

Unit 7

Leadership Choices: Mentor for the Future

Compared to a typical American youth, young people participating in community-based organizations are significantly more likely to report feeling good about themselves and are more than two-and-a-half times more likely to think it is “very Important” to do community service or to volunteer (McLaughlin, 2000). Seventy-five to 85% of mentors report having a positive impact on their mentees’ behavior and attitude towards school (National Mentoring Partnership, 2002). A 1995 impact study provided by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America found that young people with mentors were 53% less likely to skip school, and 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs (National Mentoring Program).

As just two of many studies performed, they highlight a finding that resonates in each poll studying the effects of mentoring: these programs work, and they work well. No matter what the focus of a mentoring program is, statistics prove again and again that younger people benefit from having a caring adult in their lives.

All adults have a fantastic opportunity to reach out to a young person and provide support. **Members of the Leadership Alliance who are self-identified leaders dedicated to creating positive change in their communities are uniquely suited for the position of role model** and are especially apt for providing a positive influence on another’s life. As part of the *Choices* campaign, Leadership Alliance members will have the opportunity to educate high school students on issues of choice while simultaneously empowering the younger students and their sense of both the right and the responsibility of making choices.

A Feminist Approach

While there are thousands of mentoring programs in effect today, high school mentoring traditionally focuses on helping “at risk” students build self-esteem and become more productive students. The objective of the *Choices* mentoring program is to educate students on select issues of feminist concern while providing students with positive role models. The program will highlight ways for participating students to empower themselves through a variety of means, including, including **education, skills-building workshops, and social activities** that highlight women’s leadership in a variety of areas (including women in sports). Like the Leadership Alliance program, the mentoring

program will encourage students to develop leadership skills that will help them make thoughtful decisions for themselves and for their futures.

Goals

By providing a mentoring component to the *Choices* campaign, the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances will strive to:

- **Foster a long-term relationship between the campus Leadership Alliance and local high school.** As a central component to community outreach, this mentoring program has a vision of creating a relationship that will continue to strengthen and grow each year.

- **Develop the leadership skills of high school students.** The Feminist Majority Foundation’s 16-year history has demonstrated its dedication to the “next generation.” By creating a program that focuses on skill development, each student participant will take part in a series of skills building workshops ranging from public speaking to developing analytical skills.
- **Encourage students to apply a “study and action” model to their lives.** High school students along with their mentors will participate in the Feminist Majority Foundation’s innovative study and action model, which encourages students to educate themselves on important feminist issues while also applying that knowledge directly to their own surroundings.
- **Provide role models for high school students.** Members of the campus Leadership Alliance are themselves leaders and activists on their college campus. By grouping high school students with active feminist leaders, high school students will be provided with the opportunity to learn and work with positive female and male feminist role models.
- **Educate on feminist issues.** As a campus group affiliated with our national organization, the Leadership Alliance has access to the Feminist Majority Foundation’s research and resources. The Leadership Alliance will be using our resources to highlight important feminist issues that relate directly to young people’s lives. Likewise, high school students will be encouraged to use our resources (e.g. our award winning website) on their own time, to learn more about feminist issues, find resources for writing a paper, and more.
- **Create a feminist community.** Our goal for starting the Leadership Alliance program and the high school outreach program is ultimately to create an environment that encourages feminist thought and activism while developing skills to lead our country into the 21st century. By fostering relationships between college feminist leaders and high school students, this program will promote critical thinking, development of leadership skills and appreciation of the importance of community activism.
- **Show high school students “the ropes.”** A mentor can provide a student with information that isn’t covered in formal education. For example, a mentor can share experiences that might help students make better decisions in their own lives. Mentors can help students network with other feminist leaders in the community and help them find feminist community resources. Sometimes just having an older person looking out for their interests can make the difference between a student feeling supported rather than isolated.

The Issues

The following topics are covered briefly in this unit as focal points for discussion and action for mentors and high school students. Each topic also includes key reference points for further research. Actions can be facilitated in small or large groups.

There are many issues facing young people today that can be added to the list below for Leadership Alliances who are able to research additional topics. These activities strive to educate and empower students as well as create space for students to feel comfortable enough to ask ques-

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tions and discuss their own ideas and choices. Here are the following topics that will be highlighted to both educate and activate high school students.

- Applying to college/preparing for college
- Leadership, organizing and public speaking skills
- Academic/athletic, financial need scholarships and scholarships for women
- Self-esteem/body image
- Reproductive choices and other sex education issues
- Women in sports
- Sexual assault
- Eating disorders

The Program

The following program is a structure that can be applied to different levels of mentoring activity within each Leadership Alliance. For any Leadership Alliance that wants to establish a mentoring program with a high school, **it is imperative to follow steps listed in this unit.** As far as what time commitments are established between the mentors and high school students, it is up to each Leadership Alliance to determine their level of commitment.

This format suggests group activities with mentors and students at least twice a month.

This program does not include one-on-one mentoring, but rather chooses a group model. This model will provide the best forum to educate and train high school students on important leadership skills. It will also serve as a tool to develop a sense of team spirit among the high school participants and the college mentors while

allowing a less rigorous time requirement for all participants.

Each Leadership Alliance must immediately assess their realistic availability to the high school students before approaching high schools or taking other initial steps to set up a mentoring program. Once the members of the Leadership Alliance have determined their level of commitment, they should then formulate a timeline for the semester and beyond.

Individual sections that deal specifically with the steps to take when setting up a mentoring program are listed in the action component of this unit. Again, whether you plan on visiting high school students once a month on their campus, or plan for a more ambitious relationship including weekly activities, **you must invest initial time and energy into establishing a solid relationship with the school administration, high school teachers and high school students. The most important consideration is that the time you spend with students is well organized and productive.**

Mentoring Activities

Listed below are the topics and suggested activities to plan with the high school students once you have set up a mentoring program (Note: see the action component of this unit for how-to information). There are many different ideas for activities so that each Leadership Alliance is provided with a variety of choices for action. **You do not have to do all of these activities!** Instead, choose the ones that are the most appealing to your group and the students with whom you are working. Ideally, try to have as many mentors as high school students for activities. Also, make the effort to ensure that all students are included and are getting attention and guidance from the mentors. Sometimes, in

group settings, the most outgoing students draw the most attention. Since this mentoring program strives to provide each participant with a role model, it is essential for the group of mentors to concentrate on making everyone feel important and part of the program.

Applying and Preparing for College

As mentors, you will have the opportunity to encourage students to attend college and to make educated choices as to which college to attend. This section will have activities for all students, whether they have applied to college already or have not even begun the process. Help all of the students with their college plans, and try to stress the importance of a college education, or further education to those who do not plan on attending. Here are some options for activities:

- Have a discussion about college and how you applied to schools. Lead students to first-step resources such as the **Peterson's Guide to Colleges** which gives a description about each four-year college in the country (there is also a two-year guide). Determine what they might possibly like to major in, what geographic location they are interested in, what size of school, what their families can afford, etc. Help with the preliminary research for what type of school s/he would like to attend.
- Give information about what it was like applying to colleges. Talk about the application form, recommendation letters, and essays. By telling them what to expect, they will feel more prepared when their applications arrive.
- Do a feminist survey of the universities they are considering. Here are some questions to ask: How many female professors are tenured there? Is there a Women's Studies program, and is Women's Studies offered as a major? Are there a variety of varsity sports for women, and do women get scholarships for their athletic ability? Is there an enforced sexual harassment/assault policy on the campus? Are there safety procedures (i.e. emergency alarm boxes, escort services, lighted pathways)? What women's organizations are there on the campus? What is the general climate towards women? Are there a high number of reported rapes? A large and powerful fraternity system? Does the campus seem supportive of women's groups or hostile towards them? Are there a large number of active radical right groups on the campus?
- Take the students along with the mentor group to your campus for a day. Show them around, highlighting important areas like the women's center, counseling center, financial aid office, the library, dining halls, campus police, etc. **While they may not attend your school, they will at least be aware of what resources to look for on other college campuses.**
- When you are on campus, introduce the high school students to the Student Activities center and the progressive organizations that meet on campus. Also check out what kind of leadership opportunities are available for students (e.g. Resident Advisor, student government representative, member of a student-run group, etc). This will be an informative way to introduce the high school students to the kinds of progressive activism they can be a part of during their college years.
- Arrange to take the high school students

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to a social event on your campus (e.g. a play or lecture) so that they can get a feel for what the social scene is like.

- Try to arrange for the high school students to sit in on an Introduction to Women's Studies class. Introduce Women's Studies faculty members to the students.
- Highlight what resources are available for first-year students, including workshops on stress reduction, studying skills, test-taking skills, resisting peer pressure to do drugs, tutoring services, free counseling sessions, etc.
- If you have students who already know what they want to major in, take them to those departments on your campus. Introduce any available faculty, look at what kinds of classes are offered, etc.

Finding Scholarship Money for College

Many students must rely on financial aid and scholarship money to attend college. There are a number of resources for finding scholarships that apply specifically to women, minority students, student athletes, etc. that are separate from loan and grant money available through each college. Below are some tips for prospective college students on how to tap into outside resources to help finance school, as well as tips for getting grant and loan money through the university.

- The most important advice to give the high school students is to investigate scholarship possibilities *early*. There are two specific reasons for this advice: first, scholarship money is competitive and sometimes limited. Also, scholarship applications have deadlines and once the deadline has passed, the money will

not be available for another year. Since most deadlines are either winter or early spring, the best time to start investigating is early summer. This will give the students plenty of time to receive the application and to gather the information needed to complete it, like teacher recommendations.

- College departments usually have lists of scholarships available for study in their particular field. For example, the Women's Studies department and the Engineering department will have lists of scholarships that are available for their specific field of study.
- There is also grant money available through the financial aid departments of each university. Take students to your financial aid department so they can get a sense of how it works and have the opportunity to ask questions about the process.
- Student athletes have an enormous amount of scholarship money available to them. If any of the high school students in your program are active athletes, make sure they look into some of the resources listed at the end of this section specifically for them.
- Students with a high grade point average and a demonstrated ability to accept academic challenge (i.e. taking advanced placement courses) have more potential scholarship and grant money available to them.
- Besides scholarship and grant money, students are also eligible for loan money. Loans, unlike grant money, need to be repaid. Explain that since government loans are at an incredibly reasonable rate and have flexible pay back schedules, (e.g. borrowers have years to pay back their loans) it is a

good alternative to postponing/missing out on a college education due to lack of resources.

- Encourage high school students to go beyond the books on grants and scholarships to see if there is money available in other places. For example, maybe a progressive organization that they have volunteered for has resources available for scholarship. One student raised money in her hometown to help out with school expenses by holding a recital (she was a singer). Stress the need for trying all possible options for the most successful results.

There are dozens of books written on this subject. Some list scholarship and grant money available, others offer a more comprehensive overview, including advice on how to apply for scholarships, when to apply, a guide for families, etc. Most of these books are available in public libraries and bookstores.

Books

Athletic Scholarships: Making Your Sport Pay
by David Lahey

Athletic Scholarships: Thousands of Grants-And over \$400 Million for College Bound Athletes
by Andy Clark and Amy Clark

Barron's Handbook of Junior and Community College Financial Aid by Nicholas Proia

Cash for College: An ABC Guide for High School Students and Parents by Doris M. Bruce-Young

College Costs & Financial Aid Handbook 1997
by the College Scholarship Service

College Student's Guide to Merit and Other No-Need Funding 1996-1998
by R. David Weber (Editor) and Gail Ann Schlachter (Editor)

Dan Cassidy's Worldwide College Scholarship Directory (4th Ed) by Daniel Cassidy

Dinero Para LA Universidad (Cash for College)
by Cynthia Ruiz McKee and Philip McKee

Directory of Financial Aid for Minorities 1995-1997
by Gail Schlachter and David Weber

Directory of Financial Aid for Women 1995-1997 by Gail Schlachter and David Weber

Financial Aid Financier: Expert Answers to College Financing Questions (Money Saving Guides, No 13) by Joseph Re

Financial Aid for the Disabled and Their Families by Gail Schlachter and David Weber

Free Money For College (4th Ed) by Laurie Blum

Get Yourself a College Sports Scholarship
by Susan Wilson

How to Get an Athletic Scholarship: A Student-Athlete's Guide to Collegiate Athletics
by Whitney Minnis

How to Win a Sports Scholarship
by Penny Hastings and Todd Caven

Minority Financial Aid Directory: A Guide to More Than 4,000 Educational Scholarships, Loans, Grants and Fellowships for African Americans, Asian Americans, etc. by Berry Lemuel Ph.D.

Money For College: A Guide to Financial Aid for African-American Students by Erlene B. Wilson

Peterson's Scholarships, Grants & Prizes 1997

Peterson's Sports Scholarships and College Athletic Programs by Ron Walker (Editor)

Scholarships 1997-98 by Richard Christiano

Ten Minute Guide to Paying for College
by William D. Van Dusen

The A's and B's of Academic Scholarships 1997/98 by Ann Schimke (Editor)

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The Best Resources for College Financial Aid
1997 by Michael T. Osborn

The Big Book of Minority Opportunities
by Willis Johnson

The Big Book of Opportunities for Women
by Elizabeth Olson

*The Black Student's Guide to Scholarships:
600+ Private Money Sources for Black and
Minority Students (4th Edition)* by Barry
Beckham

The Complete Scholarship Book
by Student Services Inc.

*The Prentice Hall Guide to Scholarships and
Fellowships for Math and Science Students*
by Mark Kantrowitz

*The Road to Athletic Scholarship: What Every
Student-Athlete, Parent & Coach Needs to Know*
by Kim McQuilken

*The Student Aid Game: Meeting Need and
Rewarding Talent in American Higher Education*
by Michael McPherson and Morton Schapiro

*Winning Money For College: A High School
Student's Guide to Scholarship Contests* by
Alan Deutschman

Leadership and Skills Development

Mentors have a great opportunity to help students develop certain skills that will help them in preparing for college and their careers. Listed below are some ideas for activities that will help students get comfortable with leadership, public speaking, and taking initiative. Pick activities that interest your group the most!

- Start a feminist reading group with the high school students. (Some great books to start with are *Sister Outsider* by Audre Lorde, *Black Looks* by bell hooks, and *Backlash* by Susan Faludi). Pick

chapters the group wants to read, and have each student pick out a part they would like to present to the group. After the presentation, have a discussion about what they thought of the material and how they felt presenting it to the group.

- Have students organize a Leadership Alliance action on their campus. Two great suggestions are the Afghanistan petition action (see “Know the Opposition” actions) and a pro-choice education campaign. Have the students organize actions, collect signatures, and draw attention to these issues on their campus. As a first step, you can invite the students to help you organize the action on your campus. This way, when they want to organize on their own campus, they will know first hand what steps need to be taken for the action to be a success. After the campaign, ask what it was like to organize and explain how their efforts made a difference.
- If you live in a capital city, take the high school students on a Lobbying Day. (Local feminist and other progressive organizations hold them.) You can join in and have the students meet their representatives.
- Have a public speaking workshop. Following the speaker's tips sheet, have each student present a topic. Have the group watch for presentation skills: eye contact, articulation, projection, pronunciation, etc. Afterwards, ask some questions about the presentation. What was difficult and what seemed to come naturally? Help them hone their skills, and encourage the students who thoroughly enjoy public speaking to look into debate and forensics groups in their high school and later in college.

- Take your group to a college debate to watch college students and their public speaking skills.
 - Find out if there is something at their high school that the students would like to change: like apparent sex discrimination in gym class, preferences to male students in the classroom, etc. Help the students organize around an issue at their school. Encourage them to speak out against injustice; let them know that activism *does* produce positive change!
 - Hold an assertiveness seminar. Have exercises where the students are in difficult situations and must stand up for themselves. For example, have a role-playing exercise where you play a peer or teacher who is behaving inappropriately toward the students. Find out each initial reaction, and then have the group give input on the best way to handle the situation, and how to report it afterwards. Women are often taught that assertiveness is bad and that women should be seen and not heard. Dismantle this stereotype! Teach the students that it is okay to stick up for themselves and to be assertive about their boundaries.
 - Most high school students have to do community service hours. Encourage them to think of volunteer hours at organizations that correlate with possible career goals or future internship opportunities.
- (AAUW, “Shortchanging Girls” 2). Paralleling this drop in self-esteem is a strong surge of negative body image, which can lead to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Listed below are some activities to help combat the loss of self-esteem so commonly experienced by teenagers. Most importantly, remember to always give positive reinforcement to the students you are mentoring.
- Take the students out for ice cream (coffee, etc). Bring a quote/poem/statement/print, etc. of your favorite woman writer/politician/artist/poet, etc. Explain why this woman has served as an inspiration for you, and what you like most about her work. Ask each student to bring in the same for the next time you meet. (See if there would be interest for starting each group activity this way!) Have them identify a great woman in the past or the present. This will help raise awareness about the enormous contributions women have made nationally and globally. After each student has presented their most inspirational woman, ask them how having the female role model has shaped their lives.
 - Show the video “(Still) Killing Us Softly” or “Dream Worlds” (both are generally available at public or college libraries). Talk about the way women are portrayed in advertisements, rock videos, etc. Talk about the strategy of exploiting women and how women are made to feel like they must fit an unrealistic ideal. Discuss times when you or your high school students felt bad after being exposed to this kind of exploitation.
 - Have each student bring in the most offensive ad they could find and the best feminist ad they could find in magazines. Discuss the differences

Self-Esteem and Body Image

According to the AAUW’s report “Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America,” female students suffer a “loss of self-confidence that is twice that for boys as they move from childhood to adolescence”

between the two and their reactions to the different kinds of representation.

- Introduce the students in your group to as many progressive teen magazines you can find. Here's some to recommend: *New Moon*, *Teen Voices*, *Blue Jean Magazine*, *Jane*, and *Blackgirl*.
- If possible, take the students to a female artist's exhibit or woman-run organization in the area. Try to arrange for a tour. Introduce them to the powerful world of working women.
- Many bookstores offer reading groups, and many of them have women authors come to do book readings and presentations. Keep your eyes open for these events; they will be great social events for you and the high school students. (While at the bookstore together, peruse the Women's Studies section and introduce them to this growing field of research and influence.)
- Get the high school students to help you do a "This insults women" campaign at your school. Photocopy offensive ads and write statements about why the ads are offensive to women. Hang them up everywhere!
- Have each student choose a woman who has been influential in their lives, and ask them to share their story with the group.
- Introduce the students to a variety of websites of groups who are determined to empower female students (listed in the resource section).

RESOURCES

Here are some organizations that strive to empower young people through a variety of strategies.

About Face—A woman in California who was fed up with demoralizing advertising started this site. It is a wonderful source for statistical information, pictures of the worst ads and the messages they send, and how to make things better for women. They also have great links to other feminist sites. Website: <http://www.about-face.org>

American Association of University Women—An organization that works for equity for women and students. This is an organization that offers thousands of dollars of grant money for graduate studies as well as community projects. Website: <http://www.aauw.org> or call 1-800-225-9998 for more information.

AWSEM—An organization which wants to enrich young women's opportunities in Science, Engineering, and Mathematics. This group offers activities including tutoring and mentorship programs. Also included is research on gender equity in science, math and engineering. Website: <http://www.awsem.com> or call 503-748-1277 for more information.

Feminist Majority Foundation—As a multi award-winner, our site includes feminist news, "take action" pages, reproductive choice information, domestic violence and sexual harassment information and hotlines, etc. Website: <http://www.feminist.org>

Feminist.com—This site has a health section, links to other women's sites, and interviews with great women. Website: <http://www.feminist.com>

Girl Power!—This is a national public education campaign sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Ser-

vices to help encourage and motivate 9 to 13 year-old girls to make the most of their lives. Girls at 8 or 9 typically have strong attitudes about their health, so Girl Power! seeks to reinforce and sustain these positive values among girls ages 9-13 by targeting health messages to the unique needs, interests, and challenges of girls. Website: <http://www.girlpower.gov> or email gpower@health.org for more information.

Girl Scouts—Girl Scouts of America stresses leadership skill development in girls and young women. Website: <http://www.girlscouts.org> or call **1-800-GS-USA-4U**.

Girl Tech—Girl Tech was started in 1995 with the specific goal of encouraging girls to use and enjoy technology and explore non-traditional avenues of life by providing girls with the Club Girl tech website and a line of electronic products designed specifically for girls. Website: <http://www.girltech.com>

Girls, Inc.—Girls Incorporated is a national non-profit youth organization dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. For over 55 years, Girls Inc has provided vital educational programs to millions of American girls, particularly those in high-risk, underserved areas. Website: <http://www.girlsinc.org> or call the national headquarters at **1-800-374-4475** for more information.

The Ms. Foundation—The Ms. Foundation is probably best known for their “Take Our Daughters to Work Day,” but they also sponsor a Leadership Program which offers funding to women’s programs including health and development. Website: <http://www.ms.foundation.org>

WEEA—The Women’s Educational Equity Act is a U.S. Dept. of Education program that works to promote gender-fair educa-

tion products and fights against discrimination on the basis of gender, race, class, or disability. This is a great resource for equity issues as well as information on grant money available to schools, communities, and individuals. Website: <http://www.edc.org/WomensEquity/about/program.htm> or call **202-260-1280** for more information.

YWCA—An organization that strives to empower women and girls and to fight against racism. They offer many programs in skills and leadership training and job placement for women. Website: <http://www.ywca.org> or call **212-273-7800** for the YWCA closest to you.

BOOKS

There are a number of excellent books written on the subject of esteem. Here is a brief list. For more listings, check out <http://www.amazonfembks.com>.

Am I Thin Enough Yet? by Sharlene Hesse-Biber.

Body Traps by Judith Rodin

Diversity in Girls’ Experience: Feeling good about who you are by Bonnie J. Leadbeater and Niobe Way

Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls by Myra and David Sadker

Feeding the Hungry Heart by Geneen Roth

Girls Speak Out! by Andrea Johnston

Real Gorgeous (a parody) by Kaz-Cooke

Reviving Ophelia by Mary Pipher

School Girls: Girls, self-esteem, and the Confidence Gap by Peggy Orenstein

The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolff

The Difference by Judy Mann

Transforming Body Image by Marcia Hutchinson

When Women Stop Hating Their Bodies
by J. Hirschmann and C. Munter

Where the Girls Are by Susan Douglas

Reproductive Choices

This section of the program should increase awareness of reproductive choices and the current opposition to a woman's right to choose (see "Knowing the Opposition" in this manual). Discuss the abortion rights struggle in the feminist movement, the radical right's violent tactics to shut down clinics, as well as other reproductive health issues. The following is a list of activities that you can choose from to do with your group:

- Show the video *Abortion Denied* and have a discussion following the viewing. Discuss how governmental restrictions limit a woman's legal right to choose.
- Find a local clinic that offers family planning and abortion. Take a field trip to the clinic. Arrange for a staff member to give a quick tour of the facility and to explain birth control methods and the medical procedure for an abortion. Have a question/answer session at the end.
- Explain the Feminist Majority Foundation's *Adopt-a-Clinic* tactic to students as a successful strategy for combating clinic violence.
- When your campus is organizing a Rock for Choice™ show or a pro-choice demonstration, get the students involved with the planning and the execution of the event.
- Show the movie "If These Walls Could Talk" and have a discussion about why

reproductive choice is essential to the health and safety of women.

OTHER SEX EDUCATION ISSUES

Encourage the students to learn more about their bodies and about the implications of having unprotected sex, including AIDS and STI's. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (known as SIECUS) is an excellent source for all current information on sexuality education and can be found at <http://www.siecus.org>. SIECUS covers issues ranging from teenage sexuality and HIV and STI research to gay and lesbian sexuality and the far right fear-based approach to teaching abstinence-only programs. As experts in their field, their research is highly respected and will provide mentors and students with numerous resources for education and discussion. Enclosed in the SIECUS materials provided is a "sexuality information catalog" which lists all of their publications (including reports and fact sheets) and how to order them.

OTHER RESOURCES

Abortion Clinics Online Choice Links at <http://www.gynpages.com> links to abortion information providers, abortion rights political organizations, etc.

Advocates for Youth is an organization dedicated to helping youth make healthy decisions about sexuality. They provide publications and fact sheets on topics ranging from buying condoms to HIV. Website: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org>

AIDS information: **The Whitman Walker Clinic** homepage at <http://www.wwc.org> or call the information line at **202-797-3500**.

Another informative website is the **Coalition for Positive Sexuality**. Website: <http://www.positive.org>

National Abortion Federation offers reproductive health information and a hotline number: 1-800-772-9100 Website: <http://www.prochoice.org>

National Coalition of Abortion Providers can be reached at 703-684-0055. Website: <http://www.ncap.com>

Planned Parenthood has a wealth of information, including fact sheets, a listing of clinics, information specifically for teenagers, and access to abortion services. Website: <http://www.ppfa.org> or <http://www.230-PLANwire.com>, or call 1-800-230-PLAN.

Pro-Choice Education Project (PEP) targets young women with the pro-choice message. Website: <http://www.protectchoice.org>

Books

The College Woman's Handbook
by Rachel Dobkin and Shana Sippy.

The New Our Bodies, Ourselves
by The Boston Women's Health Book Collective Staff.

Women's Sourcebook
edited by Lisa DiMona and Constance Herndon

Sexuality

High school is often the time when women and men have identified their sexual orientation. Acknowledging an attraction to the same sex can be confusing. If you have a student who is determining her/his sexual orientation or knows that s/he is gay, it is essential that you are supportive.

Listed below are some of the best websites, books, and organizations for gay, lesbian and bisexual issues, several specifically concentrating on gay youth and

“coming out”. Each website listed links to literally hundreds of others, covering issues like identifying with being gay, resources for family and friends, local activities and political activism.

RESOURCES

Lesbian resources— <http://www.lesbian.org>
This site is the most comprehensive site for lesbian women and includes everything from activism to gay academia.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force— <http://www.nglftf.org>
The NGLTF is another large, grassroots organization that specifically focuses on gay youth. In the summer they hold a youth leadership institute. Call 202-393-5177 for more information.

Oasis— <http://www.oasismag.com>
Oasis is an online magazine for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth.

OutProud— <http://www.outproud.org>
This is a national coalition for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)— <http://www.pflag.org>
is an organization that represents more than 69,000 families.

The Human Rights Campaign— <http://www.hrc.org>
This organization is the largest existing national lesbian and gay political organization. A great site for resources.

The Pride Network— <http://www.pridenet.com>
Another large site with many links to gay and lesbian sites. They also have pride products to order.

The Queer Resources Directory— <http://www.qrd.org>
is an excellent site since it links with over 100 other sites. This source also has a queer youth section with links.

The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL)— This group offers resources and a hotline for gay youth at 202-546-5911. Website: <http://www.smyal.org>

Books

Being Different: Lambda Youths Speak Out (The Lesbian and Gay Experience) by Larry Dane Brimmer.

Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian and Bi-Sexual Youth—and Their Allies by Ellen Bass and Kate Kaufman.

Gay and Lesbian Youth by Gail Stewart and Natasha Frost.

Helping Gay and Lesbian Youth: New Policies, New Programs, New Practices by Theresa Decrescenzo.

Joining the Tribe: Growing up Gay and Lesbian in the 1990's by Linnea A. Due.

Not the Only One: Lesbian and Gay Fiction for Teens by Tony Grima.

Service Organizations for Gay and Lesbian Youth by Greg Greenly.

The Journey Out: A Guide For and About Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Teens by Rachel Pollack and Cheryl Schwartz.

Women in Sports

The Feminist Majority Foundation's report on women in sports found that "women and students who participate in sports and other fitness programs are healthier and more academically successful." The health benefits involved with exercising on a regular basis include decreasing the chances of back problems, strokes, breast cancer and osteoporosis (Feminist Majority Foundation, "Empowering Women in Sports" 10). Sports participation has also been

linked to an increase in self-esteem. For example, rural Hispanic and white students who were involved in sports dropped out of school less often and went on to four-year colleges more often than the non-athletic students in their area (FMF, "Empowering"10). While it is important to support athletic students to keep up their activity, it is also necessary to encourage non-athletic women in high school to get active as well. **Athletics are not just for incredibly gifted athletes; they are for everyone.**

Another important topic to discuss with high school students is the issue of sex discrimination in sports and the importance of Title IX. **Title IX is a federal law that prohibits gender discrimination in federally funded education programs, including athletic programs.** Before Title IX, only 31,000 women participated in college sports. Because of Title IX, the number has risen to over 128,000, a more than 400% increase in participation (Women's Sports Foundation 2002).

While this growth is important to note, it is also essential to highlight the magnitude of sex discrimination in sports today. Even at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta (an incredibly successful year for our female athletes) there was a major discrepancy between the number of men and women athletes who participated. While there were 6,500 men, there were only 3,780 women. Since the success of women in the 1996 Olympics, there has been a growing number of women Olympians. Nevertheless, the discrimination against women athletes is an ongoing struggle until women are provided with the opportunity for equal funding and equal representation.

On June 27, 2002, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige announced the establishment of the Commission on Opportunity in Athletics to

“collect information, analyze issues, and obtain broad public input directed at improving the application of current federal standards for measuring equal opportunity for men and women, and boys and girls to participate in athletics under Title IX” (Commission). In February 2003, the Commission submitted recommendations that would weaken Title IX enforcement standards. Membership on the Commission was dominated by NCAA Division I institution representatives (institutions still not in compliance with Title IX 30 years after the passage of the law) and proponents of the position that women are not as interested in sports as men, so institutions should not be required to provide equal participation opportunities as currently required under Title IX. After months of pressure by women’s rights groups, including the Feminist Majority, the Bush administration reaffirmed its support of Title IX and announced no changes would be made.

- Find out if your high school students are involved in competitive sports. For those who are not, ask if they are involved in any recreational sports or exercise routines. Encourage physical activity, and talk about the health benefits as well as the boost in self-esteem that exercising supplies.
- Arrange a recreational sports day with the high school students. Some ideas include going to a local public pool for a swim, a community field for a softball/soccer game, or a basketball court to shoot some hoops. You could also arrange this at your campus field house. Make sure to stress group participation and to give everyone a chance. Try not to let the more talented athletes rule over the game, and stress teamwork if some members are getting pushed aside.
- After an activity, take a walk. Or, arrange for an activity (sightseeing) that requires a lot of walking. If possible, take a trip to a local park/forest for some scenic hikes.
- If your students play on a sports team, go to their games and cheer them on. Support their athletic involvement as often as you can.
- Invite your group to women’s sports events on your campus. Find out what sports they are most interested in, and arrange to see a game at your school.
- Try to get in touch with a professional community athlete and ask her to speak about her experiences with the group.
- Ask a female coach on your campus if she would be willing to talk about her experiences as a coach, and any issues of discrimination she has run into.
- After you know what sport the students are most interested in (there can be more than one!) ask some of your college athletes if they could talk to your group about being a college athlete. For example, have them talk about any scholarship money they received, any experiences with sex discrimination, etc.
- Supply each of the students with an **Empowering Women In Sports** report from the Feminist Majority. Discuss the history of women in sports, the myths about women’s physical capabilities, and Title IX. Leave time for questions at the end.
- Have the high school students over to watch the WNBA (Women’s National Basketball League) and the WUSA (Women’s United Soccer Association). Talk about the fact that this is the first time in history that women have their

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own professional basketball and soccer leagues in this country, both of which have broad-based public support.

- Encourage active athletes to look into scholarship money for college.

RESOURCES

Gender Equity in Sport—This site provides thorough information on Title IX, and offers several links to sites that relate to or are involved in investigating the state of affairs in interscholastic and intercollegiate sports.

Website: <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/ge/>

The Feminist Majority has incredibly comprehensive materials on women in sports including the entire text of their **Empowering Women In Sports** report. They also have great links to many other excellent sites for information on women in sports, including statistics, athlete information, calendars of up-coming events, etc. Website: <http://www.feminist.org> or call 703-522-2214

Women in Sports—This site is dedicated to providing women athlete role models and also has an interactive element. People can submit biographies and personal accounts. There is also information about women in sports busi-ness. Website: <http://www.makeithappen.com/wis/>

Women's Sports Foundation—This site has information on scholarships and grants for athletes and many resources on sports and other health topics. Website: <http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org> or call 1-800-227-3988 for more information.

WWW Women's Sports Page—This site offers an overview of the variety of sports that women are involved in. It has more than fifty links to other women's sports pages. Website: <http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~lewis/womspirt.html>

BOOKS

A Sporting Chance: Sports and Gender
by Andy Steiner

Are We Winning Yet?: How Women are Changing Sports and Sports are Changing Women
by Mariah Burton Nelson

Crashing the Old Boys' Network: The Tragedies and Triumphs of Girls and Women in Sports
by David Salter

The Complete Guide to Women's College Athletics
by Carolyn Stanek

The Stronger Women Get, the More Men Love Football: Sexism and the American Culture of Sports
by Mariah Burton Nelson

The Unplayable Lie: The Untold Story of Women and Discrimination in American Golf
by Marcia Chambers

Women in Sport: Issues and Controversies
by Greta Cohen

Women Who Win: Exercising Your Rights in Sport
by Bonnie Parkhouse

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention

An unfortunate reality for all people, but especially women, is the ongoing threat of sexual assault. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, a woman is raped or sexually assaulted every two minutes somewhere in America. Also, in a two-year period, 700,000 women were the victims of a rape or sexual assault in this country (RAINN). This program will provide an excellent opportunity to explode myths, raise awareness and help provide the knowledge and tools necessary for prevention.

- Go through some common myths with your group of students. Some examples

are: Sexual assault only happens to young, attractive women, most rapists are psychopaths who live on the streets, etc. Make sure that the high school students are aware that sexual assault can happen to *any* woman and that most perpetrators are acquaintances or even friends of their victims. Most importantly, stress that sexual assault and rape are not crimes of passion or lust, but crimes of violence, domination, and the desire to overpower and humiliate the victim.

- Encourage the high school students to enroll in a self-defense class. The women and men who have taken self-defense classes always highly recommend it to others as it teaches excellent prevention and fighting techniques. A lot of times, local community centers and some college campuses will offer courses (sometimes free of charge). Classes can range from an intensive afternoon session to a ten-week seminar or longer. Check into what is available in your area. (And if the mentors haven't taken a defense class—use this opportunity to take one as a group!)
- When touring your college campus, take the high school students to the sexual assault services center at your school. Explain its function and take advantage of the materials they provide.
- Always make sure that the high school students know that it is important to report an assault or attempted one. Since it is common for victims to feel ashamed after an assault, many attacks are never reported.
- Below is a list of resources for victims and survivors of sexual assault across the country. Make sure to familiarize your group with the extensive resources out there, and if needed photocopy

some pertinent information for distribution (i.e. hotline numbers, etc). in case of emergency.

RESOURCES

Assault Prevention Information Network—

This site provides information on self-defense, safety precautions, how to protect children, workplace violence, etc. Website: <http://www.jump.net/~judith/APINintro.html>

D.C. Rape Crisis Center—As the second rape crisis center in the country, the D.C. Rape Crisis center has extensive information on issues such as what to do if you are raped, the long term affects of assault, facts on assault, etc. They also provide a 24-hour hotline. Website: <http://www.bookcase.com/DCRCC> Hotline number: **530-342-RAPE**

RAINN—The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network was founded by singer/songwriter Tori Amos. This organization has extensive material and statistical information regarding sexual assault, including a 24-hour hotline number. Website: <http://www.rainn.org> Hotline number: **1-800-656-HOPE**

The American Women's Self Defense Association—This organization is dedicated to furthering awareness of self-defense and rape prevention. This organization teaches self-defense classes, produces a quarterly newsletter, and holds conferences on all issues regarding rape prevention and defense. Website: <http://www.awsda.org> Phone number: **1-888-STOP-RAPE**

The Feminist Majority is a great resource for a variety of extensive information and links to dozens of national and local services. Website: <http://www.feminist.org>

The Rape Crisis Center— In existence since 1975, the Rape Crisis Center provides educational material on sexual assault for public education, crisis intervention, and counseling services. They also have a 24-hour hotline for victims of assault. Website: <http://www.rapecrisis.com> Hotline number: **210-349-RAPE**

Books

A Guide to Rape Awareness and Prevention
by Robert and Jeanine Ferguson

Acquaintance Rape by Robin Warshaw

Back Off! How to Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment And Harrassers by Martha Langelan

Defending Ourselves: A Guide to Prevention, Self-Defense, and Recovery from Rape by Rosalind Wiseman

Everything You Need to Know About Date-Rape
by Frances Shuker-Haines

How to Fight Back and Win: The Joy of Self-Defense by Judith Fein

I Never Called It Rape: The Ms. Report on Recognizing, Fighting and Surviving Date and Rape Crisis Intervention Handbook: A Guide for Victim Care by Sharon McCombie

Rape on Campus by Bruno Leone

Recovering from Rape by Linda Ledray

Sexual Abuse Prevention: A Course of Study for Teenagers by Rebecca Voelkel-Haugen

Sexual Assault: How to Defend Yourself
by Dan Lean

Sexual Assault: Will I Ever Feel Okay Again?
by Kay Scott

Straight Talk about Date Rape by Susan Mufson

Surviving Sexual Violence by Liz Kelly

Talking Back to Sexual Pressure by Elizabeth Powell

The College Woman's Handbook by Rachel Dobkin and Shana Sippy

The Danger from Strangers: Confronting the Threat of Assault by James Brewer

Women's Sourcebook edited by Lisa DiMona and Constance Herndon

Eating Disorders and Teenagers

As highlighted earlier in the Self-Esteem section of this unit, teenagers struggle both with their sense of worth and negative body image. At an age where “fitting in” seems to mean success, many teens and young people will do anything to fit in. Often this includes trying to attain a body type that is portrayed as “ideal”—an incredibly emaciated one.

According to the resource page of the “About Face” website, today’s models are between 13% to 19% *underweight*. Poor body image combined with a desire to fit an unrealistic body type is a deadly combination. The result is young people suffering from eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimia, to keep themselves thin.

Anorexia is characterized by starvation dieting, excessive exercising, weight below what is necessary to maintain your body’s healthy functioning, and an intense fear of weight gain (Mirror-mirror web site, <http://www.eatdis.htm>). **Bulimia** is characterized by episodes of dieting along with eating large amounts of food in one sitting (bingeing) and then using laxatives or vomiting to “purge” their system of the food (About Face).

Besides the emotional trauma associated with eating disorders, the physical effects are devastating. The American Anorexia and Bulimia Association states that 1,000 women die of anorexia each year (About Face). Those that survive these

disorders live in a state of chronic illness, malnutrition, exhaustion, muscle and tissue damage, tooth decay (from stomach acids), anemia, and loss of hair.

- As mentors, take time to discuss eating disorders and their effects with your students. Encourage discussion of body image and the effects of living in a culture that venerates unhealthy thinness.
- Try to arrange for a faculty member from the high school health department to talk to your group about what happens to a body that is suffering from malnutrition.
- Do an exercise highlighting all of the different body shapes that exist (you can do this by sketching your shadows onto paper with chalk and highlighting how unique they all are). Talk about how all kinds of body shapes are normal and emaciation is not.
- If you think someone in your group is suffering from an eating disorder, encourage them to seek help. Below is a great list of resources that provide everything from basic information on eating disorders to how and where to get care.

RESOURCES

Here are some good websites for eating disorders:

<http://www.eatingdisorders.com>—This site has a vast amount of information on the disorders, statistics, chat groups, information on resources, therapy, hospitalization and programs to help people with eating disorders. It also links to other sites.

The Harvard Eating Disorders Center-HEDC is an interdisciplinary community of scholars dedicated to cutting-edge research, education, and public discourse in the field of eating disorders. Website: <http://www.hedc.org>

<http://www.something-fishy.org>—This site is probably the most comprehensive site discussing eating disorders on the web. The main page has a thorough definition for each type of eating disorder along with warning signs, emotional and physical damage, outreach, programs, and support groups online. There is also a page with personal stories from people with eating disorders.

Following is a list of national organizations that offer support and resource information.

American Anorexia/Bulimia Association
212-575-6200

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders 847- 831-3438

National Eating Disorders Organization
1-800-931-2337

Overeaters Anonymous
505-891-2664

BOOKS

A Hunger So Wide and So Deep by Becky Thompson

Appearance Obsession by Joni Johnson

Consuming Passions by C. Brown and K. Jasper

Fat is a Feminist Issue I and II by Susie Orbach

Feminist Perspectives on Eating Disorders
by Laura Fraser

Hunger Strike by Susie Orbach

Making Peace With Food by Susan Kano

Surviving an Eating Disorder
by M. Siegel, J. Brisman and M. Weinschel

The Hungry Self by Kim Chernin

The Secret Language of Eating Disorders
by Peggy Claude-Pierre

Unbearable Weight by Susan Bordo

Setting Up the Program: A “How To” Guide

The most important place to start when considering a mentoring program is with the understanding that a mentoring program requires a *long-term* time commitment. Any program working to enhance individual lives should not be attempted haphazardly. When setting up this mentoring program, assume that you are at the very beginning of a commitment that can potentially last for years between your campus Leadership Alliance and the high school.

When choosing a high school, its students, and mentors, it is essential to find people who are willing to commit to the program and who can invest at least a college semester (at minimum) of time. **Preferably, mentors should plan on participating for a year or longer. All of the steps listed below will instruct you on how to establish a relationship with a high school. The more prepared and organized your Leadership Alliance is, the better your chances are for creating a positive and lasting relationship in your community.**

This program does not include one-on-one mentoring; all activities are planned for either small or large groups. It also suggests bimonthly activities with the students. Again, depending on your time availability as a group, this structure is flexible to each Leadership Alliance’s time constraints.

DEVELOPING A MENTORING COMMITTEE

Once your Leadership Alliance has decided to start a mentoring program, have the members most interested in making this project their top priority commit to being a member of the steering committee. Ideally, this committee should be between four to six students who are dedicated to setting up a successful mentoring program. Once the committee is established, set up your first steering committee meeting and make sure to do the following:

- Introduce yourselves and explain why you want to start a mentoring program.
- Read this unit thoroughly and carefully as a group. You will realize that your group has to make decisions about your level of involvement with a high school early on. Immediately determine what kind of time commitment seems appropriate and realistic for your Leadership Alliance. Remember that you can always build on a smaller commitment, but will struggle to maintain an overly ambitious commitment.
- Present this unit to the Leadership Alliance general meeting. Discuss what the mentoring committee has determined as far as their time dedication to the high school students. Have you decided on a monthly event? Bimonthly? Weekly? On campus, off campus, or a combination? Explain your reasoning with the general group, and ask for their feedback. Use this as a way to get comfortable presenting the program, as you will need to present it to potential high schools.
- Create a workable timeline to begin the process of setting up the program with a local high school.
- Discuss the profile and interview process for potential mentors (highlighted below). Begin to establish how you will set up interviews and review profiles. (Note: Interviews should include at least two members of the Leadership Alliance).

- Pick a weekly meeting time to report back to each other on progress. Expect to need a substantial amount of time in the initial phases, and plan accordingly.
- If any questions about the program arise, *don't* guess; call your campus organizer.

After some initial steps are underway, the search for a local high school should begin. Simultaneously, another steering committee member should head up the effort to recruit mentors who want to join the Leadership Alliance. The existing members of the Leadership Alliance are strongly encouraged to participate.

ADOPTING A HIGH SCHOOL

There are many considerations when choosing which high school your group will adopt. These are some key points to investigate:

- Is it within close proximity and easily accessible from your campus?
- Are any campus faculty or staff familiar with local high schools and how might they support this program?
- Do any of your own feminist professors have ties to a high school (i.e. they have children there) who could provide insight?
- Does your campus faculty and staff know of feminist high school principals, administrators, or teachers in the area?
- Are there first-year feminist students at your college who came from a local high school who could recommend their school as a potential match?
- Do any of the high schools in your area offer outreach programs that involve community volunteers? Have they participated in any mentoring programs?
- Are there any obvious political climates to be aware of at a school? (e.g. an openly conservative or sexist school board or principal, abstinence-only “sex education” classes, etc).
- Is there a high school that enthusiastically wants to participate in a mentoring program?

There is a lot of investigative work that needs to happen *before* you make initial steps to contact a high school to ensure a good match. Here are some important tips when making initial phone calls to discuss your program with potential high schools:

- All mentors are members of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, a campus feminist activist program sponsored by the Feminist Majority Foundation, and explain the principles stated in its constitution.
- The program’s structure is flexible and desires input from the high school.
- The program’s objective is to educate and empower students on feminist issues ranging from self-esteem to college preparation.
- Off-campus activities are scheduled to take place, including a tour of your college campus and facilities.

- **The Leadership Alliance’s desire is to make a long-term commitment to a high school and its students.**
- **The Leadership Alliance’s desire is to discuss with administration and teachers what they feel would most benefit the students involved in the program.**
- Some activities deal specifically with young women’s lives (i.e. there is a section on Women and Sports) but everyone interested is encouraged to participate.
- Each mentor will fill out a profile and will be interviewed by the mentoring committee.

Ask a lot of questions, and if you have found a school with good potential, organize a meeting with your mentoring committee. Meet with the faculty and administration *before* making any decisions. Often, you can discover potential problems that did not surface over a phone conversation. At the meeting, make sure to include some of the following topics for discussion:

- Outline the goals of your mentoring program. Invite everyone to take a look at this unit in the Study and Action Manual.
- Explain your position as a member of the mentoring committee, as well as the profile and interview process for mentors.
- Highlight your timeline and how often you plan on meeting with the students.

At this point in the discussion, make sure to determine what the high school staff feels would benefit their students the most. Remember, a mentoring program should aim to serve the needs of the students and the high school. Do not assume that you know what would work best. Encourage their feedback and suggestions.

- Ask how potential students will be identified for the program and if they would like for the mentors to be part of that process.
- Allow open time for each group to ask questions.

RECRUITING MENTORS

Advertising your plans on starting a mentoring program will be an effective way to find new membership for the Leadership Alliance. It is essential to recruit for members of the Alliance and not just people who want to mentor since the program will require a substantial time commitment. Here are some suggestions for advertising the mentoring program:

- Flyer your campus about becoming a mentor for the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance. Make sure to include that it is a project of the Leadership Alliance and anyone interested should contact the student leaders to learn more about the group. Any non-member wanting to mentor must join the Leadership Alliance and support the principles of the organization (as stated in your constitution).
- Ask your faculty advisors to help identify students who might be interested and to announce the program (and the deadline to get involved) in their classes.
- Put an ad in your school paper about the Leadership Alliance and its new mentoring

project. Again, encourage feminists to contact the leaders of the Leadership Alliance if interested.

- Announce the Leadership Alliance's mentoring program at other student group meetings.
- Hold a general interest meeting discussing the Leadership Alliance and its mentoring program. Leave plenty of time to answer questions. Pass out Leadership Alliance membership applications to those interested. If students at your meeting have questions that you cannot answer about the program, have them contact your campus organizer.

INTERVIEWING: STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

Every potential mentor should be interviewed by the steering committee. The interview will provide a forum to address basic issues like time commitment as well as more complex issues like what each person feels a mentor should be. The interview does not need to be lengthy, but should consider some of the following questions:

- Is s/he willing to participate (at the minimum) for one semester or longer?
- How much time does s/he have available to contribute?
- Does s/he have transportation or access to public transportation to get to and from the high school?
- What benefits does s/he feel s/he will get from mentoring?
- What extracurricular or volunteer activities has s/he been involved in?
- Does s/he consider herself/himself to be good student?
- Does s/he demonstrate sensitivity to other cultures and races?
- Has s/he ever been mentored before, or ever mentored others before?
- What are her/his goals as a mentor?

BECOMING MENTORS

Preferably, you should have at least ten mentors to kick off a small mentoring program. (Again, this number can vary widely depending on what kind of program you have in mind). Once you have conducted interviews and found your group of members that are committed to the program, each mentor will fill out a profile (see below). The profile gets down some basic information about each mentor and helps establish her or his goals for becoming part of the program. Here are some suggestions for what kinds of questions should be on the profile:

- Age, class year (and major)?
- What are some of their future goals?
- A list of hobbies and what they most enjoy doing in their free time.
- Are they proficient or fluent in more than one language?

- Do they play any sports (competitive or intramural)?
- What are their extracurricular activities on campus?
- Do they have any younger siblings? What do they most enjoy about having younger siblings? What is the hardest aspect of having younger siblings?
- If they could spend an afternoon any way they wanted to, how would they spend it?
- What do they hope to accomplish as a mentor?
- Who is their feminist role model?
- What do they think is the most important issue facing young feminists?
- What do they think is their most special quality?

Whatever questions you choose, the ultimate goal of the profile is to have a sense of a person's background, interests, and goals as a mentor. Make sure to create a file for the mentor profiles; this will help you keep track of who is involved in the program.

THE MENTOR TRAINING SEMINAR: WHAT TO COVER

Once you have determined your program scope, your group of mentors, the high school, and the students who are going to participate in the program, plan your training seminar. You should cover the following issues during this seminar:

- Establish the overall goals and vision of the mentoring program.
- Establish what the role of a mentor is and is *not*.
- Discuss logistics including the structure of the program you have decided on and how group activities will be implemented.
- Create scenarios that will highlight important issues of diversity and cultural sensitivity.
- Have a question/answer session.

Members of the mentoring steering committee will lead this seminar.

The term "trainer" does not mean that you have to be experts of all the nuances of mentoring programs. It means: 1. You have a thorough understanding of the program as presented in this unit. 2. You have led the effort to find a high school and create a workable structure for your Leadership Alliance participants and 3. You can answer questions on the how-to steps to the best of your ability. With these skills you can successfully lead a seminar that will familiarize mentors with the program and how it will work.

Establish overall goals of the program.

In the beginning of this unit is a list of the program's goals. Highlight these goals when discussing this topic, and encourage individuals to share their personal goals with the group.

Establish what the role of a mentor is and is not.

There are many things a mentor can be to a student. Mentors can be role models, advice-givers, listeners, teachers, and in some cases, even friends. **Mentors, however, are**

not parents, social workers, counselors, or psychotherapists. It is important to discuss the limits mentors must establish right away. You will not be trained to handle any emotionally damaged teenagers or trauma victims. You cannot counsel victims of molestation or rape. You are not trained to handle a student with a drug addiction. What you can do is listen, offer emotional support, and send troubled students in the right direction (i.e. high school counseling center). But essentially, **your role does not and cannot extend to levels of need that you and this program are not capable of providing.**

Discuss the structure of the program, including how activities will be implemented.

Discuss the structure you've decided on. Will you be having activities twice a month, or more often? Have you determined (with the teachers and administration) if your activities will include visits during school hours, or only after school hours? Give the group all of the logistical details the steering committee worked out with the high school, and explain how activities will work. Also highlight that all activities will be group activities.

Create scenarios that will highlight issues of diversity and cultural sensitivity.

As a group, do some role-playing activities. Create scenarios where a mentor is faced with a tough situation involving a variety of socio-economic statuses, beliefs, practices, or cultural traditions that are foreign to their experience. Here are some examples:

- A student likes and talks to the mentors about music that you find extremely offensive. It includes lyrics that you feel denigrate women.
- A student from the Middle East has worn a *hijab* to every mentoring activity. One day, she tells the group that she is thinking about abandoning the tradition and asks for thoughts. What would you say?
- Some students in your group can afford to apply to and attend private colleges. There are others, however, who cannot afford to go to private school and are looking into the local State university. How can the mentors address both groups effectively?
- There are three first-year students in your group who recently moved to the United States. Spanish is their primary language, and the three will often begin to speak to each other in Spanish. How could the mentors make all of the students feel more comfortable?

The purpose of having role-playing activities is to introduce mentors to potential situations where it is essential to be sensitive towards other beliefs, or traditions. This doesn't mean mentors must pretend to share the same view. It means that mentors should always show respect for an individual, even if this means to respectfully disagree with their beliefs. Take for instance, the situation above where a student liked and talked about music that someone finds extremely offensive. A mentor would never say: "I think that group is disgusting and misogynist, and I can't believe you listen to that sexist garbage!" This kind of response would not be as effective as explaining your view without being hostile and judgmental.

Also, "sticky" situations like some listed above could help your group talk about issues of cultural sensitivity with the high school students. Take the example where some students are speaking to each other in Spanish. The mentors could use this as a way to help other students understand what it must feel like to be immersed into a different culture

with limited time to adjust. The mentors could also take the opportunity to have the Latina/Latino students share some of their traditions with the group—giving them an opportunity to share their culture and to also feel more included. During your seminar, create other scenarios where you can develop some effective ways to address issues of diversity as well as ways to use those difficult situations as tools for group learning.

MENTOR/STUDENT NIGHT

The best way to begin your mentoring program is to have an exciting and fun kick-off event. Try to hold this event at the high school (in the gym or cafeteria possibly). Here are some suggestions for the evening:

- Introduce the mentors and students (include an icebreaker) and then have a fun group activity. One idea is to have mentors and students bring in a picture to share with the group. The picture can be of family, friends, their favorite spot, or their pet. Have them explain why the picture is significant to them.
- Make sure to bring food (and music if possible) to the Mentor/Student night. Make the atmosphere casual and fun so that everyone feels comfortable.
- Discuss the goals of the mentor program and answer any questions.
- Discuss potential activities, and ask if people have a preference for what to do first.

As members of the Leadership Alliance, you have a tremendous opportunity to provide young people with information, resources, support, and most importantly, someone to look up to. Take pride in the fact that you are working to better the lives and experiences of others. Use this opportunity to create a lasting relationship between your college and the local high school so that other leaders will follow in your footsteps and invest their time to further create positive change in their community.

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