SESSIONS FOR AGES 14 to 18
Facilitator Best Practices

Welcome to SMART Girls! Here are a few helpful hints to make your SMART Girls program successful:

- **Be consistent** in your meeting place, time and day.
- **Come prepared.** Having a box filled with binders, pens, markers and other SMART Girls supplies makes setup so simple.
- **Create a space that’s just for girls.** Invite them to help decorate it with posters about SMART Girls, or hang up each week’s main idea on the walls.
- **Always have extra worksheets!**
  - Create a rule that **everyone has to talk one time** before others can talk again.

Some suggestions to make meeting more effective:

- Give the girls time to talk about their day during the beginning of the meeting. It allows them to be more focused during the lesson.
- Add movement whenever possible! Lots of times the girls want to learn, they just have tons of energy that needs to be released.
- Be willing to say, “I don’t know.” Then find the answer to their question and address it during the next session.
- Don’t be afraid to deviate from the plan. If the girls are more interested in a specific topic concerning that day’s lesson, talk about it more in-depth.

*Best practices submitted by Anita Douglas, Program Director, and Olivia Gahan, Program Aide, at Pedersen-McCormick Boys & Girls Club of Chicago.*
Welcome to SMART Girls!

Overview: This session introduces the SMART Girls program; gives girls a chance to get to know one another; and teaches girls about respect, trust, confidentiality and effective communication – key components of the SMART Girls program.

Topics covered: Respect, Trust, Effective Communication, Collaborative Decision-Making

Badges earned: SMART Girl Power

Session time: 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions
Preparation time: 60 minutes

Materials needed:
- Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
- Session worksheets
- Badge Tracker sheets
- Minglo sheets
- Journal extension sheets
- Question Box slips
- Pens/pencils
- Binders equal to number of girls in program (if the Club is providing)

Resources needed: None

Preparing for the session
1. Obtain signed permission slips from girls’ parents/guardians.
2. Gather writing supplies.
3. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
4. Print Badge Tracker sheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
5. Print Minglo sheets. Fill in tiles by hand and make enough copies for the girls in your program. Further instructions are included in the Introductory activity below.
6. Print Journal extension sheets. (Print more than you think you’ll need for this session, so that you’ll have a good supply for future sessions. Re-print as needed throughout the program.)
7. Print Question Box slips. (Print several sheets and cut out slips, so that you’ll have a good supply for future sessions. Re-print and cut out as needed throughout the program.) You can leave these next to the Question Box for future sessions.
8. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities.

Conducting the session

Introductory activity: Introductions & Minglo (20 minutes)
Start with a quick welcome to the SMART Girls program. Have girls introduce themselves, and share two facts about who they are (e.g., hobbies, pets, favorite school subject) and two things they like about themselves (e.g., “I’m good at math”; “I’m friendly”; “I like the color of my hair.”).

Then pass out the Minglo sheets. This game, created by the writers of the Offbeat Home & Life blog, mashes mingling with Bingo. It’s an awesome way for girls to build social skills, and to learn things about their peers. The Minglo board is structured like a Bingo card. As the facilitator, it’s your job to fill in each tile with a quality or description of at least one of the girls in your program. If you know your girls well, you can fill in tiles with specifics – things like “Knows how to tie eight kinds of knot,” or “Holds H.S. record for 200-yard dash.” If you don’t know your group, go for generics – for example, “Has at least one sibling,” “Knows how to crochet,” “Sings in a choir,” or “Has brown eyes.”

It’s each girl’s job to find someone else in the group who has those qualities or fits those descriptions, and fill in her name on the appropriate tile. Like Bingo, the goal is to fill in one complete row of tiles (vertical, horizontal, ...
Welcome to SMART Girls!

diagonal), or, time-permitting, the whole card. When a girl completes a row or fills in her card, she shouts, “Minglo!” to end the game. Gather the group post-game to read through each tile, and identify which girl(s) matches each one.

Once everyone has been introduced, give a brief overview of the SMART Girls content and structure:

- **SMART Girls is split into three age groups. You are encouraged to participate in the program every year.**
- **The program includes weekly sessions that center around doing fun activities together that help us grow and be the people we want to be. At the end of the program, you’ll get a chance to celebrate at a special party for SMART Girls and their friends and families.**
- **Sessions fall into three categories: Your Mind sessions focus on self-esteem, personal identity and sound mental health. Your Body sessions discuss physical wellness, hygiene and nutrition. Your Community sessions focus on building healthy relationships.**
- **For each session you complete, you’ll earn a badge, which will help you track your progress. You’ll get a Badge Tracker sheet that I’ll initial as you earn badges. Badges earned translate to mentorship opportunities within the program – meaning the more badges you earn, the more chances you’ll have to work with our younger SMART Girls.**
- **You’ll also receive a session worksheet, which has spots for you to take notes, participate in session activities, and reflect on what you’ve learned. You can keep these worksheets, your Badge Tracker sheet, and any other program materials in your SMART Girl’s Journal – that’s what the binder is for.**
  *(Note: If you choose to ask your group to complete these worksheets outside of SMART Girls session time, explain that now. Also detail any incentives you wish to align with worksheet completion.)*
- **Journaling is an important part of the SMART Girls curriculum. It can help you work through emotions you might experience during a session, or clarify thoughts, ideas and questions you might have. You’re expected to spend 20 to 30 minutes every week, outside of your SMART Girls sessions, reflecting on what you’ve learned in your Journal. Completing these journal entries is key to getting badges. I won’t read what you’ve written, but I will check to make sure you’ve been writing!**
- **The better your attendance, the more you’ll get out of the program and the stronger our group will be. But if you miss a session, please come back – you’re always wanted and welcome!**

**Knowledge activity: Respect, Trust, Confidentiality and Effective Communication (30 minutes)**

Next, talk about the importance of forming bonds in SMART Girls. In order for everyone to get the most out of the program, the group needs to work well and be committed to:

- **Respect.** We treat each other the way we’d like to be treated, and understand that everyone is equally important.
- **Trust.** Everyone in the group wants the best for each other. They can rely on one another to be honest, open and accepting.
- ** Confidentiality.** SMART Girls is a safe place to share, learn and have fun. Therefore, every girl agrees to keep other girls’ comments and concerns to herself.

A majority of the SMART Girls curriculum involves group discussions. Ask the girls what behaviors lead to a good group discussion. Write their answers on a whiteboard or on poster-paper. If your group is fairly independent or self-starting, play the game below:

**Good group discussion mini-activity:** Split the girls into two brainstorming teams, and give each team a section of the whiteboard/piece of poster-paper and markers. Set a timer for five minutes, and ask the groups to write down as many hallmarks of a good group discussion as they can. After five minutes, have the teams switch places, and ask each team to mark its top three favorite answers on the other team's list. You can ask a spokesperson from each group to explain why they chose those answers, and then move to the SMART Girls Contract activity.
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If your group is quiet or shy, use the elements and activities listed below to jumpstart the conversation, and to get the girls interacting as a group.

- **Everyone has a chance to speak.** Everyone should feel free to express herself. Interrupting, talking over, cutting off and dismissing are not allowed. Discussions should not be dominated by one person.

- **Everyone has a point of view.** In any group, people’s experiences and perspectives will differ. It’s OK to think differently from other girls in the group.

- **Everyone’s ideas are welcome.** Girls should feel safe to test ideas and share thoughts that aren’t fully formed when they’re in their SMART Girls group. This encourages collaborative thinking.

If the girls in your group have participated in the SMART Girls program before, they may remember the “Yes, and…” style of discussion. If so, remind them that using “Yes, and…” during discussions is a great way to support one another. If they aren’t familiar with it, play a quick round of the “Yes, and…” game, below.

**The “Yes, and…” game:** This brief activity demonstrates how girls can build on each other’s ideas, collaboratively. It was originated by actor and writer Del Close, who used it to great effect during improv theater performances. It’s great for keeping a discussion going in a positive direction.

1. Present the girls with a challenge. For example, “We’d like to buy a new computer for the Club, but how can we raise the money for it?”
2. Then ask for solutions to that challenge and explain the one rule of the game. After each girl speaks, the next girl builds on what the previous girl said by beginning her statement with the words, “Yes, and….” Explain that this will support strong, collaborative thinking as they discuss the challenge as a group.
3. Play continues from one girl to the next. Remind them to begin their statements with “Yes, and….”
4. When the last girl has given her solution, tell the girls that you’d like them to use the “Yes, and…” model throughout the program during group discussions. It’s a great way to show each girl that her thoughts are valued.

- **Everyone can give feedback, but it must be constructive.** Girls are welcome to give honest and constructive feedback, but it should be delivered in a respectful manner. Point out that feedback is usually more effective when asked as a question, rather than given as a suggestion (e.g., Keisha, how could you have solved that problem without resorting to an insult?).

**Life-skills activity: The SMART Girls Contract (20 minutes)**

This brainstorming activity will result in a values-based contract that all girls will agree to and sign. They will place the contract in the front of their SMART Girl’s Badge Book & Journal.

1. Tell girls that since this is the very first session, and since this is their program, they will get to devise the “rules” by which they’ll all abide. They’ll work together to make a contract for the group, which everyone in the group will sign. The final language for all of these rules will be a set of “I will” statements (e.g., “I will let everyone have her turn to speak, and will listen carefully when others are speaking.”).
2. Start with the list you generated in the previous activity. Ask girls for suggestions for turning that list into a set of rules that will express what matters to the girls most.
3. If your group is large enough, you can split girls into pairs or groups of three to brainstorm a list. (If not, you can record the girls’ ideas on poster-paper.)
4. If you’ve split into groups, have each group read its rules aloud. Record these on the poster-paper. Work as a group to synthesize similar ideas into a single rule (for example, combine “I will let everyone have a chance to speak” and “I will not interrupt.”). Narrow the list to approximately four to eight rules. Write the
Welcome to SMART Girls!

The guide covers the following topics:

- Welcome to SMART Girls!
- Ages 14 to 18

**Closing conversation: Mentoring & Question Box (20 minutes)**

Girls who are interested in mentoring younger members of the SMART Girls program at their Clubs will have several mentoring opportunities throughout the course of the program. For background information on the benefits of mentorship (for both mentor and mentee), see the SMART Girls Mentors section in the introduction. Feel free to share the information in this section with your girls, to help them understand the value of mentorship.

Tell girls they can earn chances to mentor younger members by achieving badges. They can refer to the Badge Tracker sheet for information on which badge combos help them unlock these mentorship opportunities.

A list of these activities is included in the Tools & Resources section of this guide. Many of these take place outside of regular sessions, which means they require an additional time commitment from both older and younger girls. You can decide to complete as many or as few mentoring activities as suits your girls’ interests and level of commitment.

Pass out binders (if the Club is providing), or have girls get the binders they’ve brought. In addition, pass out Badge Tracker sheets and Journal extension sheets. Explain that this binder will serve as each girl’s SMART Girl’s Badge Book & Journal, where she will collect her session worksheets (like the SMART Girls Contract) and other materials; take notes during sessions; write down the names of resource persons and organizations; and reflect on what she learned during the session. Remind girls that they are expected to journal for 20 to 30 minutes after each session, using their session worksheets and Journal extension sheets, and that completing these journal entries is the last step toward receiving the badge for that week’s session.

While girls are assembling their journals, introduce the Question Box, which girls can use to ask anonymous questions throughout the program. Tell girls you will answer most questions, but you will also bring in guest speakers who may answer questions as well. Let girls know any question is welcome. Keep the box in an inconspicuous location in the room, and tell girls that they can submit questions at any time.
Your job: Find a fellow SMART Girl who identifies with a square on your grid, and mark her name in that space. When you get five in a row (across, down or diagonal) shout *Minglo*!
Welcome to SMART Girls!
Over the next 10 weeks in the SMART Girls program, you’ll learn about self-esteem, health and wellness, and relationships in a small group setting with other girls your age. You’ll learn together through interactive activities, group discussions and games. Welcome!

Section 1. **Respect, Trust, Confidentiality and Effective Communication**
In order for everyone to get the most out of the program, the group needs to work well – and to work well, everyone needs to be committed to the following:

**Respect.** What is it? __________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Trust.** What is it?
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Confidentiality.** What is it? __________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Effective Communication.** What is it?________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Section 2. **The Smart Girls Contract**
This is your program! So, as a group, you’ll decide what you value most, and turn that into a contract everyone will follow. Write down the final set of values below, and then sign the contract. Keep it in the front of your SMART Girl’s Journal.

1. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________
SESSION 1 | WELCOME

7. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________________

8. I will ______________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________________

   _____________________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________    ______________________
   Your Signature           Date

Section 3: My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key
to earning your badge!) How did you put what you learned about respect, trust and effective communication into
practice over the past week? How do you imagine you’ll use these skills outside your SMART Girls sessions?

You can also use this space to record names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this
session.

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______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
Keep tabs on your badges! Your SMART Girls leader will initial each badge as you earn it. Don’t forget to journal each week – it helps you bank badges!

Session 1:
SMART Girl Power
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 2:
Happy Talk
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Mentor Opportunity Unlocked:
Get a Pen-Pal!
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 3:
Media Maven
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 4:
Foodie
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Mentor Opportunity Unlocked:
Host a Mentor Dinner!
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 5:
Fit & Fabulous
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 6:
It’s My Body
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Mentor Opportunity Unlocked: Participate in a Puberty Panel!
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 7:
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Mentor Opportunity Unlocked:
Host a Girls’ Night!
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 8:
Social Savvy Superstar
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 9:
Famtastic!
Facilitator’s Initials _______

Session 10:
Charismatrix
Facilitator’s Initials _______
My Journal
Talk to Yourself: Self-Talk’s Influence on Self-Esteem

**Overview:** This session focuses on self-esteem and introduces the concepts of negative and positive self-talk. Girls learn how their internal monologue can drag them down or pump them up, and they practice engaging in the latter.

**Topics covered:** Self-Esteem  
**Badges earned:** Happy Talk

**Session time:** 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions  
**Preparation time:** 60 minutes

**Materials needed:**  
- Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers  
- Session worksheets  
- Laptop/projector, for watching video online (optional)  
- Journal extension sheets  
- Pens/pencils

**Resources needed:** Dove’s “Selfie” video: [http://youtu.be/BFkm1Hg4dTI](http://youtu.be/BFkm1Hg4dTI) (optional)

**Preparing for the session**
1. Gather writing supplies.  
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.  
3. Prepare slips of paper for Self-Talk activity, equal to the number of girls in your program. Find a bowl or bag suitable for the activity.  
4. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities.

**Conducting the session**

**Recap discussion: Welcome to SMART Girls! (5 to 10 minutes)**  
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

**Introductory activity: What Is Self-Esteem? (15 minutes)**  
Pass out session worksheets, so girls have a place to take notes. Reinforcing strong self-esteem in teens helps them transition into being self-assured young adults. It spurs them to make healthy life choices, because they are confident in who they are and what they believe. If your group has been through SMART Girls before, they will be well-equipped to have a conversation about the nature of self-esteem – what it is, how you get it, and why it’s important.

If not, start a conversation about how the girls define and value self-esteem. These discussion questions and potential answers can help you guide the discussion, but remember that your teen SMART Girls are more than capable of maintaining a rich, engaging conversation on their own.

- **What is self-esteem?** Self-esteem is each girl’s idea of herself:

  *Self-esteem isn’t based on what other people think of you – it comes from inside you! Sometimes self-esteem is called self-worth or self-image. No matter what it’s called, though, remember that you are a valuable person with something to bring to the world.*

- **Why is it important?** Talk about why it’s important to have a positive self-image:

  *Self-esteem affects your confidence and your relationships with others. If you accept who you are (and
Talk to Yourself: Self-Talk’s Influence on Self-Esteem

• **But other people’s opinions affect self-esteem, right?** Discuss the influence that both negative and positive messages can have on a girl’s self-esteem:

    We’ve all been there: When someone says something mean about our clothes, our friends or the things we like, we feel bad about ourselves. On the flipside, when someone says, “Cool hat!” or “You’re an awesome singer!,” we feel good. Why is that? When you receive negative or positive messages from others, how do you deal with them?

• **What’s the difference between having high self-esteem and being conceited?** It’s important to know when self-esteem crosses the line:

    When you have high self-esteem, you don’t have to brag, or pretend that you’re the best at everything, because you don’t rely on what others think to make you feel good about yourself. Self-esteem is about accepting yourself as you are. That means understanding what you are good at, and what you’re not so good at, and being willing to improve.

• **How do you get it?** Discuss a few ways that girls can shore up their self-esteem:

    Self-esteem starts with you. Take some time every day to think about yourself. If you want, you can give yourself a positive pep talk when you wake up in the morning. Telling yourself that you’re valuable is a great way to build strong self-esteem. This is called self-talk, which we’ll discuss in the next activity.


It’s true that self-esteem starts inside. Our self-esteem can be hugely affected by a thing called self-talk – that’s the voice in our heads that builds us up and drags us down. Here is a quick way to introduce the concept of self-talk to your girls:

    Self-talk can be both positive and negative. As you might have guessed, engaging in positive self-talk is the healthiest way to treat ourselves.

    Everyone engages in self-talk. Some people call it feedback, others call it an internal monologue. Whatever it’s called, everybody does it. And, unfortunately, self-talk is often negative – which is unproductive and harmful. There are plenty of ways to counter these messages. A great method for weighing whether self-talk is positive or negative is to ask: “Would I say this to my best friend?” If the answer is no, don’t say it to yourself!

This activity lets girls share the negative messages they send to themselves, and sparks collaborative solutions for countering those messages.

1. Pass out a slip of paper to each girl.
2. Tell girls to write down one discouraging or negative thing they say to themselves on the slip of paper. Tell them not to write their names on the paper – anonymity increases the effectiveness of this activity. Have them drop their papers into a bowl or bag. (You can participate, too, to build camaraderie. Your participation will also reinforce that it doesn’t matter your age or experience – everyone sends herself negative messages once in a while.)
3. Draw each slip out one at a time. Read the message aloud.
4. Let the group respond with suggestions for how a girl could replace that kind of negative self-talk with positive feedback instead.
Talk to Yourself: Self-Talk’s Influence on Self-Esteem

Alternatively or in addition, watch Dove’s short film, “Selfie” (link listed in Resources section above). Did the girls in the film practice positive or negative self-talk? How did their self-talk change over the course of the film? How did the selfies influence their self-esteem?

Ask the girls if they ever post selfies on social media. Why do they do it? Do they feel good about their selfies? How can selfies project self-esteem?

**Life-skills activity: Affirmative Reaction (25 minutes)**

This activity encourages teen girls to identify positive characteristics they see in themselves.

1. Have the girls sit in a circle. Have each girl write her name in the Affirmative Reaction section of her session worksheet, followed by a positive trait or characteristic she sees in herself. Then have each girl pass the sheet to the girl on her left.
2. Have each girl write down one positive trait or characteristic of the girl whose name is on the sheet in her hand. Then pass it to her left.
3. Repeat until the worksheets return to their owners.
4. Discuss with the girls how they feel about the characteristics that have been written about them.
   Potential questions:
   - Do you feel that these characteristics are true of you?
   - If not, why not? What does that say about how we see ourselves, versus how others see us?
   - How did reading this list make you feel? How could you use an exercise like this in your own life?

**Closing conversation: When I Look in the Mirror (20 minutes)**

Ask girls to practice positive self-talk over the course of the next week. Tell them they can start with the mirror: Each time they look at themselves, they should think of one positive quality they possess. Remind them that the mirror is there to help them focus on themselves; it doesn’t mean that beauty and goodness are purely external. Ask them to do this exercise at least once a day, and to journal about it during their 20- to 30-minute writing time.

**Extension activity: Dove “Real Beauty Sketches”**

Encourage girls to watch Dove’s “Real Beauty Sketches” on YouTube. This video is focused on physicality, but it reinforces the teachings of the Self-Talk and Affirmative Reaction activities. If they watch the video, girls should journal about the messages we send to ourselves. Are they true? Are they realistic? Do they match what others see in us? (Time permitting, you could watch this video during the session, either before or after the Affirmative Reaction activity, using a laptop/projector. Follow it with a discussion about self-talk.)
Talk to Yourself: Self-Talk’s Influence on Self-Esteem

Your internal monologue can pump you up, or it can drag you down. How can you use your inner voice to keep your confidence high?

Section 1. **Self-Esteem Is Super Cool**
Where does it come from? Why is it important?

Section 2. **Self-Talk: What Is It?**
What is self-talk? How can you turn it from negative to positive?

Section 3. **Affirmative Reaction**
Name: _________________________________________
Write down one positive trait or characteristic about the girl whose name appears above.

1. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
6. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
7. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
8. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
9. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
10. ____________________________________________________________________________________________________
Section 4. My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key to earning your badge!) What kind of self-talk did you engage in this week? Negative? Positive? How did the mirror activity change your self-talk patterns? How will you use positive self-talk in the future?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.
Ages 14 to 18

**Overview:** This session addresses the cultural conversation around “beauty.” It addresses the influence of both mass media and social circles on young women’s views of their bodies.

**Topics covered:** Body Image, Media Literacy

**Badges earned:** Media Maven

**Session time:** 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions

**Preparation time:** 60 minutes

**Materials needed:**
- Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
- Session worksheets
- Laptop/projector, for viewing videos and other online resources
- Fashion and lifestyle magazines aimed at women and girls (Teen Vogue, Ebony, Lucky, Marie Claire, Essence and Glamour are good examples), and men (GQ, Maxim, Esquire and Details).

**Note:** Some of these magazines may be too mature for your group. Use your best judgment when selecting materials for this session.
- Journal extension sheets
- Pens/pencils

**Resources needed:**
- Cameron Russell’s TEDTalk: [http://www.ted.com/talks/cameron_russell_looks_aren_t_everything_believe_me_i_m_a_model.htm](http://www.ted.com/talks/cameron_russell_looks_aren_t_everything_believe_me_i_m_a_model.htm)
- Jennifer Lawrence Flare cover GIF: [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/12/16/jennifer-lawrence-photoshop-flare-cover_n_4452105.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/12/16/jennifer-lawrence-photoshop-flare-cover_n_4452105.html)

**Preparing for the session**
1. Gather writing supplies.
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
3. Set up laptop/projector, for viewing videos and other online resources.
5. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities.

**Conducting the session**

**Recap discussion:** Talk to Yourself (5 to 10 minutes)
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

**Introductory activity: Inherited Beauty (25 minutes)**
Pass out session worksheets, so girls have a place to take notes. As a group, watch model Cameron Russell’s TEDTalk, “Looks Aren’t Everything. Believe Me, I’m a Model.” This talk sets the stage for a discussion on how media and cultural racism influence our perception of beauty. Discussion questions:

- What is your definition of beauty? How has it been influenced by ads, like the ones Cameron showed?
- Do these ads send us messages? What do they tell us about how we should look or act?
- Were you surprised when Cameron said she was insecure? If so, why?
Beauty and the Media Beast

- **What other types of media messages do we receive? How often? From where?**
- **Why did Cameron include statistics about race in her talk? What did she mean when she talked about the “genetic lottery” and “legacy” that allow her to do what she does? Are there other oppressive legacies that she didn’t mention?**

This topic can become charged, and girls may become emotional. Let them know that these emotions are OK, and encourage them to write about their feelings after the session.

**Knowledge activity: Is True Beauty a Size 0? (25 minutes)**

Race isn’t the only thing the media uses to define beauty; size plays a role, too. Ask the girls if they’ve ever felt like they were too big, or too small, to be beautiful. Feel free to share your own experience, if applicable.

Discuss the concept of body image. How do girls see their bodies? Refer back to the previous session’s extension activity. What does Dove’s “Real Beauty Sketches” project say about how women see themselves, and how others see them?

Time-permitting, and depending on the composition of your group, you can give the following overview of body dysmorphic disorder, or BDD, adapted from the Anxiety & Depression Association of America’s page on the disorder:

*BDD occurs when a person is preoccupied with negative thoughts about her perceived flaws. She can’t accept when others tell her she looks good, because all she sees are the things she thinks are ugly – maybe she thinks her hips are too wide, or her nose is too big, or her eyes are too small. She obsesses over these flaws for hours at a time, and can’t control her negative self-talk. BDD affects women as often as it affects men, and it manifests most frequently in teens. People who suffer from BDD either avoid mirrors or check their looks all the time; change clothes often; hide the parts they don’t like with baggy clothes or big hats; or exhibit excessive behaviors, like grooming or exercising much more than is healthy.*

Tell girls that if they have concerns about their bodies that interfere with their happiness, or their performance in school and at home, they can talk to you or another trusted adult – someone who can help them get the care and treatment they need from a mental health professional.

Most often, teens’ body image concerns stem from our cultural predisposition to thinness in women. The media is littered with images of skinniness, which has become a symbol of beauty in our culture – something that is perfectly normal for some girls, but completely unattainable and unhealthy for others. A perfect example: the before-and-after GIF of Jennifer Lawrence’s *Flare* magazine cover (link listed in Resources section above), which was extensively edited to make the star even thinner than she is (among other things). What does this tell us about the standards of and expectations for beauty if this is standard practice in the media?

The rise of “plus-sized” models throughout the world has widened our concept of beauty, but only slightly. As a group, look through BusinessInsider.com’s “The Hypocrisy-Laden History of Plus-Size Models” slideshow. (Note: This slideshow contains partial female nudity; as with the magazine selection, use your best judgment when deciding whether to include this activity.) In the slideshow, “plus-sized” model Jennie Runk says, “I’m looking forward to the day where plus-size doesn’t exist anymore, and we’re all just models and it’s all just clothes. … I think separating between normal and plus-sized is getting a little old-fashioned.” Ask the girls what they think about this quote. Possible discussion questions include:

- **Do you feel pressure to be a certain size? Why?**
- **Is size connected to beauty? How?**
- **If the average American woman’s dress size is 12 to 14, why are there so few plus-sized models? What does this say about our cultural concept of beauty?**
- **What is your idea of a healthy body? Is the standard set forth by the fashion industry realistic?**
Beauty and the Media Beast

Life-skills activity: Magazine Mismatch (20 minutes)
In this activity, girls compare the messages magazines send to women with the messages magazines send to men. How do magazines define women’s roles, and men’s?

1. Show girls the ads or articles (or even the cover!) that you’ve selected in the magazines aimed at girls and women. What are these ads/articles selling to or telling women? You can record answers on a whiteboard or poster-paper. Split the whiteboard/poster-paper into two columns: one for women’s magazines, and one for men’s.

2. Next, show girls the ads, articles or covers of the men’s magazines you’ve selected. What are those ads, articles or covers selling to or telling men?

3. Discuss the differences. For example, the majority of articles in women’s magazines have to do with losing weight, wearing the latest trends, keeping a tidy home, or pleasing a man. Do men’s magazines focus on the same, or reciprocal, issues? How many ads or articles in women’s magazines objectify women? How many in men’s magazines?

4. If media affects women’s expectations of themselves (as discussed in the previous activities), is it possible that media affects men’s expectations of women, too? How so?

To elaborate, check out BusinessInsider.com’s article on American Apparel’s unisex advertising campaigns. (Note: This article contains partial female nudity, so take care when recommending that girls view it at home or in the Club.) This piece has an eye-opening perspective on the way international retailer American Apparel portrays women and men in its advertising: Where men are depicted in everyday settings, standing or sitting in everyday positions, women are highly sexualized. The key point? The ads are selling the same article of clothing. If you do read this article as a group, or girls read it on their own, set aside time for a discussion about how women are often depicted as objects, whereas men are depicted as subjects. How does this message affect women and men?

Closing conversation: Beautiful Objects (15 minutes)
Ask girls to analyze ads and media messages they receive over the next week, and tell them to journal about what they notice. Does the media ever show women as anything more than beautiful objects? How can we, as women, change that? How can we alter those perceptions? What messages can we send to ourselves, and to our girlfriends, to combat negative media messages?

Extension activity: Caroline Heldman on Sexual Objectification
Encourage the girls to watch professor and writer Caroline Heldman’s TEDTalk “The Lie That Being a Sex Object Is Empowering” at carolineheldman.wordpress.com/2013/01/21/my-ted-talk-on-the-lie-that-sexy-empowering. How does sexual objectification affect us as women? How could it affect men’s expectations of us? What solutions does Caroline offer?
Beauty and the Media Beast
Media is all around us. Like your friends, the media can influence what you do, how you act, and the way you see
yourself. It sends messages about body and beauty, and creates an undercurrent of expectation that might not
match reality. What is beautiful? How do you define and embody it?

Section 1. What Is Beauty?
First, define “beauty.” Then, think about the cultural conversation around it. Does the media’s version of “beauty”
match yours? If not, why not? Is beauty tied to race, size or social status?

Section 2. Magazine Mismatch
Take a look at a few magazine ads. What do they communicate about society’s expectations of women? Are those
expectations realistic?

Section 3. My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key
to earning your badge!) Analyze the media messages you receive over the next week, and journal about what
you notice. Does the media ever portray women as anything more than beautiful objects? If so, how can we, as
women, change that? How can we alter those perceptions? What messages can we send to ourselves, and to our
girlfriends, to combat negative or demeaning media messages?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this
session.
Eating Well

**Overview:** This session gets girls thinking about how the foods they eat impact their bodies. It covers healthy eating habits, as well as eating disorders.

- **Topics covered:** Healthy Eating
- **Badges earned:** Foodie

- **Session time:** 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions
- **Preparation time:** 60 minutes

- **Materials needed:**
  - Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
  - Session worksheets
  - Laptop/projector, for viewing video online
  - Journal extension sheets
  - Pens/pencils
  - Smoothie ingredients (recommendations included in activity description); blender(s); small paper cups for sampling (optional)

- **Resources needed:**

**Preparing for the session**

1. Gather writing supplies.
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
3. Set up laptop/projector, for viewing video online.
4. Purchase smoothie-making materials and secure space in the Club kitchen (optional).
5. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities. Visit MayoClinic.com and WebMD.com for background information on eating disorders.

**Conducting the session**

**Recap discussion: Beauty and the Media Beast (5 to 10 minutes)**
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

**Introductory activity: Five Fabulous Food Groups (25 minutes)**
Pass out session worksheets, so girls have a place to take notes. Many older teens, especially those who work outside the home, are starting to make more of their own food choices. If girls this age formulate healthy eating habits, they are more likely to carry those into adulthood. Start with a quick overview of the five food groups. Teen girls will likely know them by heart, so feel free to review this information during the smoothie session outlined below. If they aren’t well-versed in the food groups, review the info below – adapted from ChooseMyPlate.gov[30] – to bring them up to speed before you start making smoothies:

- **Fruits.** Girls ages 14 to 18 should eat 2 cups of fruit per day.

  **Real-world equivalents of 1 cup of fruit (a girl should eat two of these to get her recommended daily amount):**
  - 1 large apple, peach, orange or pear
  - 1 large banana (about 8” long)
  - 8 large strawberries
  - 32 grapes
Eating Well

- 32 grapes
- 1 snack-sized container of applesauce or fruit cocktail
- 1 medium-sized glass of 100% fruit juice
- About two handfuls of dried fruit (like raisins, apricots or prunes; no-sugar-added varieties are best!)

Fruit is high in nutrients that we need and can’t get easily from other foods – things like vitamin C, potassium and folic acid.

**Pop Quiz!** Why do people say, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”? **Answer:** We know that everyone needs more than one apple per day, but the idea behind this saying has to do with fruit’s ability to boost our immune systems and protect us from disease.

Fruit is also a good source of fiber, which keeps our digestive systems running smoothly.

- **Vegetables.** Vegetables are an extremely important part of our daily diet, and girls ages 14 to 18 should eat 2½ cups of vegetables per day.

  **Real-world equivalents of 1 cup of vegetables (a girl should eat two and a half of these to get her recommended daily amount):**

  - 2 medium carrots
  - 2 cups of raw, leafy greens, like lettuce, spinach or cabbage
  - 1 baked sweet potato
  - 1 medium-sized bell pepper
  - 1 cup of cooked mushrooms, zucchini, cauliflower or broccoli – about the size of a baseball

  **Pop Quiz!** What does it mean to “eat the rainbow”? **Answer:** When people talk about “eating the rainbow,” they mean choosing veggies in all different colors: dark green, like spinach and kale; red and orange, like bell peppers, carrots and sweet potatoes; purple, like cabbage and beets; and white, like cauliflower and mushrooms. This ensures your body gets the broadest range of nutrients from the super-healthy vegetable group.

- **Grains.** Girls ages 14 to 18 should eat 6 ounces of grains a day, and at least half of that (approximately 3 ounces) should be whole grains, which are more nutritious for us than refined grains. Examples of whole grains include brown and wild rice, oatmeal, whole wheat flour, barley, bulgur, popcorn and quinoa. Refined (or processed) grains include white bread, cornbread, semolina pasta, grits and couscous.

  **Real-world equivalents of 1 ounce of grains (a girl should eat 6 of these to get her recommended daily amount):**

  - 1 slice of whole wheat bread
  - 1 cup of breakfast cereal, like whole wheat flakes – about the size of a baseball
  - ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta – about half the size of a tennis ball
  - 5 whole wheat crackers
  - 3 cups of popped popcorn

  **Pop quiz!** What makes grains so great? (Hint: think about how you feel after eating a big bowl of oatmeal.) **Answer:** Grains are an awesome source of dietary fiber, which helps our bodies process waste and makes us feel full.

- **Protein.** Girls ages 14 to 18 who are somewhat physically active should eat 5 ounces of protein per day. If girls are more active (e.g., they play on a sports team at school), they can eat additional protein to aid muscle repair.
Real-world equivalents:

- ¼ cup cooked beans, about the size of a girl’s fist, equals 1 ounce of protein
- 1 egg equals 1 ounce of protein
- 12 almonds, 24 pistachios, or seven walnut halves equal 1 ounce of protein
- 2 tablespoons of peanut- or other nut-butter, about the size of a ping pong ball, equals 2 ounces of protein
- A piece of cooked meat, about the size of a deck of playing cards, equals 2 to 3 ounces of protein

Meat, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, soy products, nuts and seeds provide protein, which gives you energy and helps you build muscle. Getting protein from a variety of sources that don’t contain too much fat or sodium (salt) is best. For example, while some people really love to eat bacon, which provides protein, it is not a very nutritious protein.

**Pop quiz!** What makes bacon less nutritious than other proteins? **Answer:** It contains high levels of sodium (salt) and fat. Too much of these can lead to disease.

And, even if you are vegan or vegetarian, there are plenty of ways for you to get enough protein on your plate – soy, nuts, beans, peas and seeds are great sources of protein for people who maintain vegan and vegetarian diets. Vegetarians can add eggs to that list, too.

- **Dairy.** Girls ages 14 to 18 should eat or drink 3 cups of dairy food per day.

**Real-world equivalents of 1 cup of dairy (a girl should eat or drink three of these to get her recommended daily amount):**

- 1 half-pint carton of milk
- 2 snack-sized containers of yogurt (4 oz. each)
- 2 slices of cheddar, Swiss or mozzarella cheese
- 1 medium-sized glass of calcium-fortified soy milk

Milk products, and many foods made from milk, are part of the dairy food group. Calcium-fortified soymilk is included as well. Some dairy foods are more healthful for you than others; those foods typically contain high amounts of calcium. Calcium is especially important to have in your diet when you are still growing, because it helps strengthen your bones, teeth and muscles.

**Pop quiz!** What types of dairy foods contain little calcium and lots of fat or sugar? **Answer:** Cream cheese, butter and ice cream.

What’s the best way to choose dairy products that are good for you? Go for high calcium and low fat, like a glass of low-fat milk or a container of low-fat yogurt.

This hands-on healthy cooking activity is a great way to let girls take charge of their nutrition. Combine this portion of the session with the Eating Well session for 11- to 13-year-olds to build camaraderie across the tween and teen age groups.

**Smoothie session:** Stock up on plain yogurt, 100% juice (such as orange, apple or carrot), nut butter, fruits and berries, and leafy greens and herbs – spinach, arugula, basil, mint, thyme and even kale are fantastic in smoothies! Make several smoothies, and pour sample portions for the group. Engage girls in washing and chopping fruits and veggies, and in recipe development.

A few ideas: Try a smoothie with yogurt, peanut butter, spinach and banana. Or create one with yogurt, berries and basil. Encourage girls to experiment with unconventional combos – they might discover a flavor they love!
Knowledge activity: Eating – It’s Good for You (40 minutes)

According to MayoClinic.com, teen girls are more at risk than any other demographic for developing eating disorders.31

Go through the list of the three most common eating disorders, and the red flags that could signal an eating disorder, included on the girls’ session worksheets. Even if no one in your group is struggling with these issues now, any girl could develop a disorder down the road, or witness it in a friend. Arming your girls with information about how to recognize and deal with eating disorders is key for prevention and cessation. The following information is based on the Mayo Clinic’s page on the symptoms of eating disorders, which you should review prior to the session.32

- **Anorexia nervosa**: People with this disorder are fixated on being thin. They are often obsessed with food, and with their own bodies. They zero in on perceived “flaws” and “fatness.” This disorder causes people to self-starve, sometimes to the point of emaciation, hospitalization and even death.

- **Bulimia nervosa**: People with this disorder go through a cycle of bingeing (eating large amounts of food) and purging (vomiting or working out excessively) shortly thereafter.

- **Binge-eating disorder**: People with this disorder routinely eat past the point of fullness, until they become uncomfortable or even sick. They don’t compensate for the binges through starvation or purging; rather, people with this disorder often turn to eating more.

Mayo Clinic identifies several behaviors that may signal an eating disorder. These may include skipping meals; ritualizing meals; expressing a distorted body image; avoiding meals in public; using dietary supplements, laxatives, and other over-the-counter weight-loss drugs; hoarding food and/or eating in secret.33 Tell girls that, if they notice these behaviors in themselves, or in a friend, they should talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, mentor or counselor. Many people with eating disorders have difficulty recognizing that they need treatment. Tell your girls to be strong and firm in urging friends to seek care, and to support friends who may be struggling with these issues.

Time-permitting, watch WebMD.com’s “The Truth About Eating Disorders.” This video features teens Emily and Lauren discussing their eating disorders, and their recovery processes.

After you’ve reviewed these disorders and their warning signs, and/or watched the video, switch the conversation to one about maintaining a healthy relationship with food. Ask the girls why they think someone might develop an eating disorder. **(Note: While the exact cause of eating disorders is unknown, biology, emotional and mental health, and societal pressures can trigger them.)**34 Ask girls for ideas for building good eating habits, and a positive body image. Record their answers on a whiteboard or poster-paper. Some key points follow, to help guide the discussion:

- **Encourage reasonable eating habits.** Diet affects the way you feel and the way you look. Girls should eat when they are hungry, and try to eat foods that fuel their bodies for more than an hour or two:

  > While a candy bar or a can of soda might give you a burst of energy as your body burns through all that processed sugar at top speed, you’ll have an even deeper crash an hour or so later. Eating a snack that has a mix of protein and carbohydrates, like an apple with a tablespoon of peanut butter, will give you energy for a longer period. Plus, you won’t suffer that nasty sugar crash, because your body can handle the natural sugars from the apple and the peanut butter in a more leisurely way.

Considering food as fuel for physical activities, like sports, and mental ones, like taking tests in school, is one way girls can build healthy relationships with food. Ask the girls if they eat when they are sad, angry or lonely. Chances are, most of them do. Emotional eating is very common, and is marked by sudden cravings and overconsumption, according to WebMD.com.35 But food doesn’t solve our emotional...
issues – sure, it produces momentary pleasure, but that pleasure doesn’t last. Ask girls what they could do instead of eating when they are feeling down or upset. Maybe take a walk with a friend? Hang out with a close relative? Text a mentor for advice? They can think of it this way:

*Getting to the root of the problem, and working through that, is more beneficial than covering it in chocolate sauce and trying to forget it exists. The chocolate sauce tastes delicious and distracts you from your troubles, but when it’s gone, the underlying issue remains.*

- **Don’t accept that beauty is a single body type.** Refer back to the previous session on body image and media. Girls receive hundreds of media messages every day that tell them a certain body type is acceptable and beautiful. Ask girls how their ideas about those messages have changed following that session. *Is thinness ideal? How thin is too thin? When it interferes with your image of yourself? When it interferes with your health?* Caution girls about the pro-ana and pro-mia movements, which endorse anorexia and bulimia as lifestyle choices rather than eating disorders. Pro-ana and pro-mia blogs and other social networks are run by communities of people who suffer from eating disorders, and who spur others to lose extreme amounts of weight, which is incredibly dangerous.

- **Promote a healthy body image and realistic eating.** Discuss how self-image can affect food choices. If a girl thinks of her body negatively, how might she alter her diet? Starvation or severe calorie-restriction diets, or diets that involve eating only one or two types of food (e.g., the lemon juice diet or the grapefruit diet), can compromise a teen girl’s health, because they don’t provide sufficient nutrition to fuel her growing body. If a teen girl is overweight or obese and wants to start a weight-loss plan that involves healthy eating and regular physical activity, more power to her! Just remind her that her dietary and activity changes should be gradual, and should be supervised by a doctor or other healthcare professional.

- **Practice positive self-talk, and don’t beat yourself up.** Remind girls that eating is enjoyable! Labeling certain foods as “bad” or “good” creates unrealistic expectations for eating, and sets girls up to feel guilty after eating those so-called “bad” foods. Tell girls that it’s OK to enjoy and experience food of all kinds, but in moderation:

  *Moderation is crucial to good nutrition – it’s OK to have a milkshake or a side of fries every once in a while. You’re not a bad person for doing it!*  

**Closing conversation: Healthy Eating Goals (20 minutes)**

Tell girls to visit PresidentsChallenge.org, the President’s campaign to help people stay fit and healthy. The campaign’s eight goals are listed below. More information on each can be found on the website.

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make half the grains you eat whole grains.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, yogurt or cheese.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Choose lean sources of protein.
- Compare sodium in foods like soup and frozen meals, and choose foods with less sodium.
- Eat some seafood.
- Pay attention to portion size.

Have girls pick one of the goals to complete the following week, and ask them to journal about their progress. If they master that goal, tell them to pick another for the following week. Give them a few minutes to report back at succeeding sessions.

**Extension activity: Cook a Balanced Meal**

Encourage girls to cook a balanced meal at home or with friends during the week. They can photo-document their party and post photos to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or another social network.
Eating Well
Nutritious food gives us the energy we need to move and grow. This week, think about the impact food has on your body and mind.

Section 1. Smoothie Session
You probably never thought you could drink your spinach – but you totally can! Write down some of your favorite smoothie recipes from today’s smoothie session. Did you discover new flavors you love? Were you surprised by certain recipes?

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Section 2. Eating Disorders
Teen girls are the most at-risk group of people to develop eating disorders, according to the Mayo Clinic. The most common disorders and their symptoms are listed below:

- **Anorexia nervosa**: People with this disorder are fixated on being thin. They are often obsessed with food, and with their own bodies. They fixate on perceived “flaws” and “fatness.” This disorder causes people to self-starve, sometimes to the point of emaciation, hospitalization and even death.

- **Bulimia nervosa**: People with this disorder go through a cycle of bingeing (eating large amounts of food) and purging (vomiting or working out excessively) shortly thereafter.

- **Binge-eating disorder**: People with this disorder routinely eat past the point of fullness, until they become uncomfortable or even sick. They don’t compensate for the binges through starvation or purging; rather, people with this disorder often turn to eating more.

Eating disorders are dangerous. They can be triggered by a number of factors, including biology, emotions and societal pressure. But building healthy eating habits and a positive body-image can help deflect eating disorders. How can you cultivate these things in yourself, and support friends in doing the same?
Section 3. My Reflections

Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key to earning your badge!) Pick one of the President's Challenge healthy eating goals from the list below, and work on integrating it into your eating routine over the next week. Journal about your progress. Once you master one, pick another! Visit PresidentsChallenge.org for more goals, info and inspiration!

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make half the grains you eat whole grains.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, yogurt or cheese.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Choose lean sources of protein.
- Compare sodium in foods like soup and frozen meals, and choose foods with less sodium.
- Eat some seafood.
- Pay attention to portion size.

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.
Staying Fit

Overview: This session redefines the concept of exercise: it could be speed walking, tetherball, freeze tag, dancing to music, or even doing household chores. Girls discover new ways to get physical, without playing a team sport or doing a traditional workout.

Topics covered: Exercise
Badges earned: Fit & Fabulous

Session time: 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions
Preparation time: 30 minutes

Materials needed:
• Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
• Session worksheets
• Journal extension sheets
• Pens/pencils
• Laptop with Wi-Fi (to stream a music playlist)

Resources needed:
• Gym or other recreation room space
• Music-streaming app, such as Spotify
• Computers with Internet access

Preparing for the session
1. Gather writing supplies.
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
3. Download the music-streaming app to a laptop and create an account. Make sure you can stream a playlist in the gym. Alternatively, you can conduct the Alternative Exercise activity in the classroom with a non-Wi-Fi-enabled computer – you’ll just have to move the furniture out of the way before you begin.
4. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities. Read the music-and-exercise article in Scientific American at www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=psychology-workout-music for background information on the relationship between music and exercise, in advance of the Alternative Exercise activity. You can also print copies for the girls to read after the session (optional).

Conducting the session

Recap discussion: Eating Well (5 to 10 minutes)
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

Introductory activity: Why We Move (20 minutes)
Pass out session worksheets, so girls have a place to take notes. Start by asking girls why exercise is an important part of staying healthy. Record answers on the whiteboard or poster-paper. If girls need assistance, jumpstart the conversation with the information below:

Regular physical activity tones your muscles, strengthens your bones, and is great for your heart and brain. It regulates weight, and keeps your heart and lungs strong. It increases balance and endurance, and it helps prevent disease. It’s also great for your mind: complicated motions challenge your brain to move multiple muscles quickly, and in succession. Plus, physical activity can boost your mood – it generates chemicals called endorphins, which make you feel happy!
Staying Fit

If your group is interested in the science behind the brain-exercise connection, share this WebMD.com article on using exercise to train your brain happy: [http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/train-your-brain-with-exercise](http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/train-your-brain-with-exercise).

Then, ask girls if they can think of the long-term benefits of regular physical activity. Some ideas below, to jumpstart:

- **Cultivating a routine of physical activity when you’re young sets you up to maintain those healthy habits as an adult.**
- **Keeping your heart and lungs healthy can help you avoid disease in the future.**
- **Being fit will benefit you if you ever have kids of your own. You’ll be able to keep up with them, and you’ll be equipped to teach them how to stay healthy, too!**

Next, ask girls what they do to stay physically fit. Give them a few minutes to share why they play sports, dance or enjoy P.E. class.

Take this opportunity to talk about “screen time” – that is, the amount of time girls spend in front of a screen (TV, computer, video games) – and encourage girls to limit it to no more than two hours per day, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.37 Suggest that girls add some activity to their TV time. Encourage them to walk in place, or do jumping jacks, push-ups or sit-ups during TV commercials!

**Life-skills activity: Alternative Exercise (50 minutes)**

Exercise isn’t just about being on a sports team or doing drills in gym class. Exercise comes in many forms – from doing yard work, to walking to school, to taking a yoga class, to playing physical activity games on a Microsoft Kinect gaming system.

1. Start the activity by creating a group playlist using a music-streaming app, such as Spotify. Let each girl pick at least one song. Tell girls that using music to pace exercise is not only satisfying and fun, it helps performance. Check out the article on the relationship between music and exercise, published in *Scientific American* (link included in Resources listed above). According to a 2012 study by researchers at Sheffield Hallam University, “participants who cycled in time to music required 7 percent less oxygen to do the same work as cyclists who did not synchronize their movements with background music.” Pass out copies of the article for girls to review after the session, if you’d like.

2. Then, send girls to the computer lab. Give them 20 minutes to research new forms of exercise, either in pairs or on their own, depending on the size of your group. Tell them they will be giving a five-minute presentation and demo of this type of exercise (assuming it doesn’t require special equipment), following their research. Recommend sites like FitnessMagazine.com, LiveStrong.com or Muve.com to help girls identify and learn about exercises with which they might not be familiar. Examples include: calisthenics, yoga, bodyweight exercises (such as burpees and planks), Zumba, belly-dancing, kickboxing and country line dancing.

3. Move to the gym or recreation room, or stay in the classroom. (If you stay in the classroom, prepare the space by moving furniture out of the center of the room.)

4. Start the first song on the playlist. You can give the first presentation, to help break the ice.

5. Continue until all girls have presented and demonstrated their type of exercise. By the end of this session, you all will have had a 30-minute workout!

Take a few minutes during the activity to discuss the importance of staying hydrated, especially when engaging in physical activity. Remind girls to drink water before, during and after activities.

*Staying hydrated helps you avoid overheating. It also keeps your muscles and joints lubricated, which helps you avoid injury and perform at your peak.* You should drink between 14 and 22 ounces of water (about the size of a large water bottle) before physical activity, and continue drinking 6 to 12
Staying Fit

Ounces every 15 to 20 minutes during the activity. Post-activity, you should drink 16 to 24 ounces of water. The more you sweated during the activity, the more you should drink!

Closing conversation: Keep Moving (20 minutes)
Sometimes, just getting started is the biggest barrier to exercise. Ask girls to share their obstacles to staying fit. Using the “Yes, and...” method of group discussion, get the group to devise solutions for incorporating their recommended amount of exercise (60 minutes/day, five days/week) into their lives. Some possible solutions:

- **Work out with a buddy.** Making an exercise date with a friend is a great way to keep you accountable.
- **Put it on your calendar.** If you’re a planner, scheduling workout time can keep you on track.
- **Make a playlist that totally pumps you up.** So what if you listen to the same song over and over while you go for a jog? If it keeps you moving, do it!
- **Squeeze it in during your downtime.** If you love watching TV, do some calisthenics during the commercials. If you’re sitting at your desk at school, tighten and release various muscles, such as your abs, your behind, your arms and your legs. Just because you’re not running a marathon doesn’t mean you’re not working your muscles!

Encourage girls to try out a new type of exercise in the following week, and to journal about their experience. Was it fun? Easy? Did they create a special playlist that inspired them to sweat it out?

In addition to partnering with the President’s Challenge, Boys & Girls Clubs offers fitness programs for members, including:

**Triple Play:** [http://bgca.net/Programs/TriplePlay/Default.aspx](http://bgca.net/Programs/TriplePlay/Default.aspx)
Triple Play, BGCA’s comprehensive health and wellness initiative, strives to improve the overall health of members, ages 6 to 18, by increasing their daily physical activity, teaching them good nutrition and helping them develop healthy relationships.

**WANNA PLAY?™ Program:** [http://groups2.bgca.net/sites/PYDS/SFR/WannaPlay/Pages/default.aspx](http://groups2.bgca.net/sites/PYDS/SFR/WannaPlay/Pages/default.aspx)
The **WANNA PLAY?™** program features a variety of fun and engaging activities to help Club members improve their fitness; increase awareness of good nutrition and hydration; learn basic baseball and softball skills; and develop a lifelong appreciation for the game of baseball.
Staying Fit
Exercise is a major part of a healthy lifestyle. Getting 60 minutes a day, five days a week is recommended for girls. How do you stay fit?

Section 1. Why Should We Move?
Why is it important to be active? How can it benefit you in the long run?

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What do you do to stay fit? Jot down a few ways you incorporate exercise into your daily life. ________________

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Section 2. Alternative Exercise
Exercise isn’t just about being on a sports team or doing drills in gym class. Exercise comes in many forms – from doing yard work, to walking to school, to taking a yoga class, to playing physical activity games on a Microsoft Kinect gaming system. In the space below, write down some facts about the alternative exercises you discover during your research. Be prepared to share these with the group when you give your presentation.

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Section 3. My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key to earning your badge!) What obstacles keep you from exercising? How can you overcome those obstacles? Pick one or two ways you can integrate exercise into your daily life, and work on those over the next week. Journal about your progress. Was it easy to get your 60 minutes/day? Difficult? How did you challenge yourself?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.

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Your Sexual Health

**Overview:** This session teaches girls the importance of keeping their lady-parts healthy by getting regular check-ups, and by taking charge of their sexual health and wellness.

**Topics covered:** Sexual Health, Female Reproduction, STD Prevention, Pregnancy Prevention

**Badges earned:** It’s My Body

**Session time:** 180 minutes (two 90-minute sessions); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions

**Preparation time:** 60 minutes

**Materials needed:**
- Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
- Session worksheets
- Female Reproductive System chart (optional); laptop/projector, for viewing online interactive and infographics
- Handshake Game playing cards (optional)
- Journal extension sheets
- Pens/pencils

**Resources needed:**
- Female reproductive system interactive: kidshealth.org/parent/interactive/frs_it.html
- First pelvic exam article: http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/puberty/Pages/Pelvic-Exams.aspx (optional)
- Teen pregnancy infographic: http://www.itsyoursexlife.com/preventing-pregnancy/the-real-deal/
- Local women’s healthcare professional – you can locate one prior to the session using Planned Parenthood’s “Locate a Health Educator” tool, here: www.plannedparenthood.org/resources/locateEducator.asp (optional)

**Preparing for the session**

1. Gather writing supplies.
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program. Print the Safe Sex sheets (double-sided), equal to the number of girls in your program. Fold according to the instructions to make a wallet-sized book (optional, depending on the maturity of your group).
3. Print copies of the Female Reproductive System chart, equal to the number of girls in your program (optional). Set up laptop/projector to view online interactive and infographics.
4. Contact a local women’s healthcare office or clinic. Ask a specialist in women’s healthcare (OB/GYN, LPN, RN) to visit your SMART Girls session. Tell the health worker that she will be fielding questions from your group about sexual and reproductive health for approximately one hour of your weekly SMART Girls session. If you can’t set up an in-person visit, use Skype or FaceTime to connect your group with your chosen health worker.
5. If you are playing the Handshake Game, print the following cards:
   - a. 1 card with a small “o”
   - b. 1 card with a small “z”
   - c. 1 one card with a small “x”
   - d. 2 cards with a small “c”
   - e. 2 cards with the “Don’t follow my directions” message
   - f. Remaining cards should be blank, to equal the number of girls in your group
6. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities. Gather contact information for local clinics and women’s health professionals to share with the girls during the introductory activity, and familiarize yourself with the risk factors for sexually active teens here: www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/sexualbehaviors. Note that some of this material may be too mature for your group; use your best judgment when choosing what to discuss with your girls.
Your Sexual Health

Ages 14 to 18

Conducting the session

Recap discussion: Staying Fit (5 to 10 minutes)
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

Introductory activity: The Importance of Sexual Health (40 minutes)
Pass out session worksheets, so girls have a place to take notes. Most girls at this age will have begun menstruation, and many will have gone through previous SMART Girls- or school-sponsored sex education classes. If not, take a few minutes to review the female reproductive system, using either the KidsHealth.org female reproductive system interactive or chart provided for the Growing Up session for 11- to 13-year-olds.

Tell girls that it is important to get a pelvic exam annually once they turn 21. This exam can be done by an obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/GYN). The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists does not recommend internal pelvic exams for patients under 21 years, but they do recommend that girls have their first visit to the OB/GYN between the ages of 13 and 15. This visit typically focuses on discussion of sexual health, and can include a human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. (More information about the HPV vaccine is included below.)

If a girl under 21 experiences pelvic pain, vaginal discharge or a menstrual disorder, she may wish to have an internal pelvic exam. HealthyChildren.org offers a great introduction to a girl’s first pelvic exam. (URL included in the Resources listed above. You can print and share it with your girls, if appropriate.) The article explains each step, and dispels a few common myths, which you can review with your girls:

- Getting a pelvic exam doesn’t mean you’ve lost your virginity. You’re a virgin until you have vaginal sexual intercourse.
- A doctor can’t tell whether you’re a virgin through performing a pelvic exam. The only way she’ll know is if you tell her.
- Pelvic exams aren’t painful. They might be a little uncomfortable, but they only last about five minutes from start to finish.

Most pelvic exams include a Pap smear, in which the doctor takes a sample of cervical cells by sweeping a cotton swab over the cervix. The doctor tests the cells for cervical cancer, or indicators that suggest the potential to develop cervical cancer. Most cases of cervical cancer can be traced to a few strains of HPV (human papillomavirus), a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is caused by intimate skin-to-skin contact with an infected person.

Thankfully, two vaccines, Cervarix and Gardasil, can protect girls against these and other strains of HPV. They are recommended for girls and women ages 13 to 26, and are available at most family healthcare clinics, including Planned Parenthood. Most insurance plans cover the vaccines. If girls don’t have access to insurance, they can look into getting coverage through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, a nationwide program that offers vaccines to children at no cost. Though it is recommended that girls get the vaccines before they become sexually active, all women, regardless of their sexual activity, can benefit from vaccination.

Segue into a conversation about sexual responsibility, and the physical risks of sexual activity. Included on girls’ session worksheets are the following statistics, from a 2011 survey of high school students, conducted by the CDC. Of students surveyed:

- 47.4% had ever had sexual intercourse.
- 33.7% had had sexual intercourse during the previous three months, and, of these:
  - 39.8% did not use a condom the last time they had sex.
  - 76.7% did not use birth control pills or Depo-Provera (birth control shot) to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex.
- 15.3% had had sex with four or more people during their life.
- Nearly half of the 19 million new STDs each year are among young people aged 15 to 24 years.
Your Sexual Health

Girls may feel pressure from peers and the media to engage in sexual activity, and they may give in to those pressures even if they don’t feel ready. Remind your girls that the decision to practice abstinence is personal, and they can feel confident and comfortable in their choice to avoid sexual activity. Each girl is in charge of her own mind and body. You can suggest that girls repeat the following mantra if ever they feel pressure to have sex: *It’s my body, it’s my choice.*

Tell girls that they are responsible for their own sexual health, including preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and diseases (STIs and STDs). **Note:** Many healthcare professionals and organizations have shifted their use of STD to the more inclusive STI, as many sexually transmitted infections do not manifest symptoms, and are therefore not considered “diseases.” Nevertheless, both acronyms are still acceptable.43

**STIs and STDs**

STIs and STDs are infectious diseases that are spread through intimate contact – i.e., oral, anal or vaginal sex; and, in the cases of herpes and HPV, through skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. They include HIV/AIDS, chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital herpes and genital warts, hepatitis B, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), pubic lice (crabs), syphilis (less common among teens) and trichomoniasis.44

While some of these diseases and infections are curable, some are not – and that’s why prevention is key. The CDC recommends that sexually active teens get tested annually for chlamydia and gonorrhea, and for HIV at least once during their high school career.45 Teens can locate nearby STD testing centers by calling the CDC’s National STD Hotline at 800-232-4636, or by texting their ZIP codes to 498669 (GYTNOW).

Remind girls that, typically, STDs and STIs are *asymptomatic.* That means they don’t generate easily observable symptoms. A girl can’t look at her partner and tell whether s/he is carrying an STD or STI, so it is up to her to keep herself safe.46

**Pregnancy**

Pregnancy is another risk factor for heterosexual girls who are sexually active with boys. Call up IYSL’s teen pregnancy infographic on your laptop, and run through the stats with your girls. This infographic contains information about condoms and birth control, which may not be appropriate for your group. Use your best judgment when choosing to show this to your girls. If you skip the infographic, share the following facts:

- Three in 10 teen girls will get pregnant at least once before age 20.
- A sexually active teen who does not use a contraceptive has a 90% chance of becoming pregnant within a year.
- Less than half of teen moms under 18 ever graduate from high school, and fewer than 2% earn a college degree by age 30.
- Eight of 10 teen fathers don’t marry the mothers of their children.
- A child is nine times more likely to grow up in poverty if s/he is born to unmarried teen parents who have not yet completed high school.47

**Prevention**48

Girls and women today have many options for contraception and preventing infections, including:

- **Abstinence.** Abstaining from sexual activity (avoiding all sexual contact) is the only 100% effective method for pregnancy- and disease-prevention.

- **Latex condoms.** When used consistently and correctly – that is, every time, from the point of erection through ejaculation – are up to 98% effective at preventing disease and pregnancy, but they aren’t infallible, especially if they are used incorrectly. Encourage your girls to carry their own condoms if they are expecting to have sex, and to insist that their partners wear a condom every time.
• **Prescription birth control.** This is a broad category of pharmaceuticals and devices. The most common forms include:
  - Birth control pills, taken orally every day
  - Birth control patch (Ortho Evra), applied to the skin weekly
  - Depo-Prevera (birth control shot), administered by a healthcare professional every three months
  - Vaginal ring (NuvaRing), inserted into the vagina for three weeks each month
  - IUD (intrauterine device), inserted into the uterus by a healthcare professional; can last up to 12 years

Reinforce that **these birth control methods are not substitutes for using condoms**, which protect against STIs and STDs.

• **Emergency birth control.** While it is much safer to plan contraceptive methods **before** having sex, girls do have emergency contraception options in the event they have unprotected vaginal sex, or their chosen method fails (as with a broken or misused condom). Both over-the-counter and prescription versions of the morning-after pill are available. Tell girls that emergency contraception should be started as soon as possible following unprotected vaginal sex. Also make sure girls understand that this method should be their last resort.

### Knowledge/Life-skills activity: The Vagina Dialogues (40 minutes)

Pass out Question Box slips to the girls (three or four per girl), and ask them to write down any questions they have about female reproductive health or sexual activity. Then, have them put their questions in the box. Introduce your visiting healthcare professional, and give her the Question Box. Ask her to read each question aloud, and give an answer. Welcome girls to ask additional questions, or share their experiences and knowledge.

You can seed the Question Box with any or all of the following questions. Note that some may be inappropriate for your group. Use your best judgment when adding questions to the box.

- Does an annual exam hurt? What happens? Where can I get one?
- What if I’m not getting my period regularly? Am I normal?
- Can I get pregnant when I’m on my period? Are there any sexual positions that will prevent pregnancy?
- What’s the best way to prevent getting an STD?
- Can a doctor tell if I’m not a virgin? If I’m not, should I tell her?
- If my boyfriend pulls out before he has an orgasm, I can’t get pregnant, right?
- My friend says she uses the “rhythm method” to avoid getting pregnant. What is that? Can I try it?
- My partner says that if I don’t have sex with him/her, then I don’t really love him/her. Is that true?
- Do only gay people get HIV and AIDS?
- What do I do if I think I might be pregnant?
- It’s safe for me to not use condoms if I take the morning-after pill every time, right?
- My family is really strict. Where can I go to talk to someone about birth control?
- How old should I be before I lose my virginity?
- My partner told me that s/he should get to have sex with me whenever s/he wants. Is that true?
- Oral sex is the safest sex, isn’t it? Can I get a disease from doing it?
- My partner wants to have anal sex, but I’m scared. What should I do?
- I want to wax my pubic hair, but I’m not old enough to go to a salon (and I don’t want to ask for my parents’ permission!). Can I wax at home? Or should I just shave? (Note: If girls are feeling self-conscious about body hair, check out the section on shaving in Session 5 for tweens.)
Closing conversation: Yeah, Sex Can Be Great (40 minutes)

Remind girls that abstaining from or practicing safe sex isn’t just about maintaining physical health. Engaging in sexual activity affects emotional health, too. Depending on the maturity of your group and your comfort level with the topic, you can discuss the emotional aspects of having sex during your closing conversation. Here are a few talking points to get you started:

- **Sex can be awesome.** Sex is supposed to feel good. But it doesn’t feel good if you don’t want it, or if you feel pressured or obligated to do it. Sex should be about people sharing a physical experience that is caring, respectful and satisfying.

- **Sex isn’t about power.** Some people engage in sexual activity as a way to exert power over their partners. They use it as a reward, or a bargaining chip: “I’ll have sex with you if you ________,” or, “If you really loved me, you’d have sex with me.” Others use it as punishment, or as a way to exert physical dominance. Sex should never, ever be forced on a partner. If you don’t want to have sex with someone, say so. And if someone forces you to have sex, and you’ve said no, that constitutes sexual violence, which is against the law. If this has happened to you or someone you know, talk to an adult you trust, or contact a local organization that specializes in helping people who have experienced sexual violence, such as Planned Parenthood or RAINN (the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) at 800-656-HOPE.

  Keep in mind that both men and women use sex to exert power over partners. It isn’t exclusive to one sex or one gender. Forcing someone into having sex, or using it to get what you want, is never OK.

- **Sex is emotional.** Sharing anything personal with someone else can be emotional. Just think about the first time you divulged a deep, dark secret to a friend. It was tough, right? Sharing physical intimacy is equally emotional. It can make you feel incredibly close to your partner, but it can also make you feel vulnerable and exposed. If you don’t think you are ready to handle those emotions, don’t do it. Having sex with someone is your choice to make. Don’t make it lightly.

- **Sex isn’t what you see in the movies.** Sex in the movies and on TV typically falls into one of two categories: dreamy or violent. Dreamy sex isn’t explicit, and it’s usually portrayed as romantic and intimate. Violent sex is often explicit; it is usually accompanied by force, and sometimes by protest from the person being forced into the sexual situation. Both of these types of sex exist in real life, but they aren’t the only types of sex. Sexuality is much more nuanced and individual. What excites you sexually might not map to images you’ve seen in the media, but that doesn’t mean you’re bad or wrong. As long as you’re engaging in sexual activity with a partner who shares your enjoyment, you’re all good!

  Healthy sex is consensual, caring and enthusiastic; if you’re in a sexual situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, speak up! A respectful partner will listen to you. And if you’re interested in sharing a certain type of sexual experience with your partner, talk about it. If you have built a respectful, loving relationship with your partner, s/he won’t laugh at you or make you feel bad – s/he’ll be happy to listen, and perhaps try out your idea.

Encourage your girls to journal about their sexuality and their choices regarding sex over the next week. How have those choices changed over the past few years? How has their concept of sex changed?

Remind girls to practice safe sex, every time, and encourage them to get tested for STDs annually. Pass out the Safe Sex booklets (optional), which include information on prevention methods, as well as contact info for national organizations that support sexual health, all of which are incorporated into this lesson.
**Alternative closing conversation/activity: The Handshake Game (30 to 40 minutes)**

This game teaches girls just how fast an infection can spread. You can use this in place of the previous closing conversation if it better suits your group. This game is adapted from AdvocatesForYouth.org’s STD/HIV Handshake Game, and is played as follows:

1. Distribute one card to each girl. Tell girls to keep the instructions on their cards a secret. Ask each girl to stand and shake hands with three people, and have each of those people sign her card. Make sure the girls move around the room during this portion of the activity.
2. When all the girls have collected three signatures each, ask them to sit.
3. Ask those with the O, Z and X cards to stand up. Ask everyone who shook hands with those girls to stand up. Ask everyone who shook hands with a standing person to stand up. Continue until everyone is standing, except for the designated non-participants.
4. Now tell the group to pretend that the person with the card marked Z was infected with HIV, and that the handshake was equal to having unprotected sex with that person. Do the same with the card marked O (chlamydia) and the card marked X (genital herpes).
5. Have the girls sit down again, and ask those with the “Do not follow my directions” cards to stand. Explain that these people had chosen to abstain from sexual intercourse, and were therefore protected from these sexually transmitted diseases.
6. Ask those with the C cards to stand. Explain that these people had used condoms, and were therefore not at significant risk for infection. Note: Remind the girls that this game only represents the transmission of STIs. Also remind them that STIs are not spread through shaking hands, but through sexual contact – oral, anal or vaginal.

You can round out the activity by reviewing the discussion questions below.

- *How did person X feel? Person Z? Person O?*
- *How did you feel toward X, O and Z when you found out they were infected?*
- *How did the people who discovered they had used condoms feel?*
- *The teens with the X, O and Z cards didn’t know they were infected when we started this activity. In reality, many people don’t know they are infected with a sexually transmitted disease. Is it possible to know ahead of time who is infected and who is not? Knowing this, what steps can you take to avoid infection?*
Your Sexual Health

It might be a no-brainer, but it’s critical that you keep yourself (and your lady-parts) 100% healthy. Getting annual pelvic exams and understanding your sexual responsibility are the first steps to maintaining your sexual health.

Section 1. The Importance of Sexual Health

Annual pelvic exams are the frontline of maintaining your reproductive health. You should get an annual pelvic exam if you are sexually active, or after you turn 21. And guess what? They aren’t terrible! Use the space below to take notes on what to expect, as well as where to find a clinic or doctor who can perform an exam.

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Section 2. Your Sexual Responsibility

You are responsible for your sexual health. That means choosing a method for preventing pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections and diseases (STIs and STDs). In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveyed high school students in the U.S., and found the following:

Of students surveyed:
- 47.4% had ever had sexual intercourse.
- 33.7% had had sexual intercourse during the previous three months, and, of these:
  - 39.8% did not use a condom the last time they had sex.
  - 76.7% did not use birth control pills or Depo-Provera (birth control shot) to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex.
- 15.3% had had sex with four or more people during their life.
- Nearly half of the 19 million new STDs each year are among young people aged 15 to 24 years.

Abstinence is the only 100% effective method for preventing pregnancy and STIs/STDs. But if you are sexually active, there are other methods available to you, including prescription birth control and condoms. If you are having sex, use a condom every time – no exceptions. It protects you from STIs and STDs, and can prevent pregnancy.

Insist that your partner get tested for STIs/STDs before you engage in any type of sexual activity. Text your ZIP code to 498669 to get a list of testing centers in your area. Use the space below to record additional information and resources from this session:

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SEbE 6 | YOUE BODY}
Section 3. My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key to earning your badge!) Write about your sexual responsibility and choices. How have they changed? How do you imagine they will change as a result of this session?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.

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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA
Take charge of your sexual health.

Keep this guide in your wallet or purse for quick reference. You are responsible for keeping yourself safe, healthy and happy. It's your body, so take care of it!

Visit your OB/GYN

Whether or not you are sexually active, visit an obstetrician-gynecologist (OB/GYN) to discuss sexual health, contraception and STI/STD-prevention. You can also get your human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which protects you against strains of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

Visit your OB/GYN

Need help paying for your vaccination? You may be eligible for assistance through the Vaccines for Children Program. Contact your state’s VFC coordinator to find out if you are eligible. Search for “VFC coordinator” at www.cdc.gov for specific contact info.

Prevention, prevention, prevention

Abstinence.

Abstaining from sexual activity (avoiding all sexual contact) is the only 100% effective method for pregnancy- and disease-prevention. Period.

Prevent pregnancy, and avoid STIs & STDs

Find an STD testing center near you:

National STD Hotline 800-232-4636

Text your ZIP code to 498669 (GYTNOW)

Prevent, prevent, prevent

More Strips.

www.iyonservice.com (for women's health division)

You should always have a little bit of backup. Check out the websites that offer pelvic exams. Or if you have a gynecologist, ask them if they can refer you to a testing center near you.

Prevent pregnancy, and avoid STIs & STDs

If you're not going to use a condom, at least get tested annually for chlamydia and gonorrhea, and for HIV at least once.

Prevent pregnancy, and avoid STIs & STDs

Visit your OB/GYN

Whether or not you are sexually active, visit an obstetrician-gynecologist (OB/GYN) to discuss sexual health, contraception and STI/STD-prevention. You can also get your human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which protects you against strains of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

Prevent pregnancy, and avoid STIs & STDs

Find an STD testing center near you:

National STD Hotline 800-232-4636

Text your ZIP code to 498669 (GYTNOW)

Prevent, prevent, prevent

Abstinence.

Abstaining from sexual activity (avoiding all sexual contact) is the only 100% effective method for pregnancy- and disease-prevention. Period.
SESSION 7 | YOUR COMMUNITY

BFs, GFs & BFFs

Ages 14 to 18

**Overview:** This session focuses on building healthy relationships. Topics of discussion include dating, maintaining balanced friendships and peer pressure. The influence of social media, including texting, on these relationships is discussed.

**Topics covered:** Healthy Relationships

**Badges earned:** Best. Friend. Ever.

**Session time:** 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Materials needed:**
- Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
- Session worksheets
- Journal extension sheets
- Pens/pencils

**Resources needed:**
- Amy Rose Spiegel’s “Dating Older Guys” article: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/13/dating-older-guys_n_2465474.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/13/dating-older-guys_n_2465474.html)

Preparing for the session

1. Gather writing supplies.
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
3. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities.

Conducting the session

**Recap discussion: Your Sexual Health (5 to 10 minutes)**

Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

**Introductory activity: Building Healthy Friendships (30 minutes)**

Pass out session worksheets, so girls have a place to take notes. Then, start a conversation about friendship. At this age, most girls will have at least one BFF, and will be enmeshed in one social circle or another. Ask the girls to talk about the qualities of a strong friendship. You can use the following questions to get the conversation started:

- *How many friends do you have? Do you have to have a lot of them? Just one?*
- *What does it mean to have a BFF? Can you have more than one? What are the qualities of a close friend?*
- *How have your friendships changed over time? Are you still friends with people from gradeschool?*
- *How does your self-esteem affect your friendships, or your ability to make friends? If you have a lot of confidence, does that mean you have a lot of friends? What if you’re shy?*
- *What’s the best way to make a new friend? What’s the best way to keep a friend?*

For teens, peer pressure can play a huge role in friendships. Being part of a group feels good, but it can suppress a girl’s individuality, and can compromise her values and beliefs. Tell girls that they shouldn’t feel stifled by their friendships. Rather, they should feel free to be who they are, and express their thoughts and opinions – even if it stresses the friendship temporarily. Real friends listen to, respect and support one another.

Ask girls to name the qualities of a good friend. Record their answers on the whiteboard or poster-paper. Ask them to think about how they’d like to be treated, and then extrapolate qualities from there. For example, if you want a friend to keep your secrets, “trustworthy” could be one quality of a good friend. Ask the girls why each quality is important as you list it.
SESSION 7 | YOUR COMMUNITY

BFs, GFs & BFFs

Knowledge activity: More Than Just Friends – Dating and Romantic Relationships (30 minutes)
Transition into a discussion about romantic relationships. Many girls this age spend a lot of time crushing on someone, or are involved in some kind of romantic relationship. The emotions that come with having a crush, and with dating, can be hard for a teen to handle. Both she and her partner are going through, or have just gone through, puberty – a major transition accompanied by all kinds of new feelings. Moreover, both she and her partner probably don’t have much experience dating, so they are muddling through things as best as they can. And, if neither of them has been exposed to a healthy, supportive romantic relationship, they might not know what behaviors are acceptable.

Note: Though cultural expectations assume that girls will crush on boys exclusively, keep in mind that some girls may be developing romantic feelings for other girls, or for transgender peers. Try to be inclusive in your language and discussions, in order to make everyone feel safe and supported. If you need additional education on LGBT issues, or if you’d like to pass on information to the girls in your group, visit the CDC’s LGBT Youth Resources page, and the Gay Straight Alliance Network at www.gsanetwork.org.

In The Six Most Important Decisions You Will Ever Make: A Guide for Teens, author Sean Covey differentiates between what he calls “intelligent dating” and “brainless dating”:

Intelligent dating is … being selective about who you date, hanging out and having fun, remaining steady through the natural highs and lows of romance, and keeping your own standards. Brainless dating is … becoming centered on your girlfriend or boyfriend, having your heart broken repeatedly, and doing what everyone else seems to be doing.

The following sections address three important aspects of romantic relationships. Use one or all to kickstart a discussion about defining and navigating the ups and downs of teen romance.

Healthy Romance: The definition above is a great springboard for a discussion about the hallmarks of a healthy romantic relationship. Some discussion questions follow:

- How do you know if you have a crush on someone? How do you know if s/he feels the same way about you? And what should you do about it?
- Can the qualities of a good friend be present in a romantic relationship?
- What does it mean to have “chemistry” with someone? How should you conduct yourself around someone to whom you are physically and emotionally attracted?
- How important is trust in a romantic relationship? Communication?
- What should you do if you want to change your partner’s behavior? Is that OK?
- How much time should you spend with a partner? Should you spend more time with him/her than you do with your friends or family? Should s/he take precedence over other commitments, like school, sports or community activities?
- How do you know it’s time to have sex with a partner? How should you address the subject?
- What should you do if your friends tell you that you should or shouldn’t date someone?
- What should you do if your partner is jealous, or calls and texts you all the time to find out where you are, and whom you are with?

Peer Pressure and Dating Violence: Peer- and partner-pressure exerts a strong influence over teens. Talk with the girls about communication and boundaries:

If a partner (or even a friend) crosses a boundary line – for example, if s/he tells everyone something that you asked him/her not to repeat, or s/he touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable – tell him/her to stop. If s/he doesn’t, get out, and talk with a friend or adult you trust to determine a solution. You don’t have to put up with disrespectful treatment in a relationship. Ever.
SESSION 7 | YOUR COMMUNITY

BFs, GFs & BFFs
Ages 14 to 18

You can refer back to the sessions on self-esteem and sexual health to remind girls that, when they feel good about themselves, and they understand they are in charge of their bodies, their confidence and self-assuredness will carry over into their relationships. Be prepared to discuss the intersection of sex and teen relationships. Check out some of the additional sources listed in the Resources section, and feel free to refer girls to those sites as well. PlannedParenthood.org, for example, has a great section on sexual health for teens: www.plannedparenthood.org/info-for-teens.

Forcing intimacy or sex, tracking or controlling phone and social media usage, isolating a partner from friends and family, and abusing a partner physically or emotionally constitutes dating violence – a growing problem for teens. According to Child Trends 5, between one in 10 and one in four teens has experienced dating violence. What’s more, boys and girls are equally likely to commit dating violence.51

Encourage girls to take the Healthy Relationships quiz at LoveIsRespect.org. This quiz can help them identify behaviors that may be dating violence and can give them tools for building healthy romantic relationships. Remind girls that, if they are in an abusive relationship, they should tell a trusted adult who can offer support and assistance.

Dating an Older Person: An important topic for many teen girls is the question of dating an older person, particularly an older man. While the age of consent – the age at which consent to sexual activity is recognized by the law – varies from state to state, it is typically 17 or 18 years of age. Remind teens that, if they are under the age of consent, even if they engage in consensual sexual activity with a person who is above the age of consent, that person can be convicted of statutory rape – that is, “sexual relations between individuals that would be legal if not for their ages.”52 Beyond the legal implications, however, are bigger questions concerning romantic relationships with older people. Ask girls if they think dating an older individual is a smart and safe choice. For many girls, the idea of dating an older person may seem exciting – older individuals are generally more experienced and grounded than girls’ peers, and it can feel good to be valued and desired by someone older. But dating up comes with its own set of hurdles, ones that teens might not be emotionally equipped to clear.

Read through RookieMag.com contributor Amy Rose Spiegel’s piece on dating older people, published at HuffingtonPost.com (URL in Resources listed above). While the subject matter may be too mature for your girls, or may break some of your Club’s rules around appropriate language, Spiegel’s message is clear and straightforward. You can use her main points to frame a discussion on the potential pitfalls of dating an older person:

- Missing out on the high school scene
- Imbalance of power and life experience
- Social stigma, which often predicates secrecy, and can cause feelings of isolation and loneliness
- Potential pressure to have sex

Ask girls to be as circumspect as possible when considering a relationship with someone older. As Spiegel says: “When you’re a teenager … every year is a pivotal one! Consider how different you are now from how you were two years ago – huge, right? … That idea also applies to the years between you and an older paramour.” So many shifts in perspective can happen during a girl’s teen years. Encourage your girls to look for the hallmarks of a healthy relationship, no matter whom they date.

Closing conversation: What Kind of Friend Are You? (25 minutes)
Invite each girl to think about what kind of friend she is, and to journal about it during the following week. Is she supportive? Kind? Selfish? Fair-weather?

Also ask girls to think about how they can improve their friendships and romantic relationships. If they are super-busy, could they make themselves more available to hang out with friends? If they are dating, could they change the way they relate to their partners? Could they resist pressure from peers or partners to do things they don’t want to do? Give them time to report back on their progress at the beginning of the following session, and remind them that you’re always available to discuss challenges and solutions.
BFs, GFs & BFFs

Strong friendships can handle the ups and downs of life. You can always count on a good friend to dry your tears and make you laugh. And with some people, you might want to be more than friends. Both crushing and dating are exciting and crazy. How can you keep a clear head and foster a strong, supportive romantic relationship?

Section 1. **Building Healthy Friendships**

What do you look for in a friend? What makes a friendship strong? How do you think your friendships will grow and change as you get older?

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Section 2. **More Than Just Friends**

Can the qualities of a good friend translate to a romantic relationship? What does it mean to have a crush on someone? What does it mean to date someone successfully? How do you know when you should get physical, and how much physicality is appropriate? How do you know if you should break up?

Take the Healthy Relationships quiz at LoveIsRespect.org. It can help you identify potentially abusive behaviors. If you are in an abusive relationship, tell a trusted adult, who can help you get out of the situation and back on the road to a healthy romance.

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Section 3. My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key to earning your badge!) Think about the kind of friends you want, and the kind of friend you are. How can you work to be a caring friend, and to surround yourself with friends who care about you, too? If you are dating someone, evaluate your relationship. Is it healthy? What could you do to improve it?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.
Overview: This session addresses the challenges of bullying and peer pressure, and looks at the influence of social media on girls’ lives and choices.

Topics covered: Bullying, Peer Pressure, Social Media Literacy
Badges earned: Social Savvy Superstar

Session time: 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions
Preparation time: 30 minutes

Materials needed:
- Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
- Session worksheets
- Laptop/projector for viewing video online (optional)
- Computers with Internet access
- Journal extension sheets
- Pens/pencils

Resources needed:
- “PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center” video: www.pacer.org/bullying/video
- Cyberbullying quiz: http://stopcyberbullying.org/kids/are_you_a_cyberbully.html (optional)

Preparing for the session
1. Gather writing supplies.
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
3. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities. Visit Pacer.org for background information on bullying.

Conducting the session

Recap discussion: BFs, GFs & BFFs (5 to 10 minutes)
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

Introductory activity: Bullying and Peer Pressure – What Should You Do? (20 minutes)
Bullying is a growing issue in the U.S. Every year, 13 million kids are bullied. That’s one in three American students. Bullying causes physical and/or emotional harm, and, typically, there is an imbalance of power between the bully(ies) and the target. That means the bully has more power physically, socially or emotionally. For example, the bully is physically stronger or larger, has a higher social standing, and/or s/he is verbally or emotionally intimidating. This often results in the target being unable to extricate herself from the situation.

Pass out session worksheets, so girls have a place to take notes. Start a conversation about bullying with the girls. If time and equipment allow, you can show PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center video (Link listed in Resources).

Bullying isn’t just hitting, kicking or pushing. Sometimes peers – that is, people in our age group – can be really mean. They can leave us out or ignore us, tease us, or say mean things about the things we like, or wear or do. They can talk behind our backs, and spread rumors. They can try to force us to do what they want. That’s bullying, and it’s incredibly hurtful.

At this age, the bullying girls experience will likely be emotional rather than physical. Nevertheless, ask them to name some situations they’ve experienced or witnessed that could be considered bullying.
Bullying, Peer Pressure and Social Media

Record ideas on a whiteboard or poster-paper, and discuss possible solutions for each bullying situation. You can prompt the girls’ answers by bringing up some of these topics:

- **Say “Stop!” with confidence.** It is important to tell people clearly that you don’t like how you’re being treated and that you want them to stop.

- **Make a joke.** If someone says something mean to you, you can say something funny in return, instead of getting upset. This can confuse the bully and stop her from mistreating you, because she isn’t getting the reaction she wants. When you get upset, she feels superior; but if you make a joke, she doesn’t get the satisfaction from making someone else feel bad.

- **Walk away.** If someone is saying mean things to or about you, you can always walk away. Again, it isn’t the reaction the bully wants, which can throw her off. Plus, it gets you out of a hurtful situation – and fast!

- **Tell an adult, such as a teacher, parent or mentor.** If a situation feels too tough to handle on your own, or if it happens repeatedly, tell an adult you trust, like a teacher or parent – that you are being bullied and you need help.

Recognize that it can be difficult to report bullying when you’re the target. It can be embarrassing or even scary, depending on the nature of the bullying. As the facilitator, you can make suggestions for coping with bullying, but it is crucial to let girls know that bullying is never OK. If girls are being bullied, encourage them to report it to an adult. Severe bullying, both in-person and online, can damage self-esteem; interfere with school performance; and even lead to depression and suicide.53

Tell your girls that, if they witness another person being bullied, they have the right and responsibility to inform an adult, too. Sometimes even events that have multiple witnesses go unreported, simply because the bystanders assume someone else will talk with an authority, or they don’t feel a personal responsibility to the person in distress. Encourage your girls to practice empathy, and to assume no one else has reported a bullying incident.

**Knowledge activity: Dealing With Peer Pressure (20 minutes)**

Bullying isn’t always so clear-cut. Sometimes girls have to deal with negative peer pressure, which is closely related to bullying. You can start this discussion by asking the group to define peer pressure. Be ready to help the girls along if they need it: **Peer pressure is the influence your peers (friends, teammates, classmates, etc.) have on you. It can be both positive and negative.** Ask the girls to come up with an example of positive peer pressure. If they can’t, here are two thought-starters:

- Your lab partner has a special way of memorizing the periodic table. She knows you’ve been struggling with that, so she offers to teach you her method.

- A girl from school knows it’s hard for you to find a ride to the Club for your SMART Girls session every week, so she offers to drop you off on her way home.

Then, ask them to come up with an example of negative peer pressure. Again, here are a couple of suggestions:

- You’re not really into parties, so you usually say “No, thanks” to invites. One of your Facebook friends keeps posting messages on your timeline, saying that you’ll be a loser forever if you don’t go to this weekend’s big bash.

- You’re driving, and your friend is in the passenger seat. She tells you to text her BF to meet you guys, because she forgot her phone. You’re apprehensive about texting and driving, but she tells you to relax – it’ll only take a second.

Ask girls for ways to deal with this kind of negative peer pressure. Are their solutions similar to the bullying scenario solutions?
Ages 14 to 18

**Knowledge activity: How Social Is Too Social? (25 minutes)**

Most girls this age participate in at least one social network or another. In fact, according to three 2013 studies done by the Pew Research Center, 81% of teens use social media—predominantly Facebook and Twitter. Give a quick overview of social media, and how it differs from consumer or news media.

- **Social media is a set of powerful tools that connects people all over the world. It gives everyone an opportunity to have a voice—** not just big corporations or celebrities.
- **Things like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram are social media tools that people use to talk with one another about what’s going on in their lives, and in the world.**
- **Social media differs from things like television and magazines. It is largely the domain of regular people, but it can still influence our choices because we can see what our peers are thinking, doing, wearing, listening to, etc.**

Remind the girls that it’s important to stay safe on social media, where people like to post a lot of personal information. It’s never wise to give out information like a home address or phone number, or where they go to school or hang out on weekends. Meeting people online can be fun, and it can be a great learning experience, but it’s vital to keep personal information personal.

What’s more, posting something hurtful via a social network is a breeze. The person posting is physically disconnected from her target, and doesn’t have to deal with watching him/her suffer, making it a dangerous habit to develop. Take the “Are You a Cyberbully?” quiz at StopCyberbullying.org (link in Resources section above) as a group to help define what qualifies as cyberbullying. Then ask each girl to give an example of cyberbullying that she’s witnessed, experience personally, or even perpetrated. After each example, discuss solutions to the issue, and ways to avoid it in the future.

And it’s not just about safety or cyberbullying; it’s about reputation, too. Ask girls if they’ve ever posted something on Facebook or Twitter that they knew was hurtful, or that they’d be embarrassed to have a teacher, mentor or grandparent read. Chances are, they have.

Encourage them to think twice before they post. While social media feels immediate and of-the-moment, it lasts. Just about anyone—even their grandmothers!—can see what they’ve posted. This is especially important as girls get older, and start building resumes and filling out college applications. Prospective employers and schools aren’t blind to social media. They can check social profiles just as easily as friends and family can. A questionable post, or a series of inappropriate photos, could cost a girl a great opportunity down the line.

**Life-skills activity: Digital Scrub (30 minutes)**

This activity prompts girls to review their social networks based on a set of criteria they create.

1. Move to the computer lab.
2. Ask the girls how they’d like other people to see them. Record answers on a whiteboard or poster-paper, or ask them to record their answers individually on their session worksheets. Likely, the girls will want people to see them as positive, kind, smart, friendly, etc. Time permitting, ask them why they’d like others to see them in this way.
3. Then have girls log in to their social networks and grab their phones. Tell them that they are going to do a digital scrub. That means they will audit their tweets, texts and Facebook posts, and eliminate anything that doesn’t match up with the criteria they’ve just created.
4. Give girls 20 minutes to delete anything that doesn’t meet their standards. Encourage them to keep on task; giving them the chance to catch up on Facebook can undermine the effectiveness of the activity.
5. Have each girl report back on one or two things she eliminated, and why.
Bullying, Peer Pressure and Social Media

Closing conversation: Facebook Fast (20 minutes)

Ask the girls to consider the differences between healthy in-person relationships, and the ones they have online. Are they more likely to engage in negative peer pressure and bullying via social media, which hides the consequences of their hurtful words? Are they short-changing the friendships they could be cultivating in real life, in exchange for virtual relationships?

Encourage the girls to complete a three-day fast from their social channels (Facebook, Twitter, texting, etc.) over the next week. Ask them to journal about how being “disconnected” makes them feel. How does it change the way they interact with friends and peers? How does it make interaction more difficult? Set aside time at the beginning of the following session to discuss how the fast affected them.
Bullying, Peer Pressure and Social Media
The flipside of friendship can be super-stressful. How do you deal with frenemies, bullies and the people who post nasty messages on Facebook?

Section 1. Bullying Isn’t Cool
Write down a few strategies for dealing with frenemies, bullies and people who push you around. Why do these strategies work? How can you deal with peer pressure in a healthy way?
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Section 2. Social Media Savvy
Social media like Facebook and Twitter are super fun. But they can take over your life. How much time do you spend using social media? How do you balance your real life and your digital one? How do you stay safe on social media?
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Section 3. My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key to earning your badge!) Take some time this week to think about your social media persona. Does it match who you really are? If not, how can you align the real you with the virtual you?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.
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Modern Family

Overview: Everyone’s family situation is different. This session gets girls talking about how they define “family,” and why family is important to building a healthy life. Girls are asked to think about family in terms of a support network, rather than a unit strictly based on bloodlines.

Topics covered: Family Relationships
Badges earned: Famtastic!

Session time: 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions
Preparation time: 30 minutes

Materials needed:
- Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers
- Session worksheets
- Journal extension sheets
- Pens/pencils

Resources needed: None

Preparing for the session
1. Gather writing supplies.
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.
3. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities.

Conducting the session

Recap discussion: Bullying, Peer Pressure and Social Media (5 to 10 minutes)
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

Introductory/Knowledge activity: Defining Family (20 minutes)
Having a strong support system is key for a girl’s development into a healthy adult, and families typically fill that role. But families can extend beyond bloodlines.

Start the activity by asking girls to define “family.” Record their answers on a whiteboard or poster-paper. If they need help, ask them about things they do with their families:

- Do you have dinner together every night?
- Do you go for walks on the weekends?
- Do you play games together?
- Do you see your family members every day, or only some days?
- Do you know your extended family members?

Then, extrapolate definitions from those answers. If girls’ families have regular game nights, perhaps a family could be defined as a group of people who spend quality time together, having fun. If they see their families infrequently, at holiday events or reunions, perhaps a family could be defined as a group of people who respect tradition and enjoy marking important events together.

Next, ask the girls if they think an influential teacher, Club leader or other mentor could be part of their family. How about a best friend? A step-parent or step-sibling?

Refer back to the session on building healthy friendships. Ask girls to recall their definitions of a good friend.
Modern Family

Could those definitions apply to a family member? Initiate a discussion about the nature of family, and how that nature might change as girls get older and start to build stronger friendships and other relationships.

If girls in your group have been through SMART Girls before, they will be familiar with this activity. Rather than complete it again, have each girl talk about how her definition of family has changed throughout her life. What does it mean to her? Who comes to mind when she thinks about her family? How has her relationship with those people grown as she has gotten older?

**Life-skills activity: Family Matters (40 minutes)**

It's no surprise that friction between girls and their parents/guardians increases as girls grow up and gain more independence. As girls get older, they develop more complex modes of thinking and expressing themselves. This can lead to conflict with parents/guardians, especially if the girl's values and those of her family don't match up. For example: A girl's parents might think she's too young to date, but she knows that she is mature and responsible, and will stay away from risky situations.

Yet, though girls are seeking increasing independence from their parents/guardians, those parents/guardians remain responsible for their well-being, at least until they are 18 years old. What's more, they care about their girls, and want them to make healthy choices.

Start a discussion about how girls interact with their families. Ask each girl to state one great thing about her family. Go around the circle, so all girls have a chance to say something positive.

Then, ask each girl to state one challenge she's had with her family. Let the girls help each other devise solutions to those challenges, using the “Yes, and...” method of discussion. You can record the challenges and solutions on a whiteboard or poster-paper.

Some tips for resolving conflict are below, adapted from the Women's & Children's Health Network's tips on collaborative parent/teen problem-solving. You can use these to help girls along:

- Just as you do in SMART Girls sessions, practice respectful communication when discussing disagreement, and be willing and open to listen to your parents/guardians' point of view.
- Stay calm. Yelling, screaming, and being violent don't accomplish anything. They obscure rationality.
- Avoid blame. Stick to the facts of the issue.
- As a group, determine the exact problem. Then, figure out the commonalities between what you want, and what your parents/guardians want.
- Devise a plan that meets those common goals. Remain open to all suggestions, and think creatively. Work together to formulate a solution that seems reasonable to everyone.
- Once you determine a solution, stick to it.

**Note:** Depending on your group, this discussion has the potential to become very heavy and emotional. Remind girls that everything they say is confidential, and that you are all there to support one another. Also remind girls that they don't have to share anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, and that you are available to talk about any lingering concerns at any time.

**Closing conversation: Family Matters (25 minutes)**

Remind girls that they aren't alone in their frustration. Their parents/guardians and other family members are probably just as frustrated and emotional! Encourage girls to practice empathy – that is, put themselves in their family members’ shoes, and try to understand why they are upset. For example:

- Why is Mom so upset that I’m texting through dinner? **Maybe she’s upset because she worked hard to make dinner for me, and I’m ignoring her.**
Modern Family

- How come Dad doesn’t want me to leave the house before I’m done with my homework? **Maybe because he’s concerned that, if I don’t do my homework, I’ll do poorly in my classes. And he knows how important it is to me to get into a good college.**
- Why do my sisters get so mad when I tell them I’m going out with my friends instead of staying in for our regular pizza-and-a-movie night? **Maybe because they look forward to spending time with me, and when I choose other activities over them, it makes them feel unimportant.**

Tell girls to remember that, most of the time, their parents/guardians have their best interests at heart:

*They were teens once, too. They made mistakes, which they’d like to help you avoid. Keeping this in mind can go a long way toward understanding why your parents/guardians do the things they do. They’re just trying to take care of you, and help you grow into a caring, responsible adult.*

Encourage girls to journal about their troubles and triumphs with family over the coming week. Are they able to empathize? How do they address conflict?
Modern Family
Everyone’s family situation is different. But everyone needs one, because we all need love and support – no matter what.

Section 1. Defining Family
How do you define “family”? What are the qualities of a strong family unit?

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Section 2. Family Matters
What do you love about your family? What’s challenging? Write down some solutions for handling family problems in a healthy way.

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Section 3  My Reflections
Over the course of the week, take 20 to 30 minutes to journal about what you learned in the session. (This is key to earning your badge!) Take some time this week to think about your family relationships. How can you strengthen them? How can you work with your family members to resolve conflict?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.
Social Etiquette: It’s Not Just for Ladies Who Lunch

Overview: This lesson focuses on basic social etiquette for today’s young woman, which is especially important for young women who are getting their first jobs and preparing to move out on their own.

Topics covered: Social Etiquette  
Badges earned: Charistmatrix  
Session time: 90 minutes (max); can be broken into multiple shorter sessions  
Preparation time: 30 minutes  
Materials needed: • Whiteboard or poster-paper; markers  
• Session worksheets  
• Journal extension sheets  
• Pens/pencils  
Resources needed: None

Preparing for the session
1. Gather writing supplies.  
2. Print session worksheets, equal to the number of girls in your program.  
3. Familiarize yourself with the content of the activities. Visit [www.emilypost.com](http://www.emilypost.com) for background information on social etiquette.

Conducting the session

Recap discussion: Modern Family (5 to 10 minutes)  
Recap the learnings from your previous session. Review that session’s Overview and/or your session notes to devise a recap question and discussion starter.

Introductory activity: Look ‘em in the Eye – Basic Social Etiquette (25 minutes)  
In this activity, girls discuss scenarios that focus on proper etiquette. Introduce the activity by asking girls why social etiquette is important. Help them out if needed:

Adhering to culturally accepted manners – like shaking hands when you meet someone new, or keeping your mouth closed when you’re chewing – isn’t about “following the rules.” It’s about respecting those around you, and treating them in the way you’d like to be treated. For example, when you meet someone new, you probably want her to look you in the eye, because that shows she is confident in herself, and she is glad to be meeting you. That means you should return the courtesy. Show that you respect someone else, and yourself, by following some basic guidelines.

As girls prepare to go to college or move out, it is crucial for them to understand the basic principles of etiquette, which facilitate smooth and positive interactions with others.

Next, split the girls into pairs or groups of three. Read through the following etiquette scenarios one at a time (and feel free to create your own!). Ask one of the groups to offer a solution. Give the other groups time to weigh in, if it seems the original group needs a little assistance. Share your solutions if the girls don’t arrive at them on their own.
SESSION 10 | YOUR COMMUNITY

Social Etiquette: It’s Not Just for Ladies Who Lunch

• Your new friend from school invites you over for dinner. When you come in, her mom holds out her hand to greet you. What do you do? **Look her in the eye, introduce yourself clearly, and shake her hand firmly. This shows you are confident, and you respect her, too.**

• You’re on a very full bus, near the front, when an elderly woman boards. There isn’t an open seat. What do you do? **Address her, stand up, and invite her to take your seat.**

• Your uncle sends you an awesome birthday present. You know he checks his texts all the time, and he’s always on email. How do you thank him? **You can definitely send him a quick text or email to let him know you received the gift, but a handwritten thank-you card is the best way to show your gratitude. It means you took time and care to show your appreciation – just like he took time and care to pick out your great gift.**

• You’re exchanging mad texts with your bestie re: plans for Friday night when your brother comes into your room. He’s really upset, because his girlfriend just broke up with him. What do you do? **Tell your BFF you’ll have to go dark for a little while, because your brother needs extra support.**

If girls are intrigued by the rules of etiquette, refer them to Emily Post’s Teen Scene section at [www.emilypost.com/teen-scene](http://www.emilypost.com/teen-scene). It contains a host of etiquette tips for today’s teen, and is a great resource for girls who are getting ready to strike out on their own.

**Knowledge activity: Tech-tiquette (20 minutes)**

As more girls integrate technology into their lives, the lines between what’s OK to say via text, and what’s not, are starting to blur. Take a few minutes to present girls with the following situations, and ask what method of communication is best for conveying the message. To speed the activity, let them choose from the following options: inperson, text or Facebook post. Of course, phone calls and emails aren’t represented here; remind them that those options exist as well, following the activity.

- **Your sister was in a car accident, and you need to tell a close family friend.** **In person. If the relative is far away, a phone call is acceptable, too.**
- **You got an A on your English paper – your mom is going to be so proud!** **Text. Your mom will be really excited to know, and you don’t have to wait until you see her after school, because this info isn’t super-sensitive.**
- **You’re breaking up with your boyfriend/girlfriend, because you’re just not clicking as a couple any more.** **In person. You should respect his/her feelings enough to give him/her the news face-to-face.**
- **You’re hosting a last-minute movie night, and you want to invite your girls.** **Group text. It’s last-minute, so you’ll get the message across faster. Plus, you can plan your movie snack menu together.**
- **You read a great book, and you can’t wait to tell your BFF about it.** **Text, or possibly Facebook post. If you know your BFF is the only person who will be into the book, go with a text – it’s more personal.**
- **Your favorite band just released a new album, and you know your besties will want to know ASAP.** **Facebook post. Your friends will see it, and maybe the band will, too!**

Tell girls that communicating appropriately is all about respect. If you know a situation is sensitive, or requires tact, definitely discuss it in person. Sending a breakup text shows you have little respect for your partner’s feelings. On the flipside, trying to wrangle all your girls for a last-minute movie-fest could be hard, and you might leave someone out – so go with a text.

**Closing conversation: SMART Girls Review (40 minutes)**

Because this is the final session, it’s a good time to review and debrief the program with your girls. Open the floor to discussion, and be prepared to answer any lingering questions about the content of the past 10 sessions, as well as questions about what’s next. Remind girls that the SMART Girls celebration is taking place next week, to mark the end of the program.

This is a great time to administer the SMART Girls Post-Test, to measure girls’ knowledge.
Social Etiquette: It’s Not Just for Ladies Who Lunch
You might think it’s old-fashioned, but it totally isn’t. Understanding the basic principles of etiquette is as important now as it was in your grandmother’s day. Adhering to culturally accepted rules or etiquette shows you respect yourself and the people around you – and who doesn’t want that?

Section 1. Basic Social Etiquette
Write down some of the basic principles of social etiquette. Use the scenarios you discussed in the opening activity to jumpstart your thoughts. (Tip! You can learn more about etiquette at www.emilypost.com/teen-scene.)

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Section 2. Tech-tiquette
So, should you break up with your BF via text? Use the space below to jot down notes about the intersection of technology and etiquette. How can you use technology in a socially savvy way?

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Section 3. My Reflections
Now that SMART Girls is wrapping up, take 20 to 30 minutes over the next week to journal about your experience. What have you learned? How have you changed? How will you use your SMART Girls knowledge in the future?

You can also use this space to record the names of resource organizations or people you learned about in this session.

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