

# ***Building Healthy Relationships and Communities***

## A TAASA Phase 1 Curriculum: Curriculum Summary

### **Session 1 – Introductions (45 minutes)**

#### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Understand the process of using a community discussion circle.
- Identify some commonalities between group members.

#### ***Session Outline and Summary***

The main focus of this session is to introduce the facilitator to the group, the group members to one another, and the community discussion circle format to the participants. It is intended to be fun and to start building some connections between group members.

##### **INTRODUCTION: *Talking Piece* | 5 min**

The facilitator introduces the talking stick as a way to have group discussions in which everyone a chance to hear one another speak. The group will also select the talking piece(s) it will use when needed for the remainder of the sessions.

##### **GROUP BUILDING: *Would You Rather* | 30 min**

Participants answer “Would you rather ... and why?” questions, such as “Would you rather only be able to whisper OR only be able to shout? Why?,” as a way of getting to know one another. They will answer the questions in the community discussion circle and using the talking piece as a way to practice taking turns sharing and listening, and to start to build some comfort level with speaking in a group format.

##### **EVALUATION: *Personal Traits Activity* | 10 min**

This activity-based evaluation is described in *Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas: A Primary Prevention Outcome Toolkit*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Primary Prevention Planning Committee. *Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas: A Primary Prevention Outcome Toolkit*. January 2016. Available to download at [http://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Texas-PPPC\\_Outcome-Toolkit\\_Updated.pdf](http://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Texas-PPPC_Outcome-Toolkit_Updated.pdf).

## **Session 2 – Building Community (45 minutes)**

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Identify the key components of safe and healthy communities.
- Identify behaviors that will help the group create a safe and healthy community together.
- Identify ways to respond when group members don't honor group agreements.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

This session will start with a conversation about the characteristics of safe and healthy communities. Then the group members will establish group guidelines as well as discuss how they want to hold one another accountable to the group guidelines.

#### ***ACTIVITY: Pipe Cleaner Communities | 20 min***

Participants work alone and then in groups to build mock “houses” and then “neighborhoods” out of pipe cleaners. They then identify in small groups some of the key characteristics for safe and healthy communities and place them on their structures. Participants look at the pipe cleaner structures other small groups have done and identify common components or characteristics of healthy and safe communities.

#### ***DISCUSSION: Group Agreements | 25 min***

Using the format of the group discussion circle from Session 1, participants will develop group agreements to help guide interactions between one another and with the facilitator. The goal of the group agreements is to help the participants build a healthy community within the group and to provide guidance regarding healthy interaction they can use to create healthy relationships and communities beyond these sessions. Once the group agreements are developed, participants will discuss how they want to hold one another accountable to these groups agreements.

## Session 3 – Exploring Our Relationships (45 minutes)

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Describe types of relationships they have with different people in their lives and beneficial aspects of those relationships.
- Identify different approaches for healthy communication about what participants want in their relationships.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

Participants will talk about the characteristics of health relationships, examine their own relationships, and learn healthy communication approaches they can use in their interactions with other people.

REFLECTION: *Exploring Our Relationships* | 10 min

Participants will share the values that are important to them. They will focus on different relationships that they have and what they want from those relationships. They will also explore what healthy relationships look like and the benefits of having a healthy relationship.

DISCUSSION: *What Do I Want? What Can I Give?* | 20 min

Participants will respond to a few questions using words, sentences, drawings, or song lyrics that help them deeper explore and reflect upon their relationships. They will also identify and share one quality they want from their relationships.

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING: *Direct and Peaceful Communication* | 15 min

Participants will discuss how they can communicate what they want and need, and how to communicate how they feel in relationships in ways that won't harm others. They will talk about being open to hearing and committed to honoring other's needs and wants in ways that do not violate their own values. Finally, participants will learn "I" statements as an approach for healthy communication. They will discuss using "I" statements in their interactions inside and outside of the group.

## **Session 4 – Advertising and Gender Socialization (45 minutes)**

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Understand what hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality mean.
- Understand how hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality can be reinforced through media messages.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

Participants will be introduced to the problematic components of gender socialization – hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality. The group will discuss how these problematic components can be barriers to developing healthy relationships, identify them in magazine covers, and identify ways group members can push back against them.

#### **REVIEW & DISCUSSION: *Challenges to Cultivating Healthy Relationships* | 15 min**

The group will reflect back on conversations about healthy relationships from Session 3. The facilitator will ask the group to think about things that can make it challenging to cultivate healthy relationships and will introduce basic definitions of the problematic components of gender socialization - hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality. Participants will have time to ask questions and put these definitions into their own words.

#### **SKILL BUILDING: *Messages in Advertising* | 20 min**

Participants will identify examples of the problematic components of gender socialization in media by critically examining magazine covers. The facilitator will guide an analysis of one magazine cover, and then participants break into small groups to identify and label the problematic components of gender socialization on other magazine covers.

#### **SHARING: *The Art Gallery* | 10 min**

Participants will display the magazine covers their small groups analyzed. They will view each small group's magazine cover, talk about similarities between them, and discuss how they can push back against these problematic messages when they see them in the media.

## **Session 5 – Gender Socialization and Media (45 minutes)**

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Identify hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality in various forms of media and in other influences in their lives.
- Describe how these problematic components of gender socialization can lead to unhealthy interactions, relationships, and communities.
- Explore ways to resist and respond to messages that promote these problematic components in the media they create and consume.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

Participants identify instances of the problematic components of gender socialization in a TV show clip, other forms of media (specifically social media), and in their day-to-day lives beyond media. They also discuss approaches they can take to respond to and push back against these problematic messages.

#### ***CLIP and DISCUSSION: TV Clip Analysis | 15 min***

During Session 1, participants were asked to share their favorite TV shows. During this session, the facilitator will bring a clip from one of those TV shows that includes examples of the problematic components of gender role socialization. The group will watch the clip and participants will identify examples of hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, or unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality they see in the clip.

#### ***DISCUSSION: Other Forms of Media | 15 min***

Participants will identify and discuss examples of the problematic components of gender socialization in other forms of media, including social media. Participants are also asked to share examples of when they have seen the problematic components of gender socialization play out in their day-to-day lives outside of the media they consume.

#### ***BUILDING: Resisting and Reacting to Messaging | 15 min***

Participants brainstorm some ideas for how they might react to and push back on messages that promote hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility toward women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality when they see them in the media. A particular focus is placed on how they might respond to these problematic messages in their own social media by using healthy communication approaches discussed during previous sessions.

## **Session 6 – Recognizing and Respecting Boundaries (45 minutes)**

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate identifying and respecting boundaries.
- Articulate how recognizing and respecting boundaries is an important part of a healthy relationship.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

The main focus of this session is to introduce boundaries as a component of healthy interactions and relationships, and to discuss the factors that can impact how we communicate about boundaries.

REVIEW: *Looking Back* | 5 min

Participants will review the conversations they've had during previous sessions about healthy relationships and what makes them healthy. They will also recall the things that can get in the way of developing healthy relationships. Boundaries are introduced as a component of healthy relationships.

SKILL BUILDING 1: *May I Take Your Picture? – Part 1* | 10 min

This activity provides a platform for talking about what it looks like to honor and respect someone's boundaries. Participants pair up and take turns asking one another if they can take their picture and responding to the request in different ways.

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING: *Dealing with a "No"* | 10 min

Participants will consider different ways they can respond when someone says "no" and apply what they can from the group guidelines, characteristics of healthy relationships, and healthy communication approaches they have already discussed. Participants will also consider how the problematic components of gender socialization can impact communication about boundaries in relationships.

SKILL BUILDING 2: *May I Take Your Picture? – Part 2* | 20 min

Participants will go through the same activity and apply what was discussed during the previous section regarding boundaries. After the activity, the group will talk about the activity, and about how what they've learned might apply to their interactions and relationships outside the group.

## **Session 7 – Community Mapping (45 minutes)**

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Identify locations in their community (e.g., school, youth program, neighborhood, etc.) where healthy interactions and relationships are supported or promoted.
- Identify locations in their community (e.g., school, youth program, neighborhood, etc.) where they can find relief from the problematic components of gender socialization.
- Identify some of the aspects that make the safe places they have identified feel safe.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

The goal for this session is to identify the places where participants see healthy interactions and relationships supported, modeled, and promoted in their school (or youth group agency, neighborhood, etc.), and to identify the places where they feel some relief from hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality.

**REVIEW:** *Connecting What We've Learned* | 5 min

The group will review conversations and key points from previous sessions.

**ACTIVITY:** *Mapping* | 40 min

The group members develop a map of the school (or community, or neighborhood) they are from. Then they identify places in the school where they feel safe, witness modeling or promotion of healthy interactions and communications, or feel relief from the problematic components of gender socialization. Using green dots, participants will indicate these locations on the map of the school. They will discuss patterns they notice across the group – similarities and differences in the locations that feel safe for different members. They will also talk about what makes those spaces feel safe.

## Session 8 – Planning for Action (45 minutes)

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Practice healthy relationship skills and healthy communication approaches while developing a group project.
- Develop media-based strategies for challenging hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

Participants will work in groups to develop a project to promote one of the positive messages related to healthy relationships they identified during Session 7.

#### ***ACTIVITY: Planning for Action | 35 min***

Participants will work in groups to develop a project that will promote healthy communication; promote the group guidelines; provide relief from or challenge hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality; or promote relationships based on gender equity, respect, and consent. Project options include a poster, a video, an interview with peers, or a social media message.

#### ***EVALUATION: Personal Traits Activity | 10 min***

This activity-based evaluation is described in *Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas: A Primary Prevention Outcome Toolkit*<sup>2</sup>.

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## Session 9 – Making Meaning (45 minutes)

### ***Session Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Present to their peers their media-based strategies for challenging hypermasculinity, male entitlement, objectification of women, hostility towards women, and unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexuality in their community.
- Express the impact of their participation in the curriculum.

### ***Session Outline and Summary***

This the final session. Participants will share the projects they developed during Session 8 with one another and have time to process the experience of being in the group for nine sessions.

**ACTIVITY:** *Share Out* | 15 min

Participants share the projects they developed in Session 8 with the rest of the group and discuss themes, similarities, and takeaways.

**EVALUATION:** *Photo Cards* | 15 min

In a discussion circle, participants select an image that represents what they're thinking or how they're feeling about the different things that have been talked about and done during the first eight sessions. Participants will share a few words about why they chose the image and how the group has impacted them.

**EVALUATION:** *Outcome Measures* | 15 min

The appropriate evaluation tool from *Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas: A Primary Prevention Outcome Toolkit*<sup>3</sup> will be distributed, completed, and collected.

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