media, etc.) to describe men, women, and LGBTQ/T+ folks. Be sure to emphasize the seriousness of this activity and check-in with each group throughout the activity. **[10 minutes]**
- 2** Ask each group to post their lists for the entire group to read silently. Allow a few minutes for participants to read and think silently. **[5 minutes]**
- 3** Lead a discussion to reflect on the activity. **[30 minutes]**

Potential discussion questions include:

- How did it feel to list these words and to read them? Was it difficult to come up with your list?
- Do you notice any themes across the three lists? What are the similarities and differences?
- What do you notice about derogatory words referencing sexuality for men in comparison to women (Examples: player versus slut, manwhore versus whore)? What types of connotations do these words have?
- There are probably several people in this group who have been hurt by these words before. Do you know someone who identifies as a (insert identity being discussed)? Would you describe them using this language?
- How can you refer to someone who identifies as (insert identity being discussed) instead? What can you do if you have a question about how to refer to someone's identity?

SEXUALITY: LEVEL ONE

LENGTH: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: Flipchart paper and writing materials

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Understand the differences among gender, sexuality, and sex
- Have language for gender identities and sexuality
- Gain comfort asking questions around gender and sexuality

Understanding Gender and Sexuality

- 1** Review concepts of sex and gender presented in Gender and Gender Stereotypes: Level One activity. Allow time for any questions or clarifications if needed. *[5 minutes]*
- 2** Create a list of identities with participants. Create two categories - gender identities and sexuality. If a participant labels a gender identity as sexuality or vice versa, be sure to point that out and explain further. Allow time for questions/clarifications along with each identity. *[15 minutes]*

Some examples might include (but are not limited to):

Gender Identity	Sexuality
<i>Man</i>	<i>Lesbian</i>
<i>Woman</i>	<i>Gay</i>
<i>Non-binary</i>	<i>Bisexual</i>
<i>Transgender Man</i>	<i>Queer</i>
<i>Transgender Woman</i>	<i>Pansexual</i>
<i>Gender Fluid</i>	<i>Asexual</i>
<i>Gender Non-Conforming</i>	<i>Questioning</i>

- 3** Ask participants to anonymously write any additional questions that were not answered or they were afraid to ask. *[5 minutes]*
- 4** Respond to these questions during the next meeting or immediately if you are comfortable doing so.

SEXUALITY: LEVEL TWO

LENGTH: 60 minutes

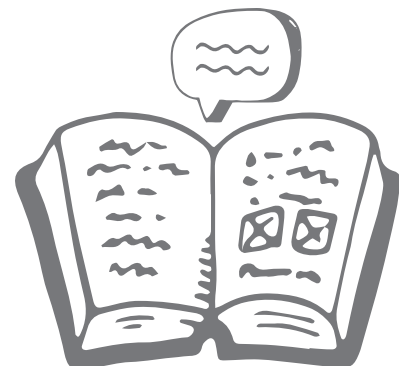
MATERIALS:

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify some challenges that LGBTQ/T+ people face due to discrimination

LGBQ/T+ Stories

- 1** Share a video from the perspective of LGBTQ/T+ youth. Many stories can be found online and one story is shared in the film "Bully," a documentary directed by Lee Hirsch. Choose a video that is appropriate for your group and that is educational.
- 2** Lead a discussion about the video(s).
 - o What are your initial reactions to the video(s)?
 - o Did anything surprise you?
 - o Did anything sound familiar? If youth talked about bullying, have you seen this happen at school?
 - o What challenges did people face in the video(s)?
 - o What did you learn?
 - o What questions do you have for the people in the video(s)?





RACE & RACISM

National Education Association | www.nea.org

The National Education Association provides a thorough list of resources for addressing race, racism, and cultural competency.

Teaching Tolerance | www.tolerance.org

Teaching Tolerance is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. The website includes resources for teachers to address institutional violence and racism in the classroom.

White People Challenging Racism | www.wpcr-boston.org

White People Challenging Racism: Moving from Talk to Action (WPCR) are workshops to guide people in examining white privilege and racism to move them toward anti-racist action. The course is open to everyone and is offered frequently in Cambridge and Boston.

GENDER STEREOTYPES, GENDER IDENTITY, AND SEXUALITY

LGBTQ+ Commission | www.cambridgema.gov/glbtc

The LGBTQ+ Commission of Cambridge advocates for a culture of respect and monitors progress toward equality of all persons with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity. The commission can be contacted for further resources in Cambridge. Meetings are open to the public.

It's Pronounced Metrosexual | www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com

This website provides a wealth of educational resources related to gender and sexuality, including a comprehensive list of gender and sexuality definitions, infographics and printable worksheets, articles, and books.

Safe Zone Project | www.thesafezoneproject.com

The Safe Zone Project is a free online resource providing LGBTQ/T+ awareness and ally training workshops. The website offers a free, downloadable 2-hour curriculum for a workshop focused on LGBTQ/T+ topics.

The Network/La Red | www.tnlr.org

The Network/La Red is a social justice, survivor-led organization working to end partner abuse in LGBTQ/T, polyamorous, and SM communities. In addition to the direct service provided to survivors, The Network/La Red offers training, technical assistance, and written educational materials.

Please refer to the Media Literacy Additional Resources section (page 45) for movies focused on gender stereotypes.



Relationships

Over the course of our lifetimes, we form many types of relationships – including with ourselves, family, friends, teammates, romantic and/or sexual partners, teachers, supervisors, co-workers, and many others. As we work with young people to support them in a variety of interpersonal relationships and interactions, it is important to discuss and acknowledge which behaviors and qualities feel healthy and safe to them.

In this section, we introduce session outlines focused on: **healthy behavior** and **self-reflection**. As with the other topics in this guide, each section is scaffolded to facilitate learning and growth.

It is important to be thoughtful about varying opinions that might come up in these conversations. For example, we often hear victim-blaming language in our society. Victim-blaming means putting the burden and blame of abuse on the survivor of violence. With the understanding that we all frequently hear these messages, it is essential to meet participants where they are, understand where their views are coming from, and support them in their learning. These activities are not intended to immediately correct or define healthy interactions for youth, but instead, begin the conversation and spark further thinking.

As we work with young people to support them in a variety of interpersonal relationships and interactions, it is important to discuss and acknowledge which behaviors and qualities feel healthy and safe to them.

While these sessions address aspects of romantic/sexual relationships, they are not sexual education. We encourage you to seek out specific resources for sexual education, including the resources listed at the conclusion of this section.

Given that mental health is an important concern for young people in Cambridge and nationally, we have included activities focused on self-reflection and individual confidence. The three activities included do not intentionally discuss self-reflection. Instead, they focus on community building, goal-setting, and skill sharing. The skills in each of these activities can help build self-confidence and a positive sense of self.

However, we still encourage you to discuss self-care techniques within the healthy behavior activities. For instance, with the sticky note activity (page 27), remind participants that they should also treat themselves well. These should not apply only to how others treat them, but to how they value themselves.

Relationships



The 2014-15 *Cambridge Teen Health Survey* found the following percentage of youth reported these experiences with interpersonal relationships while in school:

- **Bullying: 39% of middle school youth, 12% of high school youth**
- **Girls were more likely to report bullying and sexual harassment**

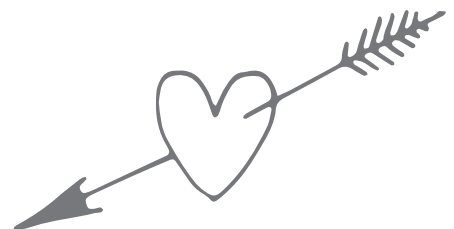
Nationally, **22% of youth ages 12 – 18 say they experienced bullying in schools**, according to a 2013 study by *The National Center for Education Statistics*.

The Cambridge survey also asked students about their mental health:

- **Feeling Depressed: 21% of middle school youth, 21% of high school youth**
- **Self-Harm: 11% of middle school youth, 12% of high school youth**
- **Attempted Suicide: 2% of middle school youth, 2% of high school youth**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES In this unit, participants will:

- Think critically about navigating their relationships by identifying healthy/unhealthy behaviors and by practicing responses to difficult relational issues
- Recognize that the relationship they have with themselves is important and identify ways of caring for themselves



HEALTHY BEHAVIOR: LEVEL ONE

LENGTH: 35 minutes

MATERIALS: Sticky notes and pens for all participants

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify healthy and unhealthy behaviors in relationships
- Begin thinking about ways to respond to unhealthy behaviors

Healthy and Unhealthy Behaviors Brainstorm

- 1** Begin by explaining that relationships are the topic for this session. Ask the group to share types of relationships and be sure to mention all types –romantic, family, friends, professional, educational, self, etc. ***15 minutes***
- 2** Designate two categories on a wall or flipchart paper: healthy and unhealthy. Provide everyone with sticky notes and a pen. ***15 minutes***
- 3** Ask everyone to brainstorm behaviors that they think are healthy or unhealthy (in all types of relationships) by silently writing down examples and posting them to either category. ***10 minutes***
- 4** Ask two participants to read one list each to the group. ***15 minutes***
- 5** Invite participants to share any observations, common themes, or feelings that arise from the activity. ***10 minutes***

Continue the discussion with the following questions:

- o How do you know something is healthy or unhealthy?
How does it make you feel?
 - o How can you let someone know what feels healthy or unhealthy to you? What are examples of ways that you can set boundaries for yourself?
 - o Who would you talk to if you felt that you, or a friend, were dealing with a lot of unhealthy qualities in a relationship?
- 6** Conclude the discussion by explaining that your expectations of healthy and unhealthy might differ from others, but it is important to know your boundaries and practice explaining your boundaries to others.

HEALTHY BEHAVIOR: LEVEL TWO

LENGTH: 45 minutes

MATERIALS: Printed scenarios

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify ways to respond to others and to take care of themselves when faced with difficult interpersonal conflicts
- Consider seeing themselves as advocates (for themselves and others)
- Identify whom they can ask for help when needed

Scenario Discussion

- 1** Break into three smaller groups to discuss one scenario each below. Modify the scenarios to meet the needs of the age group, program, etc. *[15 minutes]*
- 2** After small group discussion, ask each group to share with the full group by reading the scenario and explaining how they would respond. Ask follow up questions. *[30 minutes]*
 - Has anyone been in a situation like this before? How did you respond? Would you respond differently after having this discussion?
 - Was there anything that surprised you about this scenario or about this discussion?
 - What can you do when you feel stuck in a tough situation like these? Whom can you ask for help?

Scenario Examples

1. You have so much homework lately and your best friend is mad that you can not hang out after school. You are really stressed and tired, but do not want to disappoint your friend. What are some things you can do to take care of yourself? What are some things you can say to your friend about the situation? How can you communicate with others (friends, teachers, etc.) about your stress?
2. You have noticed that someone in your class is always getting picked on. Several other students in your class call this person names and the teacher is not able to hear it. What can you do? What would you want others to do for you if you were in this situation?
3. A friend comes to you and shares that someone in class keeps bothering them. This person keeps asking for your friend's phone number. Your friend said they were not interested but this person is very persistent and starts sending social media requests (Facebook, Instagram, etc.). What could you do to support your friend? What would you do if you were in this situation?

HEALTHY BEHAVIOR: LEVEL THREE

LENGTH: 45 minutes

MATERIALS: Red and green index cards

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify healthy and unhealthy behaviors in the context of dating relationships
- Build constructive communication skills with the group by discussing any disagreements in opinion
- Understand that context is very important to identifying unhealthy behavior

Red Light/Green Light Activity

- 1** Provide a red and green index card to each participant. Read list of behaviors on page 30 to participants. Ask them to hold up the green card when they think a behavior is healthy/acceptable and the red card when they think a behavior is unhealthy/unacceptable. *[5 minutes]*
- 2** Emphasize the opportunity to discuss and share multiple opinions. **Pause for each example when participants have a variety of opinions.** Some examples might elicit varying opinions depending on the context, relationship, etc.
- 3** Remind the group that unhealthy behavior is usually unhealthy because of context. For example, "Text your friends to find out where you are," might be unhealthy if the person is trying to control where you are by texting your friends. In comparison, this person could be texting your friends to make sure you are safe when your phone is turned off. *[15 minutes]*
- 4** Conclude by leading a group discussion. *[20 minutes]*
 - What are your reactions to this activity? Did anything surprise you?
 - Have you seen these behaviors before? How did you react?
 - If you were to start a dating relationship, would you have a conversation about these behaviors? How can you have a conversation about boundaries with a partner?
 - What questions do you have after this activity?

...continued on next page

HEALTHY BEHAVIOR: LEVEL THREE

Do you think it's acceptable for a dating partner to...

EXAMPLE	BEHAVIOR
Text your friends to find out where you are	Red
Ask you where you would be comfortable going for a date	Green
Look at your phone without your permission	Red
Express jealousy when you are spending time with friends	Red
Not allow you to spend time with family and/or friends	Red
Make rude comments about what you are wearing or tell you what to wear	Red
Encourage your interests and passions	Green
Touch you without your consent or permission	Red
Put you down with insults	Red
Respect your cultural or family traditions (language, holidays, etc.)	Green
Send you social media requests after you have declined	Red
Make negative comments about your appearance or personality	Red
Joke about something that they know makes you uncomfortable	Red
Offer to listen when you need to talk	Green

SELF-REFLECTION: LEVEL ONE

LENGTH: 50 minutes

MATERIALS: Paper, art supplies (magazines, glue, markers, etc.)

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify short-term and long-term goals for their future

Goal-Setting

- 1** Introduce the activity by asking participants to think about where they would like to see themselves in one, five, and ten years. This can include goals related to their personal lives and/or academic/professional careers, or anything else they would like to include. *[5 minutes]*
- 2** Provide art supplies and ask participants to design a visual representation of these goals. *[30 minutes]*
- 3** Provide time for participants to share their goals with the group. *[15 minutes]*



SELF-REFLECTION: LEVEL TWO

LENGTH: Varies

MATERIALS: No materials required

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Demonstrate leadership by sharing a skill of their choice with the group
- See their peers as leaders

Skill Share - Leadership Activity

- 1** Structure either one full session, or ten minutes set aside over the course of several sessions, for participants to share their skills with the group.

Some possibilities include:

- Dance performance or lesson
 - Poetry reading
 - Study skills tips
 - Dribbling lesson
- 2** Provide time for the full group to provide positive feedback to the presenter through writing or group discussion. As a facilitator, be sure to emphasize the leadership taken in sharing a skill with the group and the value of the leader's skills.

SELF-REFLECTION: LEVEL THREE

LENGTH: 30-45 minutes

MATERIALS: Slips of paper, envelopes, pens

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Practice giving positive and encouraging feedback to their peers
- Reflect on their contributions to a community

Positive Feedback Mail

- 1 Label envelopes with the name of each participant.
- 2 Provide each participant with a pen and as many slips of paper as there are numbers of participants in the group.
- 3 Ask participants to write a positive, encouraging comment to each person in the group and leave it in their envelope. Messages can include traits that they admire, things they are thankful for related to that person, or a positive quote.
- 4 If you feel it is necessary, read comments privately to screen for any negative comments.
- 5 Share the envelopes with each participant. You can either have them reflect on the comments in front of the group or take the comments home to read privately.



Resources



Advocates for Youth | www.advocatesforyouth.org

Advocates for Youth works with people ages 14-25 around reproductive and sexual health. The website's "For Professionals" section includes lesson plans (focused primarily on sexual health education), including lessons specific to LGBTQ/T+ youth.

BARCC | www.barcc.org

Located in Cambridge, the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC) is the only rape crisis center in the Greater Boston area and the oldest and largest center in Massachusetts. BARCC volunteers provide trainings to youth workers focused on consent, responding to sexual assault disclosures, creating a safe environment, and more, which can be requested through the website. They also have curriculum available to download for working with youth of all ages.

Be Safe | www.besafe.org

Be Safe is a collaborative prevention initiative focused on issues of mental health, sexual health, substance use, healthy relationships, and sexual violence. Be Safe offers two trainings (101 & 201) for youth workers.

Break the Cycle | www.breakthecycle.org

Break the Cycle provides dating abuse prevention programs to people ages 12-24. Youth programs include the Start Talking Campaign, Love is Not Abuse Coalition, Respect Works, and Peer Education.

Get Real | www.etr.org/ebi/programs/get-real

ETR (Education, Training, and Research) offers a comprehensive sexual education curriculum called "Get Real," developed by Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts. Get Real is offered nationwide. A guide for educators and trainings are available for purchase at the middle school and high school levels.

Love Is Respect | www.loveisrespect.org

Loveisrespect.org offers support, information, and advocacy around dating and relationships. Their free and confidential phone, live chat, and texting services are available 24/7 to young people and anyone else concerned about a loved one's relationships. The website also includes an extensive resources section with downloadable materials, including palm cards, posters, and handouts.

Media Education Foundation | www.mediaed.org

If you are searching for a documentary or educational clip to share with youth, the Media Education Foundation provides documentaries and other educational resources. The website has a database of "Gender and Culture" films.

Melrose Alliance Against Violence | www.maav.org

The Melrose Alliance Against Violence works to raise awareness about and prevent teen dating violence and domestic violence. In 2015, the Safe STEPS for Teens Project developed the Melrose Teen Dating Abuse Policy & Implementation Guide for the Melrose Public Schools.

Safe Place To Learn | www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov

The Safe Place To Learn resource guide is a tool commissioned by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. It includes resources for teachers and administration to support them in preventing peer-to-peer sexual harassment and violence and to assure compliance with Title IX sex discrimination prohibitions.

SexEd Library | www.sexedlibrary.org

The SexEd Library is a database of lesson plans provided by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). Lesson plans focused on healthy relationships of all types are available to download.



Media

MEDIA LITERACY. Today's digital natives, those born into digital technology, consume ten or more hours of media per day on average. Whether that is printed media (magazines, books), digital media (music videos, games, television), or social media (Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram) - each media outlet conveys countless messages about identity, stereotypes, and what is considered valuable in our society.

CURRENT SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Snapchat**
- **Facebook**
- **Instagram**
- **Musicly**
- **Skype**
- **YouTube**
- **Twitter**
- **Tumblr**
- **Pinterest**

...and the list keeps growing!

Consuming digital media through computers, mobile devices and tablets is a near-constant part of young people's lives, so it is crucial that they build media literacy skills to think critically about the messages they absorb. The field of media literacy has grown tremendously over the past two decades and has increasingly been recognized as a useful skill for youth.

In this section, we introduce session outlines focused on: **stereotypes in media and social media**. These topics provide opportunities for fun and in-depth engagement with popular culture and multiple forms of media.

Media literacy is not only about analyzing and understanding media messages, but creating media messages that are representative, uplifting, and/or educational. We encourage you to take advantage of these activities that allow for youth activism and voice through media creation.

AS A FACILITATOR, THERE ARE FEW IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND BEFORE LEADING A SESSION IN THIS SECTION ►►

MISREPRESENTATION Perpetuating stereotypes in media. For instance, in mainstream media we see racial stereotypes, gender stereotypes, sexuality stereotypes, and more. These messages are limiting, often inaccurate, and minimize people's experiences.

UNDERREPRESENTATION Invisibility of identities in media. For instance, much of the media that we see features stories of white people. This is improving, but we still know that most producers of large media outlets are white. The Representation Project explains it as, "You can't be what you can't see."

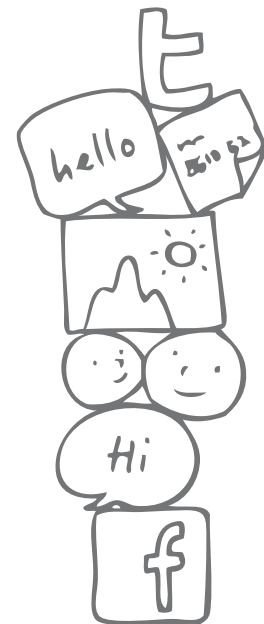
Media



We encourage you to include outside resources to supplement activities, especially digital, print, and social media. Additional resources can be found at the conclusion of this section.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES In this unit, participants will:

- Gain critical media literacy skills by analyzing current media
- See media through the lens of “underrepresentation” and “misrepresentation”
- Reflect on their personal relationship to media and how it impacts their daily lives



STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA: LEVEL ONE

LENGTH: 2 – 3 hours

MATERIALS: Film and projector

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Learn about the field of media literacy and the purpose of analyzing media
- Formulate questions about media literacy

Movie Discussion

- 1** Select a film focused on media representations to view with the group. Suggestions can be found in the Additional Resources section (page 45).
- 2** Begin by introducing the film, including who created it, its purpose, and why it is relevant to the topic of media literacy. *[5 minutes]*
- 3** Show the film to the group, either in its entirety or in selected segments. *[1.5-2 hours]*
- 4** Lead a discussion about the film. *[30 minutes]*

Potential discussion questions include:

- o What are your initial reactions to the film?
Did you like it or not? Why?
- o Did anything surprise you?
- o What did you learn about stereotypes from the film?
- o What problems were addressed in the film? What do you think are some potential solutions?
- o What questions do you have after watching the film, either about the topic or for the creators of the film?

STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA: LEVEL TWO

LENGTH: 45 minutes

MATERIALS: Magazines, scissors, tape or glue

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify stereotypes and expectations in print media
- Analyze beauty and sexuality expectations within media
- Identify examples of underrepresentation and misrepresentation in print media

Note: Try to provide a variety of print magazines for participants to explore. Some options might include "Seventeen," "Latina," "Essence," "Time," "People," "Sports Illustrated," "GQ," "Ebony," "Glamour," "Women's Health," etc.

Magazine Deconstruction

- 1** Post categories around the room and ask participants to find images or articles in magazines that fit each category, and then post them. *[25 minutes]*

Categories can include:

- o Physical expectations (skinny or muscular, clear skin, straight hair, etc.)
- o Sexuality (words related to relationships, models kissing, etc.)
- o Using bodies and/or beauty to sell something
- o Gender stereotypes (job roles, cleaning advertisements, sports, etc.)

- 2** Lead a discussion with the group about what they found and posted. *[20 minutes]*

Questions might include:

- o What are your reactions to this activity? Was there anything that surprised you?
- o Did you notice anything about underrepresentation? How was race portrayed in magazines? What about LGBTQ/T+ identities?
- o Did you notice anything about misrepresentation? Were people stereotyped? Did you find things that were not true from your perspective?
- o Why do you think beauty is used to sell products? Why do we have such a strong emphasis on appearance in our society?
- o What types of gender stereotypes were portrayed? Did you find any advertisements or articles that challenged gender stereotypes?

STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA: LEVEL THREE

LENGTH: 45 minutes

MATERIALS: Selected music videos, projector, printed discussion questions, flip chart paper and markers (optional)

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Identify stereotypes and expectations in digital media
- Analyze expectations around beauty and sexuality within media
- Identify positive messages within digital media

Music Video Deconstruction

- 1** Before this activity, select three music videos to view with the group. These can be music videos suggested by participants, videos that you choose, or a combination.

Music video suggestions include:

- o *Pretty Hurts*, Beyonce
- o *Take Care*, Drake ft. Rihanna
- o *Like A Boy*, Ciara
- o *Treat You Better*, Steve Mendes
- o *Anaconda*, Nicki Minaj
- o *Jealous*, Nick Jonas
- o *Work From Home*, Fifth Harmony
- o *Womanizer*, Britney Spears
- o *Scars To Your Beautiful*, Alessia Cara

- 2** Watch the videos with the group. **[15 minutes]**

- 3** Create three groups and assign each group one of the videos. Provide each group with a copy of discussion questions and ask them to answer the questions in writing or by discussing. If the group is interested in writing their responses, you can provide flip chart paper and markers. **[20 minutes]**

Discussion questions include:

- o What is this video about? What do you know about the artist? What message do you think they are trying to send with this song and video?
- o What did you notice about gender and sexuality stereotypes in this video?
- o If you were to make a video for this song, what would it look like?

- 4** Allow each group to share their discussion with the full group. **[10 minutes]**

SOCIAL MEDIA: LEVEL ONE

LENGTH: 30-45 minutes

MATERIALS: None required

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Think critically about their personal consumption of social media.
- Take away 2-3 social media safety tips

Social Media Discussion

- 1** Begin by asking each person to share how much time they spend each day interacting with social media. Many people will probably respond that they are on social media frequently, which opens up the conversation to why this is an important topic. *15 minutes*
- 2** Lead an informal group discussion focused on social media.

Question might include:

- o What types of social media do you use? Do you use certain types of social media for different reasons?
- o Do you have questions about social media safety? What types of security do you use on your accounts?
- o Have you or a friend experienced cyberbullying through social media? How can you support a friend? What can you do if it is happening to you?

As a facilitator, there are a few important points to emphasize:

- There are precautions you can take to keep yourself safe on social media. This can include having a private profile and only accepting people you know, turning off your GPS settings, only sharing information you are comfortable with everyone knowing, blocking people who are bothering you, etc.
- Cyberbullying is a reality and affects many young people, especially girls. Girls are twice as likely to be both victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying. If you feel that you or a friend are in danger or dealing with bullying online, please tell someone you trust. If you are not comfortable telling a parent or family member, reach out to a trusted adult at school, church, or elsewhere in your community. Do not deal with it on your own.
- We know that social media can sometimes be dangerous or difficult to figure out. It can also be an amazing, positive tool! Use your social media to send positive messages and build others up. Continue to make social media fun, interactive, and safe.

SOCIAL MEDIA: LEVEL TWO

LENGTH: 30-45 minutes

MATERIALS: None required. Can supplement with selected videos or images

OBJECTIVES: Participants will...

- Take away 2-3 examples of positive social media activism, created by other youth
- Identify one way they can use social media for positive change

Social Media Activism

- 1** Review learning from Social Media: Level One. Ask participants if they have any questions since discussing social media safety and use.
- 2** Share examples of youth who have used social media to tell their stories or make positive social changes. Try to supplement your explanation with videos or images. Be very explicit about how each example uses media for a positive purpose. *[30 minutes]*

Some examples could include:

- o Malala Yousafzai, *An activist for girls education globally*
 - o Julia Bluhm, *Successfully petitioned "Seventeen" magazine to feature un-airbrushed models in its publications*
 - o James Charles, *17-year-old makeup artist became CoverGirl's first "CoverBoy"*
 - o My Black Is Beautiful, *Instagram community celebrating Black women*
 - o Robby Novak, *"Kid President" actor*
 - o Innovative Supplies, *Company creating representative school supplies for Black girls*
 - o Sharath Jason Wilson, *Karate instructor teaching boys that it is OK to cry*
- 3** Conclude the activity by asking each person to create and share their hashtag – a hashtag that represents who they are, what they believe in, or how they want to see the world. You can provide participants with a few minutes to write down ideas and come up with an explanation. *[15 minutes]*

Resources



Connect Safely | www.connectsafely.org

Connect Safely is a nonprofit organization providing education to technology users, including tips on safety, privacy, and security. The website includes resources for parents and accessible guides for youth.

The Representation Project | www.therepresentationproject.org

The Representation Project has created two documentary films – “Miss Representation” and “The Mask You Live In.” “Miss Representation” focuses on underrepresentation of women and girls in mainstream media and positions of power, while “The Mask You Live In” discusses the expectations of masculinity on boys, men, and society overall. The film’s website also provides educational resources including infographics, tools for social media campaigns, and a full curriculum for educators.

Killing Us Softly | www.jeankilbourne.com

The “Killing Us Softly” documentary series, created by Jean Kilbourne, addresses how the advertising industry portrays women and girls. Kilbourne provides films, books, and lectures focused on this topic, with her work beginning in the 1960’s.

National Association for Media Literacy Education | www.namele.net

The National Association for Media Literacy Education provides free resources and membership to individuals and organizations providing media literacy education.

MediaSmarts | www.mediasmarts.ca

MediaSmarts is a Canadian non-profit helping children and youth develop the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens. The website provides a database of lesson plans and resources for teachers focused on gender representation.

SUGGESTED FILMS

Many of these educational films can either be found free online, for purchase, or at a local library.

Bully
Girl Rising
He Named Me Malala
Killing Us Softly series
The Mask You Live In
Mickey Mouse Monopoly
Miss Representation
Consuming Kids

Additional Resources



GENDER-SPECIFIC YOUTH PROGRAMS IN CAMBRIDGE

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM NAME(S)	CONTACT INFO
Boston Mobilization	Sub/Urban Justice	617-492-5599
Cambridge Community Center	Boys' Program and Girls' Program	617-547-6811 ext. 12
Cambridge Youth Programs	Boys II Men (Moses Youth Center) The Girls in Power Program (Frisoli Youth Center)	617-349-6262 617-349-6312
Central Square Theater	Youth Underground	617-576 9278 ext. 215
City of Cambridge & YWCA	Cambridge Girls Only Leadership Development (G.O.L.D)	617-491-6050 ext. 3025
Community Art Center	Girls' and Boys' Groups	617-868-7100
Girls Who Code	Sessions held at Cambridge Public Library	617-349-4040
Science Club for Girls	Sister Circles Program	617-391-0361 ext. 3
Title IX Girls Running Club	Running Club	www.titleixgirls.org
Transition House	Youth Action Corps	617-868-1650
Tutoring Plus	Girls' Media and Real Talk (Boys' Program)	857-266-7960
Youth on Fire	Drop-In Programs for Homeless Youth	617-661-2508

For more information about youth programs in Cambridge, visit www.finditcambridge.org



Additional Resources



EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center | Sexual Assault and Violence | 1.800.841.8371

Love Is Respect | Dating Violence | 1.866.331.9474 or Text: loveis to 22522
Chat Online: www.loveisrespect.org

Samaritans | Suicide Prevention | 1.877.870.4673

Trevor Project | Suicide Prevention – LGBTQ/T+ | 1.866.488.7386

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Agenda for Children | www.agendaforchildrenost.org

The Agenda for Children supports out-of-school time (OST) programs to build quality and partner effectively with schools and families in Cambridge. Professional development trainings and organizational consultation is available to Cambridge youth workers and organizations.

Middle School Network | www.agendaforchildrenost.org/middle-school-network

The goal of the Middle School Network is to ensure broad participation of Cambridge's middle-school-age youth in quality OST experiences. The Network provides a resource guide of OST experiences and professional development opportunities for youth workers.

Mental Health First Aid | www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches how to identify, understand and respond to mental health crises. The course is free and offered locally frequently.

Reaching All Youth | www.sites.google.com/site/reachingallyouthcambridge

The Reaching All Youth committee meets every six weeks and brings together youth workers across the City who work with teens.

SOURCES

Cambridge Public Health Department. (2015). *Summary of Results from the 2014-2015 Cambridge Middle Grades Health Survey*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Public Health Department.

Cambridge Public Health Department (2015). *Summary of Results from 2014-2015 Cambridge Teen Health Survey*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Public Health Department.

Notes

Notes



CAMBRIDGE COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

www.CambridgeWomensCommission.org

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