

# Spiced Up

(\*\*31<sup>th</sup> AUGUST FINAL DRAFT )

A Resource Book for Working with Young Women

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### About the Book

This book is written as an update of our previous resource book, Sugar and Spice. Sugar and Spice was written over ten years ago and has been used throughout the country in a wide range of settings. While many of the issues contained in it are still relevant today, we felt there was a need to adapt and update it in order to reflect the current issues for young women. The young women who first used the exercises in Sugar and Spice have hopefully made the transition to adulthood with ease and confidence. Who knows, maybe some of them have even become youth workers, health workers or teachers, who will themselves use this new book. Now we must focus on the young women of today and their needs in a rapidly changing world.

This new resource has retained many of the original exercises and follows roughly the same format of Sugar and Spice. In developing this book, we consulted with a number of people within the Youth Service and asked for comments and suggestions on what should be included and how the book might look. The result, we believe, is great!

Once again, the book is written with youth workers and leaders in mind as well as those who are involved in working with young women in a non-formal setting. However, we are aware that many others from the formal education sector and the community sector have also used Sugar and Spice and we feel that this resource is easily adaptable for use in these settings also. The materials are aimed at young women aged between 12 and 18 years but leaders should adapt the exercises to suit their group - indeed some of what you will find here could be used with women of 45 or even with boys and young men too. But our focus is girls and young women.

The book aims to address a wide range of issues which, we feel are particularly important to girls today. It is by no means a comprehensive resource of all these matters but we have selected some, which we feel, and you have said, are the most important. The format of the book does not allow us to go into great detail on any one topic, but it gives a general overview. If you want to further develop the issue of self-esteem, for example, we recommend that you consult other specialist resources or agencies to help you build a more detailed programme around this. You will find suggestions of other useful resources and support materials in sections six and seven.

This Book is divided into seven sections, each one dealing with a different broad area.

These sections are:

- Knowing Me Knowing You
- Body and Mind
- My Life My Future
- In the Picture
- Women making a difference
- Activities
- Resources

The first five sections vary in size and contain a range of exercises on the particular theme with a suggested methodology and some questions for discussion. We have not included a time span on the exercises as we feel this will vary for each group depending on factors such as the facilitator, the group size and the level at which the group is used to working. Section six is a collation of ideas for activities for your group. These are broken down into

activities you can do in an evening, a day and a weekend. Add your own ideas and exercises to this manual to make it a bumper resource for your group.

Although the book is broken into various sections and each section has a sequence to the exercises, we do not recommend that you just work your way through all the exercises. Rather pick and mix depending on the needs and concerns of the group and your own comfort and experience in doing this work with girls.

We have included a short section on guidelines for facilitation, which highlights some of the issues to be considered before undertaking a programme such as this with girls. We have also included a section on setting up and getting to know your group. This addresses matters such as how to work effectively with mixed ability and literacy levels, making the group 'safe', understanding, establishing and maintaining boundaries etc.

The final section of the book is a resource list with useful contacts, publications, resources, which can bring an added dimension to your programme and will allow you to go into more detail on a particular topic.

We hope you enjoy using this book in your work. Remember that through this vital work, you are enabling more young women to be happy, confident and proud contributors to Ireland and the world in the 21st Century - indeed giving them those opportunities and attention which we all needed, too, when we ourselves were girls and young women.

## **Guiding Principles for this work**

In developing this resource, we feel that it is important to state the principles, which underpin and over-arch all of this work and provide the foundation for our work in the area of equality and young women. This set of beliefs runs throughout the entire book, guiding and informing all our work.

### **Equality**

We believe that girls and boys should be treated equally, have equal opportunities and not to be discriminated against because of their gender. Despite the many developments in society towards achieving equality, it is still evident that on average, women earn less than men and that girls do not always have the full range of educational options available to them. Furthermore, it is still the case that young women take on more of the caring and domestic responsibilities in the home than young men, thereby decreasing their participation in other activities.

Legislation in Ireland is now very comprehensive in terms of protecting the rights of many people in terms of education, training, work and other areas but the principle of equality needs to be embedded further in society and promoted from an early age. Youth work is an ideal setting for exploring issues with young people around equality and gender. It provides a space to discuss, debate and carry out practical activities, which help to develop a real awareness of equality issues.

For leaders and workers involved in running programmes for girls or on matters of equality in general, it is important that they are aware of their own attitudes and experiences and feel comfortable discussing these with others. So, for example, working through some of the exercises found here for ourselves before tackling them with young women can be useful preparation, offering as it does the opportunity for exploring our values, attitudes and beliefs - and sometimes for making long-overdue changes in these.

**Good Practice**

We believe that the young people with whom we work have a right to high quality programmes and services and to participate fully in the development, implementation and evaluation of these. It is the girls themselves who know best what the issues are which most affect them. So it is only through listening to them and those who work with them that a quality service will be developed. Any programme for girls should also be based on trust and respect between workers and girls, between the girls themselves and between the workers. It should also aim to provide a safe space for them to explore issues, which are sometimes sensitive.

**Challenging**

Another principle of this book is the acknowledgement that the work around the issue of equality is always challenging - in two senses of the word. Firstly, it is challenging for the leaders, workers and for the girls themselves. And secondly, many aspects of this work are about challenging society in a number of ways. Our own lives and our society are always changing and we have to adapt and learn new responses and face new issues. This book aims to be challenging in terms of raising issues and helping girls to deal with them - as well as offering the support to deal effectively with this challenge in a way which does not take too great a toll.

**Enjoyment**

Finally, we believe that working with girls should also be fun and exciting. Building a programme with the girls allows for many opportunities to develop work, explore new ideas and create activities together. If you are working with a group over a period of time, by incorporating a fun element as well as addressing serious issues, friendships will be built up which may last for life and memories created which will stay with the girls for years.

## GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

Almost all youth workers and leaders use facilitation as a method of working with various groups. At times, facilitation may be difficult or demanding. We hope to give some short guidelines for facilitation here which may help in ensuring that your sessions with young women are as effective and enjoyable as possible.

### **Working with young women**

Working with young women will be a rewarding and a challenging experience for both the facilitator and the group. Remember that in this work, many issues will be explored which may be sensitive or personal for individuals. It is therefore especially important that everyone should feel comfortable in the group and this will depend on a number of factors including the following;

- ◇ The size of the group
- ◇ The location
- ◇ The issues being addressed in the group
- ◇ Whether group members know each other or not
- ◇ Whether the facilitator knows the group
- ◇ The age profile of group members
- ◇ The sense of belonging of group members
- ◇ The level of trust within the group
- ◇ Access for anyone with a disability

The facilitator should be aware of these factors and should plan the sessions with these issues in mind.

Remember that no group will be entirely homogenous and that levels of experience, confidence and literacy will vary. Also remember that not all of the young women may be heterosexual, Irish or religious. Be aware, in doing work on relationships and sexuality, that some young women may have had negative experiences and be conscious that the work may raise problematic areas for some of your group. Being aware of this will help you to understand your group and to be more open to whatever issues may arise.

### **The skills of facilitation**

Being a good facilitator comes with practice and accompanied by reviewing of your skills. There are some skills, however, which we particularly highlight here in order to help you prepare for your work. Takes note of these and consider how you work with groups and what your own strengths and weaknesses are.

### **Being self aware**

Be aware of your own style of facilitation and how this impacts on the group. Remember that facilitation is about enabling and empowering individuals to explore an issue or to take action and move on. The facilitator can lead and prompt but is not a member of the group. In order for the group to work well together, and for trust to be established, the facilitator should be confident and comfortable with the issues being discussed and should be aware of their own feelings on any particular topic.

### **Understanding groups**

A facilitator should understand group dynamics and be able to perceive changes, identify possible areas of conflict and foster development and progression in a group. In working



with a group of young women over time, the dynamics will change as the group members get to know each other. The facilitator should be able to support the group as it changes and guide it through its' development.

### **Communication**

Good communication skills are essential and these develop with practice and experience. Being aware of your skills in this area and being able to identify areas for improvement will help to improve your facilitation skills. Aspects to be aware include:

- Try to use open questions as this promotes discussion and feedback.
- When responding to input, ask for further clarification or paraphrase what the person has said in order to promote greater understanding of the issue raised.
- Be encouraging in your response to people and help them to participate fully.
- Be respectful of people's input and ensure that the speaker is aware that all points of view are valid and should be listened to.
- Encourage others in the group to respond to the issue raised by a group member and in this way, develop the issue further.
- Be aware of your body language. Look at the person speaking, show interest in the group, and don't be distracted.

### **Promote participation**

When working with groups, there are always some people who will contribute more and others who are more silent in the group. Try to achieve a balance in the group and to create an atmosphere where everyone feels they can contribute.

- Use varying methods for discussion and activities such as working in pairs or in smaller groups so that everyone can take part.
- Invite quieter people to contribute to the discussion.
- Watch the group and be aware of where most participation is coming from.
- Carry out trust and team building exercises to help the group work better together.
- Focus on the strengths/areas of interest of those who participate less and invite them to speak on these issues.

### **Be aware of difference**

In any group there will be many differences and it is important that nobody should feel isolated because of this or feel that they cannot participate or are not welcomed. So, for example, be aware of the following:

*Cultural differences.* Members of the group may be culturally diverse. Acknowledge the difference and promote diversity as a way of enriching the discussion. Be aware of generalisations and avoid making comments, which assume a homogenous group.

*Social Class.* Be conscious that the background and experiences of the group may vary greatly. There may be differences in the educational standards of the group, their living arrangements and economic circumstances. This may impact on meeting times, opportunities to participate in activities over a full day or a weekend and the cost implications of certain activities.

*Literacy levels.* The facilitator may not always be aware of varying levels of literacy within a group. If you are unsure of the literacy levels, encourage the group to work in pairs. Use creative methods instead of written exercises where possible.

*Sexuality.* When working in the area of relationships and sexuality, be conscious that some young women may not be heterosexual or may be unsure of their sexuality. Allow space for young women to explore this in a non-threatening way and include examples or scenarios, which may put forward other possibilities apart from strictly heterosexual ones.

*Disability.* While some disabilities may be obvious such as certain physical disabilities, others may not. Ensure that exercises are appropriate to the needs of the group and provide relevant support where necessary.

### **Evaluation and Reviewing**

A facilitator should always build in an element of reviewing into the group sessions. This ensures that you are aware of issues within the group and also relating to your own work as a facilitator. Include the following when planning your sessions:

- Begin with a review of how group members felt about the last session.
- Ask people how they have been since then.
- Build in a review at the end of each session – what worked, what didn't, what was frustrating, what could be developed further?
- Do a mid way evaluation which goes back to the original session plans and evaluates the progress.
- Do any changes need to be made?
- Do new things need to be added?
- How is the group working together?
- Make a renewed commitment to the group and the sessions and make amendments where necessary.
- Allow the participants to input into the design of the remaining sessions.

### **Final evaluation**

Do a comprehensive final evaluation. Use a variety of methods to get feedback from the girls, for example, including discussion, art, drama and questionnaires. Some of the questions you might want to consider are:

- Were the needs of the group met?
- What was learned?
- Where the aims and objectives of the programme met?
- What could be followed up on?
- Where can girls go for further information?

### **Document the process**

All too often we don't write up the experience of running groups. Make sure you document the entire process so that the successes can be built on and the points for learning can be

used in planning any future programmes. Ensure the participants' views are included in this documentation. Think about who it would be useful to circulate this report to, in order to raise the profile of the work you are doing and to develop your support-base.

## ESTABLISHING YOUR GROUP AND RUNNING THE FIRST SESSION

### Planning the work

Once you have decided to set up a group for young women you need to establish the group and plan your sessions. There are a number of factors to be considered in doing this:

- Who is the target group?
- Where are they from?
- Do the group know each other already?
- How will you advertise the group?
- Is there a limit on the number you will work with?
- What is the age range?
- Do you need parental/guardian consent?
- Be familiar with your organisation's guidelines and protocols for practicalities such as child protection and insurance
- When will you meet?
- Where will you meet?
- Who will run the sessions?
- Do you require a budget? If so, how will you secure this?
- How will you run the first session?
- How will you establish the group and build trust?
- What process will you use for involving the participants in developing group guidelines?
- Can you link with other groups in your area or in the organisation?
- What supports are available to you as a facilitator?
- How will you review and evaluate the work?

To make your work easier, it is advisable to develop a programme plan of sessions/activities that you will use with your group. You may decide to select a theme and work on this for a period of time or you could do a general introduction to girls' work, which touches on a range of issues. You should invite the input of the group themselves on issues, which they would like to see addressed and continue to consult them as the group develops. Involving the young women in making active decisions about the group and the programme will be crucial to developing the confidence of the group and increasing their sense of empowerment.

### The first session

For the first session, ensure that you are well prepared and spend time getting to know the group and allowing them to get to know you. The first session should have some simple objectives, for example:

- To introduce the programme and get feedback on the plan from the participants
- To get to know each other
- To explore the expectations and hopes of the participants
- To explore the concerns of the participants
- To develop some ground rules for the sessions.

### **Checklist for the session**

**When setting up your work, it will be helpful to remember to:**

- Promote the participation of everyone from an early stage
- Ensure an open and safe environment where participants feel they will be listened to and taken seriously
- Be conscious of the boundaries of the group. What is appropriate to the group and what are you comfortable with?
- Enjoy the session and promote an element of fun and relaxation.

## **Section One**

### **Knowing Me, Knowing You**

**Introduction**

**About me**

**It is good to be me**

**Family Tree**

**Family Ties**

**Friends Like Us**

**Feeling Good**

**How to say what you want**

**You win I win**

**In my world**

**What is spirituality?**

**I Believe**

**Www...Irish Young Women**

**Time Capsule**

## Introduction

### Knowing Me, Knowing You.

When working with girls, one of the key starting points is the area of self-esteem.

Self-esteem comprises a whole range of issues such as:

- feeling confident
- feeling good about ourselves
- understanding ourselves
- being assertive
- being happy in our relationships

Our self-esteem is constructed and is expressed at many different levels. Jo Adams in her book 'Go Girls', describes self-esteem in terms of a flower with many different petals – each petal representing a different determinant which impacts on self-esteem. This approach shows how we must develop a range of strategies and approaches to tackle low self-esteem. There is no point in working on only one aspect of a person's life in order to address an issue, which clearly runs throughout all their experience.

Political factors

feelings

social relationships

Spirituality

OUR SELF

self image

**(MAKE THIS A FLOWER)**

Relationship with self

**"Self esteem is feeling good about – and relating positively to – our lives, our feelings, our actions and our relationships"**

(Carol Painter and Jo Adams)

While much has changed and indeed improved in the lives of young women today, there are still many worrying developments when we look at the papers or talk to young women themselves. Many of these are related to low self-esteem. The misuse of alcohol and drugs, eating disorders, depression, stress and alienation are all evident throughout the country and unless girls are enabled to develop strategies to raise their self esteem, these will continue to be all too prevalent.

This section of the book looks at self-esteem and asks girls to identify what that means for them. It explores the issues, which impact on self-esteem and examines the level of control which girls can take over these issues. Some of the areas impacting on self-esteem such as spirituality, assertiveness, social relationships and role models for young women are also addressed in this section. An entire programme of many sessions could be developed on this topic and we only provide a taste of this here.

This section also includes exercises on “getting to know you” and introduces topics such as friends and family. For young people today, it is increasingly important to be able to identify a network of people who can support them and who they can trust. These exercises allow young women to reflect on their relationships and identify the positive and negative factors in these.

Finally, this first section asks girls to describe what life is like for young women in Ireland today. Ireland has changed rapidly over the last 15 years and the picture of young women in Ireland has changed too. What is it like for young women from different cultures who are living in Ireland? What about young women with special needs, young Traveller women and young women from urban and rural backgrounds? We should encourage young women to see the whole picture and attempt to understand the multi-cultural and multi-faceted society which makes up the picture of 'young women in Ireland today', of which they are all a vital part.



## **About ME**

**Objectives:** To introduce ourselves to others in the group  
To learn a bit about each other  
To develop a trusting atmosphere in the group

**Materials:** Flipchart paper, crayons, blue tack

**Method:** Give everyone a sheet of flipchart paper and some crayons  
Ask each person to draw images which help to describe themselves s  
likes, dislikes, family, friends etc.  
Ask the group members to include things such as, likes, dislikes, family,  
friends, hobbies etc. Stress that this doesn't have to be a perfect drawing  
since people may feel they are not 'artistic'. They can use symbols, words or  
stick people if they want to represent their thoughts – this isn't an art show!  
Include in the picture what you feel is your best achievement to date and your  
greatest ambition for the future.

When the drawings are complete, ask the group members to divide into pairs  
and to present their drawing to each other.  
Come back to the large group and ask for volunteers to show their drawing  
and talk a bit about it.

When people have presented, stick the drawings around the room and allow  
time for people to walk around and look at them.

**Questions for discussion:**

- How was it doing this exercise - did you enjoy it?
- How did it feel to share information about yourself?
- Did you learn anything about yourself?

**Suggestions:** It is helpful if the leader(s) participates in this exercise too  
The exercise could be returned to and developed further by using the  
exercise 'Questions and Answers'.

## IT'S GOOD TO BE ME!

**Objectives:** To see in each of us the things we like about ourselves  
To understand the importance of self affirmation

**Materials:** Each girl needs to bring in a photo of themselves. Alternatively, you could use an instamatic camera on the evening and take a photo of each of the girls – or a digital one if you have access to a computer and printer. Glue.

**Method:** Begin by introducing the exercise and saying that we often are quick to put ourselves down or complain about our looks, our body, our skills etc. In this exercise, we want to take time to reflect on what is good about being the person that you are.

Give each girl a sheet of paper and ask her to stick the photo of herself in the centre.

Ask each girl to write her name on the page and to write down all the things, which she likes, about being herself. This can include qualities such as sense of humour; good at sport, easy to make friends, and good listener or anything she likes about her looks such as her hair, her hands or her smile.

Ask the girls in pairs to share their worksheet with their partner. Come back to the large group and discuss the exercise using the following questions:

- Was it easy or difficult to think of things to write down?
- Would it have been easier to think of things we don't like about ourselves?
- How did you feel about sharing your worksheet with someone else?
- Why do you think we sometimes find it difficult to be positive about ourselves?
- How does it feel to acknowledge the positives?

Ask the young women to keep their worksheets and to take them out when they need reminding of how good they are!

**Suggestion:** When the group are in pairs, after each young woman shares her worksheet, the other could add to this any positive qualities, which they notice in her.

**Worksheet for  
It is good to be me**

**Make graphics Bigger**

**Name**

**What I like about me?**

**PHOTO**

## Family Tree

- Objectives:** To introduce the idea of a family tree focusing on girls' female ancestry
- To create an awareness of how female family members are presented and/or neglected in our society
- To develop an interest in our family history and to recognise ourselves as part of it

**Note for Facilitator:** Be aware that some young women may be fostered or adopted. Where you know this to be the case, unless this is a very safe group, it may be better to skip this exercise.

**Materials:** Ask the young women to do some research on their female ancestors and to bring along some old photos of female family members if they have them. Photocopies of information sheet, paints, brushes, glue large sheets of paper

**Method:** On a large sheet of paper, ask each group member to draw a family tree using the model on the information sheet.

Ask each group member to place a photo or painting of herself on the bottom and add name, date of birth and location to it. Encourage a colourful design.

Continue with the next female ancestor i.e. your mother/foster mother etc. Fill in her dates and follow on until all female family members are included.

Perhaps participants could write a small piece on each woman named for example, a family story about her beside their names or pictures.

Everyone introduces her family to the large group.

### Questions for Discussion:

- Did you find it hard to get the information?
- What did you discover while doing the research?
- Were you aware of your family history?
- Do you think it is important to know your family history?
- Why do you think women's names and stories sometimes get lost in 'History'?

**Suggestions:** Exhibit your family trees.

Invite mothers including foster-mothers, stepmothers, adopted mothers and carers in and possibly grandmothers and aunts to the exhibition.

## Family Tree

Sister

**ME**

Grand Mother

Mother

Foster Mother

Photo/Painting of Me

### **WWW...Irish Young Women**

**Objectives:** To have a discussion about what it is like to be a young woman in Ireland today  
To consider the experiences of a wide range of young women in Ireland  
To learn a little about developing information for a web-site

**Materials:** Pens and Paper, access to a computer (if possible), print out of a home page of a web-site

**Introduction:** This exercise aims to encourage the group members to think broadly about young women in Ireland and therefore to understand the many different issues and situations of young women.

**Method:** Ask group members to imagine that they have just been contacted by a major media/communications company and asked to develop a web-site / visual display about young women in Ireland today.

Group members have to design the web-site and agree the various headings and images which should be included in the site.

If you have access to a computer, go to one of the web-sites in the resource list in this book or other appropriate site. If you do not have access to a computer in your meeting room, bring along a print out of an appropriate web-site to show the group.

Look through the page(s) and ask the group to note all the types of information that are included such as statistical information, current news, profiles of individual people/projects, where to go for more information etc.

Divide the group into smaller groups of 4/5.  
Ask each group to design the general headings to be included on the web-site, the images which they would use, a sample profile of some groups of young women in Ireland today (rural, city, Traveller, young women from other countries), etc.  
Could this site provide links to other sites? Which ones?

Bring the groups back together and a spokesperson from each group should present their findings.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

- Was it easy to describe what life is like for a young woman in Ireland today?
- If there were difficulties in doing this, what were they?
- Do you think your design covers most of the issues for young women in Ireland?
- What images are portrayed in the newspapers/magazines of young Irish women?
- Do you think this is a fair representation?
- Do you think it would be possible to really develop a web-site like this?

**Suggestions:** As a group project, design a newsletter or a real web-site and write up the articles under each of the headings you have already suggested.

Make a short video about young women in Ireland today.  
To do this, interview a wide range of young women on their experiences – good and bad – of growing up female in Ireland.

## Time Capsule

**Objectives:** To think about what life is like for young women in Ireland today

To describe this as comprehensively as possible

**Materials:** Paper and pens

**Introduction:** Give a brief introduction on how every country has a particular culture and within this, different people have very different lifestyles. It is often difficult for us to imagine what life would have been like for a young woman in Ireland 50 Years ago, or even what the average day of a young woman in Africa today would be like.

**Method:** Divide the large group into smaller groups of four or five.

Ask each group to agree on and write down ten items/objects, which they would put in a box, which would describe what life is like for a young woman in Ireland today. This box would be opened in 100 years time.

In the large group, share the lists and discuss what you would learn about life for young women in Ireland today, from the different objects, which the group included on their list.

In discussion, raise the point that a lot can be learned about our lives today from simple, everyday items.

### Questions for Discussion:

Why did you choose these particular items?

Was there anything that you wanted to include but didn't or couldn't?

Do these items reflect your own interests or the general interests of young women today?

If your Time Capsule were opened by young women 100 years from today – what would they think your lives were like? Are there things it isn't possible to represent that you would like them to know about your lives?

**Suggestions:** Make up what you think would be the best box by combining some of the items from all of the lists.

If you are looking for publicity for the Group, there could even be the opportunity for some media coverage for the Girls' Group if you did a press release about this. You could actually bury the box and invite press photographers to record this, too.

## FAMILY TIES



**Objectives:**

To talk about families and our relationships within them  
To recognise how we deal with issues within our families  
To examine how we can get support from our families  
To recognise the different types of family to include fostering, step-families, adoption and extended families

**Materials:**

Worksheet on 'Who's in my family?'

**Introduction:**

This exercise is an introductory one to the issue of family. Be aware that it may require additional sessions if the group wants to discuss some issues raised in more detail. Also, remember that the experience of the participants may not always be positive within their family or they may be experiencing difficulties at that particular time. Be sensitive and allow space to deal with issues as they come up and deal with them at another session if required.

**Method:**

Give each girl the worksheet 'who's in my family' and ask her to complete it. The sheet can include the immediate family (parents, brothers and sisters or step brothers/sisters/parents) and the extended family if the girls wish. Recognise that some young women may be adopted or may be in the care of extended family or foster families.

When the individual worksheets are completed ask the girls to work in pairs and to talk through their sheets.

Families are important to all of us throughout our lives. At different times we may be close to different members of our family. Ask the girls to look at their worksheets individually again and to circle the people on the sheet who they feel closest to.

Come back into the main group and have a general discussion using the following questions:

- ◆ Are there members of your family who you would confide in if you had a problem? Think about the following issues and circle the people on your worksheet to whom you would talk to openly about it:
  - Bullying at school
  - Problems with a friend or a boyfriend
  - Sex and sexuality
  - Career and jobs
  - Health concerns
  - Stress
- ◆ If you couldn't talk to family members about one or more of these issues, who would you talk to?
- ◆ If there is a disagreement in your family, how is it usually resolved?

- ◆ If there are boys and girls in your family, are there different roles for each? Are the boys and girls treated differently? If so, why do you think this is?
- ◆ What is the most important thing for you about your family?
- ◆ What frustrates you about your family? How could this be addressed?
- ◆ Positive feedback is sometimes lacking in our families but we ourselves have the power to change this. Who do you admire most in the family – and could you tell them this and what it is you particularly appreciate about them?
- ◆ If you had children of your own, what would your hopes be for your family in terms of their relationships within the family?

## WORKSHEET FOR FAMILY TIES

**(Graphics need to be improved)**

Write in the names of your family on the sheet. Draw lines to each person indicating how close you are to that person – short lines indicate that you are close to a person, long lines indicate that you are less close.

\_ME Insert Arrows pointing in different directions

## FRIENDS LIKE US

**Objectives:** To understand the value of real friendships  
To discuss the qualities of a good friend  
To discuss ways to build and maintain friendships

**Materials:** Plain white cards or postcards, markers, crayons

**Method:**

- Give each person a card and ask her to design a card, which could be sent to a friend. The card should describe, in words or pictures, what friendship is.
- When this has been completed, pin the cards up on the walls and allow time for the group to walk around and look at the 'gallery' of cards.
- Divide the group in two. Ask one group to list all the things, which can threaten or damage friendships and ask the other group to list those things, which promote or foster good relationships.
- Bring the group back together and ask each group to present their findings.
- In the large group brainstorm a 'friendship charter' which outlines how friends should treat each other, taking the starting point ***“Good friends should...”***

**Questions for Discussion.**

- What is special about friendship?
- Think about a friendship between two women/girls in a soap opera, film or book/magazine. Discuss this and why it is a good/strong friendship. What difficulties has the friendship had? How did they get over this?
- Are there differences between boy's' friendships and girls' friendships? If so, what are they?
- Do you think it is easy to have and maintain a friendship with someone of the opposite sex? What can some of the problems be in this?

## Feeling Good

**Objectives:** To explore the meaning of self-esteem  
To create our own definition of self esteem  
To explore factors which help to boost our self-esteem and those which may harm it

**Materials:** Flipchart and marker

### Introduction:

Self esteem is an important part of our being and at different times in our lives we may either have a high level of self-esteem or a low level of self-esteem. Be aware that some of the girls may not feel very confident and their self-esteem may be quite low. Also, remember that having high self esteem may be perceived by others as being 'big headed' or over confident. Our culture does not always recognise or reward positive self-esteem. Indeed, it is often devalued, belittled or seen as vanity or conceit.

**“Self esteem is feeling good about – and relating positively to- our lives, our feelings, our actions and our relationships”.**

Go Girls Jo Adams & Carol Painter.

### Method:

- In the main group write the words 'self esteem' on the flipchart and ask participants to brainstorm what this means to them. You can prompt with things like, 'feeling good about yourself', 'being confident', 'understanding our rights' etc.
- Divide the main group into smaller groups of four or five
- Ask each group to complete the following sentence in no more than 15 words, 'Self-esteem is.....'
- Bring the groups back together to share their findings. Pin up the various definitions around the walls.
- Going back into the small groups ask each group to record on two sheets of flipchart paper
  - a) what are the things which help to boost our self esteemAnd
  - b) what are the things, which can harm our self-esteem.
- Remind participants to use their own experience to inform their work.
- Bring the group back together and ask each group to share their findings.

In the large group discuss the findings using the following questions:

- Was it easy or difficult to think of examples of what affects your self-esteem?
- Can you think of examples, which happened to you recently? How did you feel?
- Do we have control over the things, which affect our self-esteem? Do we have more control over some than others do? Which ones do we have most control over?

- Can you think of three things which always help you feel better about yourself which you could perhaps use at times when you are feeling low, to bring your self-esteem back up again?

**Note:** Because of the culture in which they live, sometimes girls are very focused on looks, size, shape and clothes as the key factors which determine their self-esteem. If this happens in this exercise, draw out some learning about this or perhaps make your next group work with girls pick up this theme.

## How to Say What You Want

**Objectives:** To encourage an awareness of our own needs  
To develop skills in communicating these needs  
To deal assertively with situations and take responsibility for our behaviour

**Materials:** Paper, pens, flipchart markers and copies of "Situations". Copies of "Giving and Receiving Messages" guidelines and observer sheet.

**Introduction:** Explain that this exercise is about becoming more confident in expressing ourselves e.g. saying what we think, feel, want or don't want. These exercises can be done over two sessions in order to allow more time for de-briefing and discussion.

**Assertiveness: *Stating your concerns and feelings without anger or passively.***

**Communication: *talking about feelings effectively: becoming a good listener and question asker; distinguishing between what someone does or says on your own reactions or judgements about it; sending "I" messages instead of blame.***

**Emotional Intelligence Daniel Goleman.**

**Method:** Ask each group member what they think assertiveness is.

Having recorded the responses, the leader then gives an input on what assertiveness and assertive behaviour are.

- In assertive behaviour, views are expressed clearly and honestly and feelings are acknowledged. Assertiveness also involves being specific in our feedback to others rather than making generalisations or sweeping statements.
- Passive behaviour usually allows other people to make decisions for us and our own needs are often denied.
- Indirect behaviour involves manipulating others, trying to get our own way without being honest and open about what we are feeling or thinking.
- Aggressive behaviour occurs when aggression is openly expressed either physically, e.g. by hitting or violence of any kind or verbally e.g. by shouting or name-calling.

Give a brief input also on the importance of clear communication in assertive behaviour, for example, stating clearly what we would like to happen.

- Divide the large group into groups of three.
- Give each group a situation from the worksheet and an observer worksheet.
- In each group, two people talk out the situation in a role-play. The third person acts as an observer and takes note of how the situation is dealt with.
- The observer gives her comments to the other two after the role-play.
- If time allows, the groups can swap around situations and different people can be observers and role-players.

- Come back to the large group and discuss how the situations were handled. The focus here should be on stating clearly what you want or think in the situations, without becoming aggressive or manipulative.
- You could possibly use a photo story or cartoon story to illustrate the different expressions and situations.

**Note:** A key aspect of assertiveness is that it is not necessarily about “Winning” but about communicating our thoughts or needs clearly and being heard. Often, but not always, this results in our achieving what we had hoped. But whatever the outcome, it should always end in a sense that we have at least represented our own opinions and feelings clearly.



### **Situations for How to Say What You Want**

- 1) You have been in your job for two months and your boss asks you to work late one evening. You have another appointment but you don't want your boss to think that you're not committed to your work.
- 2) A friend asks if she can borrow your new jacket. You really don't want to lend it to her because you haven't worn it yourself yet, but you don't want her to think you're mean.
- 3) A boy you like makes vague suggestions about a good film, which is in town. He'd like to go to it sometime but none of his mates are going. You're not sure if he's suggesting that maybe you could go together. You don't want to jump to the wrong conclusion.
- 4) You try to tell your friend that the boy she fancies has asked you out.
- 5) You bought a pair of shoes in a shop last week. You've worn them twice and the sole is splitting on them. You bring them back but the shop assistant won't give you your money back because you've worn them.
- 6) You had a big row with your parents last week. You haven't been talking to each other since. You decide to take the first step and try to talk it out but they are slow to come around.
- 7) You have heard that your best friend has said things about you that are untrue, how do you approach the issue with her?

## **Observer Sheet for How to Say What You Want**

What is the situation?

Watch out for:

- Eye contact
- Listening to each other
- Non-verbal messages

Are any generalisations or sweeping statements being made?

Are they blaming each other?

Are they acknowledging feelings?

How was the situation resolved?

Who was pleased with the outcome?

Was anyone displeased?

Other Comments

## **How to say what you want**

### **Giving and Receiving Messages**

It is important in relation to giving and receiving messages that it is the right time and place for both people. It might suit you, but not the other person when giving messages. And it might suit the other person but not you when you are receiving messages.

Being able to acknowledge that it is not the right time or place for either of you is already being assertive and will give both of you a good foundation for further discussion. If this is the case, suggest when it would be ok to have this discussion, rather than attempting to avoid the situation.

#### **Giving Messages (Make Graphics a little bigger).**

- Be clear about what you want to say beforehand.
- Make 'I' statements, not blaming the other person for your feelings. For example; "I feel angry" instead of "You make me feel angry".
- Don't generalise. Keep your feeling related to this situation.
- Have consistent verbal and non-verbal messages. For example: saying no to someone but looking at the floor can give two different, conflicting messages.
- Keep good eye-contact with the other person.
- Suggest how you would like things to be done in the future.
- Allow the other person time to respond to what you have said.
- You don't need to defend yourself about your feelings – you felt as you did and that is OK.
- Moving On: Suggest doing something nice together, thanking the person for listening.

## Receiving Messages

- Listen to what the other person has to say.
- Acknowledge any truths in it.
- Remember your own feelings during the actual situation and use these to help you with your response.
- Try not to get defensive: this is one person's point of view. But equally be open to their feedback if you feel that it is fair – there may be some learning in it for you.
- Having listened to everything the other person had to say, decide how you would like to respond and do so clearly. Check out your behaviour with other people so as to decide whether this is a once off situation or something that you might want to think about changing.
- Let the other person know that you have heard them by saying for example; "Did I understand you properly – did you mean...?" You might be surprised at what was said, so tell the other person this: "I'm really surprised at what you said - I had no idea that you felt like that!"
- If you are not sure about how to respond, tell the person you'd like more time to think about it and that you'll come back to them.

## You Win – I Win

**Objectives:** To learn more about how to communicate clearly  
To promote discussion and an exchange of different viewpoints

**Materials:** Suggested topics for debate work sheet.

**Introduction:** It is about communication and being clear and these are skills, which will aid us in being assertive.

**Communication: “ Talking about feelings effectively: becoming a good listener and question-asker; distinguishing between what someone does or says and your own reactions or judgments about it; sending “I” messages instead of blame”.**

**Emotional Intelligence Daniel Goleman**

Introduce the idea of a debate and if necessary agree on guidelines.  
Discuss these guidelines for good communication with the group e.g.

- Thinking about what you want to say
- Finding a simple way to get this across
- Reinforcing your points without being repetitive
- Maintaining positive body language

**Method:** During the discussion, focus on the content of the debate and then on the communication skills used. The leader could observe these and feed back to the large group.

Divide the large group into two smaller groups. One group will be in favour of the motion and one group against.

Give each group a topic or each group can choose their own.  
Each team must prepare their debate with a least three different points on their motion. Each team carries out the debate.

Allow comments from the floor after each debate, allowing people to elaborate on their opinions.

### Questions for Discussion:

What is your opinion based on?

Why is it important to give your viewpoints?

Did you change your opinion?

Were your points made clearly?

Were you aggressive in making your points?

Did anything stop you from listening – if so, what was this?

You Win – I Win

### ***Suggestions for Debates***

Women aren't able to do heavy physical work

All women are hurt by abortion

Women are much more emotional than men

Co-educational schools are better than single sex schools

Women and Men should equally share family responsibilities and workloads.

There should be legislative and political change to improve the economic and social position of women.

Women can get what they want if they try hard enough

All contraceptives should be widely available

All single mothers should get their own house

Young women should not learn the same subjects as young men

Young women have no say in youth clubs

All young people are the same

Young people should be allowed to vote at 16

It is okay for women to ask men out

Women have more supportive friendship than men

## **In My World**

**Objectives:** To suggest a personal set of guidelines, which encourage a respectful way of living  
To become aware of developing our own code for living

**Materials:** Paper, pens, markers, paints, card and large sheets of paper, Information sheet and worksheet

**Introduction:** This exercise is about developing your own personal guidelines for living a full and whole life. It encourages an exploration of what those guidelines are and what are they based on, for example, equality, justice, and human rights.

Outline to the group the purpose of documentation such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Convention on CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)

**Method:** In pairs, make up a list of guidelines which you think are useful and necessary for living in the world.  
They may include:

respecting yourself and other people, ensuring equality and justice for everybody, and respecting the environment. Human rights for everyone, women's rights, children's rights, respect for other cultures.

Feedback these lists to the rest of the group.

Discuss the lists in terms of common themes, the language used i.e. is it positive and encouraging or is it negative and off putting, the type of life this would mean.

### **Questions for Discussion:**

Are these guidelines the basis for a moral life?

What kind of a world would your list of guidelines promote?

How would you or do follow your guidelines? What difficulties do you encounter?

How would you encourage people to follow your guidelines?

What type of values do these guidelines encourage?

What is the purpose of such sets of guidelines?

Would most people live happier and better lives in this kind of world?

## Worksheet for In My World

My guidelines for living are

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

Add any more you wish to.



## What is Spirituality?

**Objective:** To define what spirituality means to us

**Materials:** Paper, pens, dictionary and copies of the statements

**Introduction:** Spirituality means different things to each of us, and yet we often speak of it as being the same for everyone. Exploring what spirituality in general means for us is not often done, as often we simply accept or reject the religious ideas and definitions which are passed on to us. There are many, many different explanations and definitions for the spirituality; these are just two examples.

**Spirituality...” is a person’s capacity and means to deal with and explain life’s issues which have no obvious explanation. It is also the means by which a person conducts life and defines life goals.**  
**Maurice Zeldman**

### **What is Spirituality?**

**Spirituality is the essence of a person’s being. Spirituality is who we are. It is tied to the individual’s worldview. It can encompass many things such as religion, identity, heritage, culture and so on. For each person, spirituality is different, although there are many groups who can share common spiritualities.**

**A Spiritual Journey by Nereda White**

**Method:** Divide the group into small groups of 3 or 4. Read out the statements and ask the group to discuss each and come to an opinion about it. In the main group get feedback from the smaller groups and discuss some of the issues raised. Try to reach a consensus on a definition for spirituality.

### **Questions for Discussion:**

Is there a human need to believe in a god?

What were the difficulties in reaching a definition?

Does spirituality mean something different according to the denomination or religious group people belong to?

What about humanism as another way of thinking?

Is spirituality different from religion? Some people would describe themselves as being spiritual but are not religious, what might this mean?

### **Suggestions:**

Invite people in to talk about different religions.

Visit different places of worship or gather information on different beliefs.

Invite someone in from the Humanist Society to talk about a different way of framing spirituality.

## Statements

Religion is a belief in a just god

There is no such thing as religion

You can make up your own religion

Everyone needs to believe in some form of a god

Not doing harm to other people is the cornerstone of spirituality

Religion is believing that god made the world

Believing in god means that you have no free will

Life is for living now, don't worry about tomorrow

God is a man

God is a woman

There is no God

We can never know whether or not there is a God

Religion is about sharing a view of the world with fellow believers

People who don't believe in any god have no sense of justice

God doesn't distinguish between women and men

A good person is a spiritual person

A religious person is a good person

Spirituality means something different for young and old people

Spirituality gives us a purpose in life

We can express our spirituality in many ways

Religion gives us an answer to all the problems of the world

Most of the World's wars are caused by religion

Most of organised religions discriminate against women and gay people

## **I Believe**

**Objectives:** To reflect upon and explore our own beliefs  
To develop our understanding of faith  
To share what we think is important in our lives

**Materials:** Pens, paper, markers, copy of worksheet and large flipchart paper.

**Introduction:** Begin this exercise by setting the scene where the young women are asked to explain their faith and beliefs to a group of visitors from another planet.

**Method:** Hand out the worksheet "My Beliefs" to each group member and ask her to fill it in herself.

Break into groups of three or four. Allow 20 minutes for each group to share their individual worksheets.

Ask the small groups to then feedback the main points of the discussion to the large group.

After the presentations, discuss in the large group the meaning of faith and how important our beliefs are to us.

### **Questions for Discussion:**

How did you develop your beliefs?

Can your beliefs change?

What are the practical consequences of your beliefs?

How do you live these out in your daily life?

## Worksheet for I Believe

To help you explore your beliefs, and to understand what you mean by faith, you might like to use these sentence stems.

I believe that.....

A good person is...

My faith helps me when...

It is important to have beliefs because...

For me, faith is...

I believe in....

Other

# Section Two

## Body and Mind

**Introduction**

**Food and More Food**

**The Tree of Eating Disorder**

**Working Out**

**Now I see me**

**Guidelines for Sexual Health Promotion**

**Understanding sexuality**

**Sexual relationships**

**STI Carousel**

**Young women and alcohol**

**The Words We Us. Exploring Mental Health Issues**

**Addiction**

**How to say no**

**Right to be safe**

**Promoting positive health**

**Being healthy**

**Healthy Me**

## Introduction

### Body and Mind

In our consultations with youth workers and leaders in relation to the development of this pack, the issues most requested and addressed with young women are those around health and sexuality.

Despite 'girlpower' and the perception of young women as confident, assertive and 'out there', there is still much evidence that young women may not be as secure in themselves as we may think. This is apparent through the emphasis on body image, an increase in sexually transmitted infections and an increase in the use of drugs and alcohol. The Irish Times Survey On Young People, Sept 2003 stated that, " More than two out of five young females say they are always trying to lose weight, with over half of them knowing someone with an eating disorder".

It therefore seems particularly important to address the broad issue of health for young women in a holistic way. It is worth remembering that issues of health are closely linked to self-esteem and young women with lower self-esteem may have more health problems. With this as a background, it is undoubtedly helpful to tackle issues of self-esteem with young women by using exercises to familiarise them with the factors, which can increase their sense of self-worth as well as those, which can damage it.

The Health Promotion Unit carried out a consultation with young people in out of school settings in 1998 (Youth As A Resource), to ascertain what they perceived their health needs to be. Relationships, sexual health and substances such as alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs were three of the main categories of concern to young people. The recommendations, which the young people outlined, were:

- The need for the provision of anonymous, accessible and youth friendly information and services on sexual health issues with particular reference to greater accessibility to contraception
- Smoking prevention should be targeted at children and current legislation enforced
- Moderate drinking habits should be promoted among young people
- Non judgmental, accessible and youth friendly information should be provided on illegal substances

This section of the resource pack will provide information and exercises around physical and mental health and will suggest a range of ways of improving our health. To do so, we need to examine our present lifestyles, what our needs might be, and how to meet these needs.

There are many different issues included in this section and you may need to group them together and spend a few weeks on each topic. We have included an exercise, which looks at our levels of physical activity and suggests how changes could be made in the young women's daily levels of activity. There is also a section on food and nutrition. Using copies of the 'Food Pyramid' would enhance this exercise and the girls could take a copy home with them to help them sustain their understanding. Body image is also addressed in this section and this whole area of young women's experience requires a level of sensitivity from us. A surprising and worrying number of young women are dissatisfied with their body

image and it may take some time and support to help them see what they like about themselves and to be comfortable to speak about their bodies.

Relationships and sexuality are always an important area for young women and our work may offer them one of the few places in which they can talk openly about these. As the leader, it is important that you are comfortable with the areas of discussion introduced. Do not ask the girls to participate in any exercise, which you yourself would be uncomfortable doing. Remember that you can never make assumptions about the experiences and life styles of the young women you work with. For example, some members of the group may have experienced abuse or there may be a young lesbian in the group who has not come out yet. Taking plenty of time, creating the right atmosphere and allowing the young women to decide the pace themselves will all help to ensure that the programme runs successfully.

Another area addressed is that of alcohol and addiction. With the rise in marketing of alcoholic drinks and particularly 'Alco pops' to young people, drink-related problems are increasing and these are particularly affecting young women. This also leads to other issues such as increased sexual activity, decreased responsibility around contraception and increased risk of sexually transmitted infections. Yet again, this highlights the link to self-esteem. Young women will often drink or use drugs to help them overcome shyness or feeling uncomfortable in a social group. The area of addiction is a complex one and touches on a whole range of issues in relation to both physical and mental health. This area needs to be addressed sensitively and you should be aware of the possibility that there may be issues in relation to addiction for some of the young women.

Mental Health is an area about which many people still feel uncomfortable talking openly about. For many years there has been stigma associated with mental health problems and to some extent, this still exists today. Being mentally healthy is perhaps one of the greatest assets a person can have but there is always the possibility of mental health issues arising for any of us. Being aware of your mental health and recognising the factors, which influence it, are hugely important in preventing difficulties arising or helping to deal with them if they occur. In this section, we look at what factors can cause stress and mental health difficulties and how we can adopt a lifestyle, which promotes good mental health. Other associated areas such as assertiveness skills, communications, and identifying a support network are also addressed in this and other sections.

Finally, this section also includes a practical exercise on personal safety for young women. Unfortunately, there are still many instances of violence against young women and this exercise offers ideas to help young women keep safe and deal effectively with instances of violence should they occur.



## Food and More Food

**Objectives:** To introduce the idea of a balanced diet – using the information on the fact sheets  
To decide on and plan a menu for a cooking session and meal

**Materials:** Session1 Large sheets of paper, markers, copies of fact sheet  
Session 2 Access to cooking facilities, cooking equipment and ingredients

**Method:** **Session 1**

Brainstorm “ What are you favourite foods”?

Give the handout of the food pyramid. Ask the group individually to indicate where their favourite foods fit within the pyramid.

The leader goes through the food pyramid information.

In pairs discuss eating habits and food intake and what changes if any they would like to make to their eating patterns.

Give handout on nutrition and ask the group to list what foods they would like to try out.

**Suggestions:** Select a menu and cook a meal together

Fats, Oils & Sweets  
USE Sparingly

Milk, Yogurt & Cheese Group  
2-3 Servings per Week

Meat Poultry, Fish, Eggs Nuts  
2 –3 servings

Vegetable Group  
3-5 Servings

Fruit Group  
2-4 Servings

Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group  
6- 11 Servings

**Insert Food Pyramid Triangle.**

## Handouts

### Information for Leader/Group:

Choosing a variety of foods from the different food groups on the information sheet ensures a balanced diet, containing all the essential nutrients such as protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals.

Remember: Many foodstuffs are no longer 'whole'. During processing the amount of fibre, vitamins, and minerals have been minimised. Furthermore, additives are used in some foods to enhance the taste or make it last longer and these can have a negative effect in health terms.

Preservatives are given E numbers. The purest food has no E numbers. To achieve a more balanced diet try to reduce your salt, sugar, and fat intake and try to eat as much freshly prepared food as possible.

Choose a wide variety of foods, if possible including fresh fruits and vegetables.

Drink plenty of fluids such as water, herbal teas, and juices and watch your alcohol intake.

Five small meals are easier on your stomach than two big ones and help to keep your energy level constant.

### Food More Foods – Nutrition

#### Vitamins/Minerals

These strengthen our bodies, protect us from disease and give us energy.

They can be found in fresh vegetables/fruit and in margarine, butter, vegetable oil and olive oil. But watch out – too many of these fats can give you heart and weight problems.

#### Proteins

These are essential for keeping us healthy, repairing and building up our bodies. Protein can be found in nuts, beans, poultry, fish, cheese, meat, yoghurt, **and** peanuts.

#### Fibre

Fibre is important in keeping the body working well and clearing out our internal system. This can be found in nuts, fruit, cereals, brown rice, barley, and oats

Carbohydrates: These give us lots of energy. They can be found in potatoes, bread, pasta and grains such as muesli, rice, rye and oats.

Fats: These should be used sparingly and can be found in oils and sweets.

## The Tree of Eating Disorders

**Objectives:** To promote a greater awareness of eating disorders  
To increase empathy towards those affected by eating disorders

**Materials:** Paper, Pens, Markers, Bluetack, Glue.

**Introduction:** To generate ideas about the causes of eating disorders and whether we can do anything about these causes. The group can brainstorm or also debate this issue.

**Method:** The group can have pre prepared paper trees. Alternatively participants can make their own trees or draw one large tree so the group can work on it together.

Working in smaller groups or in a large group ask the participants to explore the root causes of eating disorders.  
Put these ideas at the bottom of the tree to represent the roots.

Then explore the factors that sustain an eating disorder and place these ideas on the trunk and the branches.

Next ask them to examine the effects of an eating disorder, both negative and positive. Place this on the end of the branches, as the leaves.

Collect each group's tree and make a forest.

### Questions for Discussion:

Look at the root causes, ask the group if there is anything that could be done to challenge some of these root causes?

Are there factors in society that create a climate where eating disorders can develop?

Some ideas might include:

The roots: Depression  
Low self esteem  
The Media  
Family relationships  
Bullying  
Fashion

The trunk: Denial  
Not getting appropriate help  
Fear  
Loss of identity  
Lack of support  
Isolation

The Leaves: Osteoporosis  
Health Consequences

Loss of friendships  
Loss of childhood  
Depression  
Suicide

This exercise was written by Bodywhys.

Note for Facilitator: The key idea is that communication is vital in families. Families cannot make the person get better. However, they can support and encourage the person with the eating disorder. The person with the eating disorder will need lots of reassurance that they are loved and valued as they may not love and value themselves. Family members may at times feel frustrated and angry. At the same time the person with the eating disorder may be feeling misunderstood and isolated within the family. They may be struggling to control painful feelings and distress in their lives which they cannot express to those close to them.

## WORKING OUT!

- Objectives:** To increase awareness of our levels of physical activity  
To explore the benefits of physical activity to young women  
To make a personal plan in relation to taking regular exercise
- Materials:** Flip chart paper, copies of worksheets
- Method:** Put a sheet of paper with 'very fit' written on it at one end of the room and another with 'unfit' written on it at the other end of the room.  
Ask participants to place themselves in relation to the two ends of the continuum.  
Remind participants that many everyday activities help to build a fitness level – activities such as walking to school, cycling, walking the dog, housework etc.
- In the large group, ask the girls to list all the benefits of being fit. Are there any benefits of exercise, which are specific to girls and women? For example, it helps ease period pain, relieves depression and helps prevent osteoporosis which women are prone to.
- Hand out the worksheet 'My exercise' and ask each girl to complete it individually.  
In the large group have a general discussion on the worksheet.
- On a flipchart write 'A Personal Fitness Plan'.  
Ask participants to list a range of activities, which would make up a good exercise programme. Divide the activities into everyday activities and planned activities/sports.
- Hand out the worksheet and ask participants to complete it using the suggestions on the flipchart.
- Make a link to the exercises on food and nutrition and do a follow on session on the relationship between what we eat and the level of exercise we do. Do some research on exercise and the calories that different exercises burn off.
- Organise a session on eating habits and exercise.  
Then explore the relationship between certain foods and exercise and their impact on staying healthy.
- Suggestions:** Organise a fitness evening. Ask someone experienced to do aerobics/step/pilates/yoga or jazz dance with the group.
- Organise a game of football/basketball with another group in the area.
- Monitor your level of activity for a period of four weeks.
- As a group, enter the women's mini marathon and raise money for a charity while building your level of fitness.

## **WORKSHEET ONE**

### **MY EXERCISE**

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES

PLANNED EXERCISE/SPORT (what and how often)

**WORKSHEET TWO**  
**MY PERSONAL PROGRAMME**

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES (Make choices which involve some exercise. Walk/cycle instead of bus/car)

PLANNED ACTIVITIES/SPORTS (Ideally three times a week for at least 20 minutes each time)

WHAT MIGHT THE BARRIERS BE? (Bad weather, busy at school/work etc)

WHAT WILL KEEP ME MOTIVATED?

HOW WILL I REWARD MYSELF?

## Now I See Me

- Objectives:** To become more aware of the different parts of our bodies  
To recognise how critical we can be of ourselves  
To encourage a more positive body image
- Materials:** Large sheets of paper for everyone. Markers, pens, thumbtacks or bluetack
- Before introducing this session it may be useful to do a relaxation exercise with the group.
- Introduction:** Introduce the idea that we all have an image of ourselves, which will include our bodies and personalities. This exercise focuses on our body image, how we see ourselves, which parts we like or dislike and why. It is emphatically not about commenting on other people's bodies. It may be helpful for youth worker(s) also to take part to 'model' for girls feeling positive about ourselves.
- Method:** Introduce the exercise by saying that we are not always encouraged to see what is good about ourselves. We can be overly critical about our own bodies and looks. All of us have positive attributes that we should be proud of. This exercise provides an opportunity to explore, in a safe environment, some of the things we may feel positive about.
- Give each participant a large sheet of paper and markers and ask each young woman to draw herself. Then ask her to mark in what she likes and dislikes about how she looks. This can include anything from clothes or jewellery to body shape.
- Feedback to the large group. In discussion, the young women can share what they like and dislike in their drawings.
- Facilitator's Note: Notice especially if there is an imbalance, particularly if there are more negative than positive comments and discuss with the group why this might be. Make sure that all participants get some positive feedback.
- Questions for Discussion:**
- Are certain areas of the body ignored? Why?
  - What influences how we think of our bodies?
  - How can we improve our body image?
  - Where do we get this notion of perfect body image?
  - What ideas of beauty exist in different cultures?
  - What changes have there been to ideas of perfection over the last hundred years?
- Suggestions:** See activities in section six for ideas on pampering ourselves.



## **Good Practice Guidelines for Working with Groups In relation to Sexual Health Promotion.**

Sexual Health has been defined as:

“The integration of the physical, emotional, and intellectual and social aspect of sexual being, in ways that enhance personality, communication and love”  
World Health Organisation 1974.

Sexuality is defined as

“An integral part of life and it influences personality. It is a process that commences at birth and ends only with death. Sexuality is culturally defined and this is influenced by family peers, religion, education, school, media, law and science. Sexuality is a central issue in a young women’s life and it is the focus of much social pressure to conform to stereotypes”.

### **Facilitators Notes**

#### **Key issues that leaders and youth workers should consider in relation to Sexual Health Promotion.**

##### **A) Organisational**

1. Does your organisation have a sexual health policy or position paper?
2. Does your organisation have a child protection policy?
3. Are sexuality issues acknowledged in a holistic way?
4. What is the ethos and value base of your organisation?

##### **B) Checklist for Sexual Health Promotion Work**

1. For sexual health promotion work to be effective, different methodologies will need to be used with individuals, groups or communities in order to respond sensitively and appropriately to their particular needs.
2. Be informed by research and evidence base, which ensures maximum effectiveness and best use of resources.
3. Training and support will also need to be available for staff, teams and services.
4. Ensure that there is relevant local support, expertise and resources available in relation to young people’s sexual health. Promote collaborative and multi-agency work including partnership with the voluntary and community sector.
5. The methodology will need to be carefully chosen to ‘match’ the needs of the individual, group or community which is the audience of target group for the work.

Ensure the work is accessible to all and takes account of particular needs.  
Affirms diversity and is also person centre

6. Be familiar with the age of consent; parental consent; child protection; disclosure issues; confidentiality and other legal and ethical issues.

### C) Running your session:

1. Be clear of the aims and objectives of the course.
2. Ensure the session is accessible and consider any special needs.
3. Introduce a group agreement to reassure participants that it will be a nurturing and safe environment.
4. If dealing with upset or anger, acknowledge the feelings and offer them reassurance.
5. Maintain boundaries, if it seems appropriate, offer them referrals on to support groups or services.
6. Work with a co-facilitator.
7. Ensure you have good support and supervision in place. This offers you the space where you can discuss and review any issues raised for you by running the group, the content covered, or any aspect of the process.
8. Provide clear, accurate, up to date information in attractive and accessible forms and language. Be offered in non-judgmental, respectful and sensitive ways.

## Understanding Sexuality

**Objectives:** To explore what we mean by sexuality  
To identify the different influences on our sexuality

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers and worksheets.

**Introduction:** Introduce the exercise by explaining that our personal attitudes, feelings and thoughts about our sexuality will affect how we feel about ourselves and others. Explain the difference between sex and sexuality.

Facilitators Note: Remember that there may be members of the group who are gay or questioning their sexuality.

**Method:** **Part A**  
Brainstorm "What do we mean by sexuality?"  
Attempt to arrive at a group consensus.  
Present definition and discuss.  
In small groups discuss, Who/What do you think influences your understanding of sexuality?  
Feedback to large group and discuss.  
Using worksheet A design a chart on all the influences on us and our sexuality.

### Questions for Discussion:

How are we affected by these influences?  
What are the positive and negative influences?  
How can these be challenged?  
Is everyone a sexual being?  
Do you think there are differences between male and female sexuality? If so what are they?  
Does sexuality have to be acted out as sex?

**Method:** **Part B**  
Divide into three groups  
Give out Worksheet B on different aspects of sexuality.  
Ask each group to write in all the words/ideas they associate with the different headings on the star.  
Come back to the large group and discuss.

### Questions for Discussion:

Does it matter whether a person is heterosexual, gay or bisexual?  
Why do you think some people discriminate against others on the basis of their sexuality?  
If there are lots of negative words under the 'lesbian' and 'gay' headings, ask how it might feel to be labelled in this way?  
What effect might being talked about in this way have on someone's health, their relationships and well-being?  
How would you react if your best friend told you she was gay or bisexual?  
Do you think you could live a celibate life?

## **Worksheet A for "Understanding Sexuality"**

(Headings)

Being a young women

Religion

The Law

Work

School

Name

Magazines & TV Programmes

Friends

Boys

What my parents say

**This should be a Pie Chart**

## **Worksheet B for Understanding Sexuality**

The words and ideas that come to mind when you hear the words

### **This should be a Star**

Lesbian

Gay

Bisexual

Celibate

Heterosexual

## Sexual Relationships

**Objectives:** To provide an opportunity to examine different expectations about sexual activity among both young women and men

To examine young women's choices about a range of sexual behaviours

**Materials:** Copies of two separate worksheets, flipcharts and markers.

**Introduction:** Begin by acknowledging that discussing sex and sexuality can be difficult, interesting and exciting for young women.

However, in order to make informed decisions about this area of our lives, we need to explore our own sexuality, to learn what is right for us and when. The different expectations of young men and young women in relation to sex can also be explored during this exercise.

**Method: Part A**

Divide into small groups.

Give a copy of the case study to each group member then ask each group to answer the following questions;

- What is the problem between Conor and Niamh.
- How could this be resolved?
- How would you decide the answer to the question 'What do you think about how far girls should go with boys?'
- Do you think there would be a difference between boys and girls in answering this question?
- If so what might it be?

**Method: Part B**

Divide into groups of three and give a large sheet and markers to each.

Give each group one of the following headings:

Ask them to list three good things and three not so good things about their option for the girl and for the boy

Just holding hands and kissing.

Petting but not going all the way.

Letting it happen on the night if one person wants it.

Just being friends, no kisses or cuddles.

Heavy petting but not going all the way

Having sexual intercourse with no condoms or contraception.

Having completed the listings in the small group, come back together and give feedback.

**Questions for Discussion:**

What are the most important things to consider when deciding to become sexually involved with someone?

What are the responsibilities of each person?

What are their rights?

What do you think about pleasure in sex?

And what about sensuality – what does this mean to you?

## Niamh and Conor

Niamh and Conor are both in their Junior Cert year in the local school. They have been dating for three weeks and have arranged to meet at Hip Hops Disco on Friday Night.

**Conor** thinks Niamh is very good looking and likes to be seen with her. All his friends are jealous because she's a babe. Niamh fancied Conor for ages and when they got together she was thrilled. She thinks it's really romantic to have a boyfriend and she just likes his company at the disco. Conor is very excited at the idea of kissing her and touching her when they are dancing.

He feels this strong physical urge when he is with Niamh. Sometimes when Conor is aroused by Niamh, his sexual desire is very strong and he gets frustrated by it at times. Alongside this strong physical desire, he also feels very loving towards her. Sometimes he says he loves her.

**Niamh** is excited about being with Conor but hers is a more romantic feeling. She enjoys holding hands, dancing, sitting talking, kissing and is very pleased when Conor puts his arm around her when she's with her friends. Sometimes she feels awkward about the sexual feelings she experiences. Sometimes Conor thinks that Niamh is as aroused as he is because she continues to kiss him. He is surprised and feels hurt when she pushes his hand away. On a few occasions they have had a row about this but do not know how to talk about it. Conor feels rejected and sulks, Niamh feels hurt and used. Neither of them can talk freely about what is going on for them.

### Questions for Discussion:

Do you think young men and young women react differently in these kinds of situations?

What do you suggest Niamh and Conor do to sort out their rows? (Perhaps role-play their conversation)

Does this situation sound familiar to you?

Feedback responses to main group and discuss any differences of opinion and any similarities.

Conor often pretends to Niamh that he is very experienced and has kissed lots of girls before. Why might he do this?

Should a girl kiss a boy even if she doesn't want to? What could she say and do in such a situation?

How do you think Niamh and Conor felt going home that night?

How do you think they might feel the next morning?

What do you think they told their friends the next day?



## STI's Carousel

**Objectives:** To discuss openly issues of sexual health and sexually transmitted Infections (**STIs**)  
To examine the responsibilities which go along with being sexually active  
To discover sources of support and information in this area

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers, and Question sheet

**Introduction:** Introduce the exercise by explaining that there are many issues relating to sexual health which we all should be aware of. Since the emergence of HIV in the 1980s, there has been less focus on other sexually transmitted infections. As a result of not realising they are vulnerable to them, a large number of young women have contracted these infections. This exercise is for all young women, whether they are sexually active or not as it helps them to understand the responsibilities and risks, which go with being sexually active.

### Method:

In the large group ask the young women to name all the sexually transmitted infections (STIs) which they know of. Write these on a sheet of flipchart paper.

Divide the group into two. Group A is going to ask questions and group B will try to answer them.

Give each member of group A, a question from the Question Sheet.

Give each member of group B the fact sheet and ask them to read this over.

Arrange group B on chairs in a circle in the centre of the room, facing outwards.

Group A makes a circle around group B, so each person in the group is facing someone in group B - this forms the start of your "carousel".

The outside person asks the question which they have been given and the person on the inside answers it, using the fact-sheet they have read and their own knowledge. The two should then discuss this question and answer together.

After a couple of minutes the leader asks all those on the outside to move one space in an anti clockwise direction (this is the carousel turning) so they are facing a new person and repeat the process.

Once the circle of questions is completed, bring the large group together again. In the large group go through the questions one by one, feeding back the discussion from the pairs.

### **Alternative method to the Carousel**

If they are less confident, the girls may find it easier to discuss the questions and the facts in smaller groups instead of being 'put on the spot' to answer the questions on their own. If so, this may be an alternative way of doing the exercise.

Go through the fact sheet in the large group, asking the girls to comment on the issues or add to it what they know. Leave some time for general discussion or questions.

Break the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4 and give each group the set of questions and a copy of the fact-sheet.

Ask the groups to discuss the questions and to come up with answers or advice, using the fact-sheet.

Ask the groups to come back together and discuss the answers in the large group.

## Fact Sheet on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Sexually transmitted infections are common.

In the past few years, the number of STIs has increased by 500%.

Anyone who is sexually active may be exposed to an STI.

Talk to your partner before having sex; be aware of their sexual history. If in doubt, don't do it! Even if you know the person well, use a condom.

Alcohol and drugs may lower your ability to make careful decisions about your sexual behaviour and about using condoms effectively.

Not all sexually transmitted infections cause symptoms and so there is no way of telling if your partner has got one and they may not even know themselves.

Sometimes symptoms of STI's, include spots, warts, bleeding and soreness.

Condoms, when used properly, provide the most reliable means of protection.

Remember that if you think you might have sex, carrying a condom with you and insisting on using it is sensible and responsible behaviour. It shows that you care for yourself and the other person.

Oral sex can be risky sexual behaviour as you may expose yourself to infections from your partner if they have an STI. Using a flavoured condom for oral sex makes it safer.

Many of the major hospitals have STI clinics or you could also go to your local GP or your local Well Woman Centre.

If you have an STI your partner should also be screened and treated if you have had sex.

Many STIs, if untreated, can have serious and lasting effects, including infertility (not being able to have a baby). But if you seek help early, treatment can be simple and effective.

The main types of sexually transmitted infections are the following:

Chlamydia	Genital Herpes
Genital warts	Gonorrhoea
Hepatitis B	HIV and AIDS
Non Specific Urethritis	Trichomonas
Pubic Lice (often called 'crabs')	Syphilis

You can contact your local STI clinic, Well Woman Centre, the IFPA or your local GP for more information or leaflets on each of the specific infections.

## QUESTIONS ON SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

I want to have sex with my boyfriend but I am afraid of getting pregnant or getting some disease, what should I do?

I had sex with a boy I didn't know very well after I had drunk a lot of alcohol and now I'm worried I may have caught something. Do I need to be?

Is oral sex safer than penetration in terms of catching a disease?

Can I get an STI from sex with another woman?

Is anal sex/sex up the back passage safer sex?

I'm afraid of going to my doctor or clinic, as I don't want my parents to know that I've had sex. Will they tell anyone?

My boyfriend told me that he has an STI, which is being treated but that I should go to the clinic to get myself tested. I have no symptoms so I am probably fine, aren't I?

I don't want to get myself checked out because I don't have the money to pay for any treatment I might need. Is there anywhere, which will see me for free?

I want to have safe sex but I'm too embarrassed to buy condoms and I'm not really sure where I can get them and how to use them. What should I do?

Will my friends and boys think I'm 'easy' if I carry condoms when I go out?

## YOUNG WOMEN AND ALCOHOL

**Objectives:** To discuss issues around alcohol and young women  
To learn about alcohol and its effects  
To examine our own attitudes to alcohol and our drinking habits

**Materials:** Flipchart paper, pens

**Introduction:** It may be advisable to do this exercise over two sessions.  
In the first session do the drama piece and a short discussion and follow this with the attitude statements at the second session.

**Method:** Ask the participants to work together to develop a short drama piece which would demonstrate the enjoyable aspects of drinking and also the risks associated with it. If the group is large, divide into groups of about 5 or 6.

Each group should then act out their drama piece to the large group.

After watching the short pieces, have a discussion around how alcohol can alter our behaviour:

Record on flipchart paper the main feedback from the group discussion on the following questions.

In what ways can our behaviour change?

- Are there positive aspects about some of these changes?
- Are there risks associated with these behavioural changes?
- Are there specific risks for young women?
- What role do friends have in our decision to drink/not to drink?
- What are the recommended drinking limits for women.
- What are the effects of binge drinking?
- Is it difficult to choose not to drink?
- What could help us limit our drinking?

Explore the attitudes to drink using the statements on the worksheet. Ask members of the group to state whether they agree or disagree with the statements.

Alternatively, the group could discuss these statements in smaller groups of 3 or 4.

Develop a charter or checklist for safe drinking which could be used by the group or by other young women in the group.

**Suggestions:** Organise a non alcoholic drinks party for the group. Look up recipes and experiment with different juices and soft drinks.

### ***Statements on attitudes to alcohol***

It's alright to get drunk now and again.

Drink makes you more sociable and friendly

Pregnant women should not drink at all

It's more risky for young women to get very drunk than for young men

You are more sexually attractive when you've had a few drinks

It's better to spread out your drinking over a number of days than to 'binge drink'

Alcohol is high in calories

Women get drunk quicker than men do on the same amount of alcohol

Alcohol is a drug

Being drunk is more unattractive in young women than in young men

Peer pressure is the reason why most young people begin to drink

Manufacturers of alcohol should not be allowed to target young people in their products and advertising (e.g. alcopops)

## Fact Sheet on Alcohol for Women

Men have more bodily fluid than women, so alcohol is more diluted in their system

One standard drink contains 10g of pure alcohol, a ½ pint of beer, single measure spirit, or a small glass of wine.

Up to 14 standard drinks a week is considered low risk for women. However this does not apply equally to everyone.

Alcohol a pregnant woman drinks enters the baby's bloodstream

One in three Irish teenagers say that alcohol is a factor in their having sex  
“Demand for emergency contraception has increased in Well Woman Clinic by 60% in the last three years, with heavy alcohol consumption being a huge contributory factor here. We have also seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of women presenting for screening for sexually transmitted infections” Alison Begas, CEO Well Woman Centre.

Alcohol shows up in those tested for drug assisted rape 29 times more often than all other date-rape drugs put together ( UK Figures)

STI's have increased by 165% in the last ten years  
Alcohol consumption surged over the same period. 41% increase over decade  
1991 – 2001

Alcohol is a depressant drug. In large amounts, alcohol can make you feel tearful, depressed or aggressive.

Roughly one drink per hour is a useful guideline as this is the rate at which your liver breaks down alcohol.

Data taken from the “ The Little Book on Women and Alcohol”, Produced by the Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health and Children.

## Exploring Mental Health Issues

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us”. Emerson.

### **Objectives:**

To explore current understandings of mental health and mental illness and identify gaps in the groups' knowledge

To consider the negative connotations related to both the area and language of mental illness

To begin to explore and use the language of mental health and mental illness.

### **Materials**

Flipchart paper, Blue tack, Markers.

Photocopies of the Factsheet on Mental Health Issues /

The language of mental health.

Old Magazines/Newspapers

### **Introduction**

This activity will explore the language used when talking about mental health issues. The leader / youth worker should establish rules about the use of language, and encourage the participants to use the correct terminology explaining that many words related to mental illness can be used in a derogatory way. Stress that the use of language is one way to demystify the area. Make the point that mental health includes a whole range of states: from positive wellbeing through to mental health difficulties (such as feeling sad or unhappy); through to mental health problems and illness as schizophrenia and bipolar mood disorder( manic depression). Although mental health problems are as common as one in five, many people in the community know very little about mental illness.

### **Method**

Divide the group into four's.

Give each a piece of flip chart paper with one of the four terms on it: 'physical health', 'mental health', 'physical illness, and 'mental illness'. Ask the groups to brainstorm on all the words that come to mind when they see their term.

Ask the groups to put the sheets on the walls for all the groups to see and one person from each group should act as a rapputeour.

Encourage the group to look for:

Common themes that have cropped up, any stereotyping.

Ask them to consider what they have noticed about the type of words used on each sheet.



**Suggestion:**

Ask the group to investigate the language used in magazines and newspapers describing mental health illness.

## **Mental Illness The Facts**

Mental illness is a general term that refers to a group of illness, in the same way that heart disease refers to a group of illnesses affecting the heart.

Episodes of a mental illness can come and go in periods through peoples' lives. Some people experience their illness only once and fully recover. For others, it recurs through their lives.

Most mental illness can be effectively treated.

Stress may trigger mental illnesses or may prolong episodes.

Mental illnesses can be separated into two main categories: psychotic and non psychotic.

Psychotic illness is a condition caused by any one of a group of illness that are known, or though, to affect the brain causing changes in thinking, emotion and behaviour. People experiencing an acute stage of a psychotic illness may lose touch with reality. Their ability to make sense of thought, feelings and external information is seriously affected, and they may become very frightened.

### **Non-psychotic disorders**

An on-going pattern of inner experience and behaviours which deviates markedly from more common social norms and cultural expectations and leads to significant distress and / or impairment. This can include uncontrollable or exaggerated feelings of depression, sadness, tension or fear. These disorders include phobias, anxiety, some forms of depression and obsessive compulsive disorder.

## **The Language of Mental Illness**

### **Bipolar mood disorder (previously called manic depression)**

A specific mental illness which results in swings of mood between highs and low of emotion.

### **Clinical Diagnosis**

A decision about what mental illness a person has, based on scientific and medical information.

### **Delusion**

A mistaken belief that is strongly held even when there is evidence or proof that the belief is incorrect, for example, a false belief of being famous, highly important, being persecuted, followed, or spied upon.

### **Depression**

At its most sever, a mental illness associated with biological and chemical imbalances of the brain and resulting in long lasting feelings of deep anxiety and unhappiness, poor sleep, loss of interest, energy, enjoyment and appetite.

### **Episodic**

Many mental illnesses come and go. Some people may have only one experience (or episode) of mental illness and recover fully. Other people have periods of being ill and periods of being well. Some people recover: others learn to live with and manage their mental illness.

### Grieving process

The process of experiencing a loss. This may include periods of sadness, anger, despair and possibly depression.

### Hallucinations

Hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting or feeling things that are not there.

### Medication

Medication can relieve the symptoms of mental illness, and may help prevent mental illness recurring.

### Paranoia

Mistaken beliefs or delusions that include fear, suspicion of others and a feeling of being got at, for example, people trying to kill, hurt, or poison you.

### Predisposition

A susceptibility to mental illness because of a pre-existing factor like family history.

### Psychological treatment

These are treatments such as counselling and therapy that deal with the underlying reasons for depression and other mental illnesses. These treatments may include talking about reactions to life events, and developing better ways to deal with stress, correcting negative patterns and learning new ways to deal with negative feelings.

### Schizophrenia

A group of specific mental illness, where disorder of the brain causes people to lose touch with reality. It has nothing to do with long held idea of split personality. For a person with schizophrenia the major symptom is a loss of reality. The disease takes them into another world. Hallucinations and delusions are common.

### Treatment

An action or intervention designed to decrease they symptoms or impact of a mental illness. Since a mental illness may be the result of psychological factors and changes in brain chemistry, treatment can involve both medication and psychological treatments.

## Addiction

**Objectives:** To increase our understanding what we mean by addiction  
To explore various addictions and their consequences  
To become more aware of how people are affected by addiction

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers, and copies of the role-play.

Addiction, also known as dependency refers to a stage where a person feels a compulsion to become addicted believes that they cannot cope physically and / or psychologically without their habit.

Addiction is a gradual process. Many people do not notice their increasing dependence and the effect it may have on their own lives and on the lives of those close to them. As addictions increase, other important things in their lives begin to change, for example, the amount of time spent at home, with family, the level of interest in work, hobbies, friends.

**Introduction:** When we hear the word addiction, we often think of the typical image such as the alcoholic in the pub or someone injecting drugs. However, there are many different types of addictions and in this exercise, which we will examine some of these including some we may not have been aware of. We will also consider consequences of addictions.  
In this exercise, be sensitive to the fact that some girls will have members of their families who may have an addiction, for example to alcohol or drugs.

**Method:** The group members sit in a circle with a large sheet of paper in the centre.  
Write the word 'Addiction' in the middle of the sheet of paper and encourage the young women to write down all the different types of addictions they know of.  
  
Ask the group "What do we mean by addiction"?  
Brainstorm and try to agree on a definition of the term.  
  
Divide the group into smaller groups of 4 or 5.  
Give each group two problems from the "Dilemmas" worksheet.  
Ask them to discuss these and to write a response to the problem.  
Back in the large group, feedback the discussion and the responses.

### **Questions for Discussion:**

What are the particular types of addiction, which mostly affect women?  
Why might people become addicted?

Why are some types of addiction punished and some not?  
What defines an addiction?  
How can an addiction be overcome?  
How do you think it would feel to be addicted to a substance?  
How do you think it would affect others around you?  
What are people's reactions to addictions?  
What can some of the consequences of addictions be?

***Suggestions:***

Invite visitors from organisations dealing with particular addictions to visit the group and talk about their work.

Suggest that group members should try not to drink alcohol/drink coffee/eat chocolates or sweets for an agreed length of time. Afterwards discuss the effects of this – which may be emotional (e.g. a sense of deprivation, a lack of comfort) or physical (e.g. headaches as a result of caffeine withdrawal).

## Role-plays for Addiction

- It's Saturday morning and you are lying in bed with a horrible headache and a sick stomach. You notice a scarf which is not yours, and you don't know where you got it. As usual you spent last night down in the pub with your friends, spending about half your pay. You were very drunk and don't remember how you got home. You had wanted to buy a birthday present this week too but now can't afford it. Nothing seems to work out for you.
- You and your friend Helen are over at her place, listening to music, chatting and making plans for a shopping spree on Saturday. Helen goes into the bathroom and you hear her being sick – it is not the first time, especially if she has been snacking. When you're out shopping on Saturday, you see that Helen is really very thin and you notice that she keeps on dieting and saying how fat she is.
- You're living with two of your sisters in a flat in the city. All of you are working and you share the bills, space, rent, food, electricity and gas. But whenever a bill arrives one of your sisters never has the money to pay her share, and the money you all put in a kitty for the food is often gone two days later. Yet this sister has loads of clothes, she spends all her money in town on Saturday. Every time she goes out, she comes home with something new.
- You come home one evening and find your mother has fallen asleep in a chair in the living room. This is not the first time and you're getting fed up – because she's always moaning about how tired she is. The doctor gave her some pills again last week, but you know that these don't make her any better and she goes back for a repeat prescription very often. Every time she goes back, she seems to get pills that are stronger than the previous ones.

## How to say "no"

**Objectives:** To promote an understanding of our right to control our lives  
To increase our awareness of how to respond assertively  
To explore situations in which it is difficult to be assertive.

**Materials:** Coloured pencils, old magazines, scissors, glue, large sheets of paper, markers. Optional but not essential: video recorder / dvd machine and video tape / dvd.

**Introduction:** Assertive behaviour is based on equality and involves having respect for yourself and others. It also involves saying what you want or would prefer, in a confident, clear, honest and direct manner which is neither intimidating or threatening. This is about asserting your rights without infringing on or violating the rights of others. Assertiveness is an important communication skill which, when used appropriately, can help us all in our relationships and also help us maintain mental well being.

Non – Assertive (Passive) Behaviour this involves hoping that you will get what you want by perhaps leaving it to chance or to others to realise what it is that you want, be a mind reader.

Aggressive behaviour trying to get our own way in any way that works. It may include not respecting the rights of others, using verbal or physical abuse, threatening and manipulating others.

**Method:** In the group, show clips of a video, film, or television programme which the participants may be familiar with. This should show an incident of where a young women is in a situation that is making her feel uncomfortable either in the work place, school or at home.

Alternatively you could show a photo or read an article from a newspaper or a letter from a problem page in a magazine.

Discuss with the group:

- What is happening in this situation?
- What are the feelings of the people involved?
- Why did the woman not say no/not defend herself? (choose whichever is appropriate)
- What could have been done instead?

Discuss these responses and feed them back to the large group. Focus within the discussion on how we can improve our ability to say "no", to stand up for ourselves and to become more assertive.

Brainstorm all the different reasons, which they think, stop us from saying "no" when we want to

Based on the group members' ideas, design a poster, which would encourage women to say "No" when they mean "No". These could then be exhibited in the group room.

**Questions for Discussion:**

- How do you feel when you are not assertive?
- Why do you sometimes find it difficult to be assertive?
- What do you imagine is the reason for this?
- What do you need to learn to become more assertive?

**Suggestions:**

If the group know each other well, you could ask them if they can give an example of a situation when they said "Yes" when they wanted to say "No".

Do this exercise in conjunction with the exercise on Assertiveness in the section on "Mental Health".

**SKILLS FOR BEING ASSERTIVE**

1. Make your decision
2. Be clear about what you want to do
3. Express this clearly and confidently
4. Give your reason(s) if you want to
5. Be specific
6. Use the appropriate tone of voice
7. Look at the person directly, make eye contact
8. Use appropriate facial expression and body language



## The Right to be Safe

**Objectives:** To think about how we would respond in certain situations, through role-plays  
To encourage us to use our bodies in self defence

**Materials:** Copy of handout on "The Right to be Safe"

**Introduction:** Although there are numerous reports every day about incidents of violence in the home, at work, in public, at schools / colleges, on public transport. There are many women who have successfully managed to escape a serious unpleasant encounter.

In recent years, there has been a lot of emphasis and awareness-raising on the issue of self-defence and protection. In this exercise we will look at some potentially dangerous situations in which women may find themselves. We will also discuss practical ways in which we can defend ourselves and ensure we reduce risk and stay safe.

Remember there may be group members who have experienced or witnessed violence in their families or in a relationship.

**Method:** Divide the large group into smaller groups of three or four.  
Ask each group to devise a role-play of a situation where there is an incident of violence or harassment.  
Give some examples such as two young women having an argument which turns into a physical fight, a women walking past a group of men who whistle at her, two men fighting over a woman at a disco, a young woman being harassed and threatened, a mugging or a robbery. Allow about 15 minutes for this.

Come back and perform each of the role-plays for the group.

Discuss in the group:  
Were the situations depicted similar to real ones?  
If the participants experienced a similar encounter, what do they think they might feel or do?  
Discuss how the young women can make themselves safe.

Next, give a copy of the handout, "The Right to be Safe" to each group member and give them some time to look over this.  
Go over the handout together and add any suggestions you have.

**Suggestions:** At the next session, the group could design a poster or leaflet with all these ideas on how to stay safe on it. They could then explore how they might be able to produce this to share with other girls' groups.

## **Handout on The right to be safe**

We often hear news of muggings, robberies, attacks and murders. However, there are also many success stories, where women do manage to resist and escape potentially lethal assaults. Doing nothing is also risk taking. These are the result of women taking care of themselves and using some practical ideas on how to stay safe, by developing personal safety skills and strategies. Encourage the participants to include their own ideas.

### **General precautions**

- When walking alone, keep a set of keys in your hand to use as a 'knuckle-duster' if you have to defend yourself
- Don't be afraid to use your voice, shout out and scream
- Walk purposefully
- If somebody is following you, go straight to a public place where there are other people or talk to a person near you and explain what is happening
- Avoid being out alone if you have had something to drink or are upset. This could affect your alertness and ability to respond
- If stopped on the street, walk in the opposite direction if you feel threatened.
- Be aware of what you are carrying in your handbag/schoolbag, which you could use to protect yourself, e.g. perfume, hairspray or a long handled comb
- Never be afraid of offending someone or appearing rude, your safety is the most important thing
- If you have a sense something is wrong or someone is behaving oddly towards you, trust your instincts and act on them
- Avoid danger spots, car parks, alley ways, deserted buildings, waste ground and do not take shortcuts across badly lit lonely areas
- Always have some extra money to help you get home in a crisis
- Never take a lift from a stranger, no matter how cold or exhausted you are
- Wearing a personal stereo / CD players means you can not hear someone approaching you
- Mobile phones occasionally do not work, so do not rely on them
- Keep a watchful eye on your drink in clubs and pubs

### **The place where you live**

- Have secure locks on windows and doors.
- Have lights on in the house and as you approach it.
- Keep your keys secure.
- Don't invite in strangers

- Get to know your neighbours so you can ask for help from those you particularly trust.

### **If you are being physically attacked protect yourself by:**

- Raising attention using your voice and shouting for help.
- Hitting, pushing, scratching and biting.
- Stamping on your attacker's feet.
- Kicking your attacker's shins.
- Using any personal belongings you might have to hit with, for example keys.
- Spraying hairspray or perfume in your attacker's face.
- Protect yourself first and foremost – if you are carrying anything, drop it if you have to run.
- Don't worry about hurting the other person – it's your safety, which counts.

### **If you do get attacked:**

Your reaction may well be emotional, physical or psychological or all three. You may feel numb, angry, depressed, guilty, fearful, sad, and helpless. These feelings are quite usual and normal in such a situation.

With the proper support and time to deal with these feelings, you can completely recover from a personal attack.

### **What you should do:**

Talk to someone as soon as possible – for example a relative, friend, youth worker, doctor or teacher.

You may want to report it to the police. If you need to go to the hospital or to the police – take a friend or trusted adult with you for support.

Talk to someone in a support agency such as a Victim Support Group, Rape Crisis Centre or Women's Aid

Useful website address

[www.drc.ie](http://www.drc.ie)

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

[www.victimsupport.ie](http://www.victimsupport.ie)

Victim Support Ireland

[www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)

Women's Aid

[www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

Barnardos

[www.iccl.ie](http://www.iccl.ie)

Irish Council for Civil Liberties

[www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)

Suzy Lamplugh Trust

## Promoting Health

- Objectives:** To encourage the use of creativity to lead a healthy lifestyle  
To understand how visual images can work well at getting a message across
- Materials:** Drawing paper, paints, crayons and markers
- Introduction:** The theme of this exercise is to design a poster, which will represent what living a healthy lifestyle would look like.  
Bring in a collection of magazines and brochures, some on health-related issues and other general ones. Spread these on the table or floor and give the young women time to look through them.
- Method:** Each person chooses an issue relating to being healthy or promoting health (for example stopping smoking, exercise, nutrition, sport, stress free lifestyle or relaxation).
- Design and create a poster – girls might want to use their own drawings, painting or writing or use images and collages taken from the magazines. Encourage the creative use of various materials, colours, design and layouts.
- Exhibit the posters in the room.
- Question for Discussion:**  
What message are the posters portraying?  
Would these posters change your mind and help you make healthier choices? And if not, what else might?
- Suggestions:** Have a public exhibition of the posters.  
Invite people from health education or health promotion to speak to your group and ask them to bring other examples of health promotion posters.  
Use the posters as part of a health promotion week organised by your group.

## Being Healthy

**Objectives:** To define what we mean by 'being healthy'

To explore the factors that affect health

**Materials:** Flipchart, pens, markers, and worksheets

**Introduction:** The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health "as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity".

Factors that affect our health include:

Our genetic make up, gender, family, religion, culture, friends, income, the media, advertising, social life, social class, race, age, ethnicity, employment status, sexuality, disability, working conditions, health services, self esteem, self confidence, access to leisure facilities and shops, housing, education, food and diet.

**Question:** **What affects your health?**

The aim of the circle exercise is to identify factors, which affect women's health. This exercise can be done individually or in pairs or in a group.

**Method:**

Inform the participants that they are at the centre of the rings. In the inner ring the youth worker / leader should ask them to write the factors, which influence their health concerning them as an individual.

In the second ring ask the participants to write in factors which influence their health –concerning their immediate social and physical environment.

In the outer ring identify factors which influence their health –concerning the wider social, political and physical environment.

## Work Sheet

\_\_\_ Outer Ring   SecondRing   Inner Ring You

**Make worksheet bigger. Circles bigger**

Issues for discussion: Taking one circle at a time, consider and discuss:

- What led you to put the factors in the circle?
- How do these factors influence our health – positively or negatively?
- Which factors do you think are the most important?
- Are there factors, which you have not identified for yourself, but which may be important for other young women?
- And finally, after this discussion are there any factors which you would move into another circle?

## Healthy Me

**Objectives:** To help participants reflect on their assumptions, thoughts and feelings about the connection between being happy and healthy  
To explore and identify what enables them to feel good and healthy

**Materials:** Art material, Pens, Paints, and Markers

**Introduction:** Positive health is associated with a capacity to enjoy health and to withstand challenge, it is not merely an absence of disease.

**Method:** Using the work sheet encourage the young women to identify the words that they believe best describe themselves. Use coloured pens.

Ask them to focus on what makes them happy. Then explore what are the issues that make them sad.

Ask them to consider what being happy feels like both physically and mentally. For example when they are happy do they feel healthier, more energetic or make better decisions.

Using art materials and paper, ask the group members to draw or colour an image, which conveys what they are like when they are happy.

### Discussion Points:

How did you find trying to imagine happiness?

What feelings did it bring up?

Do more things make you happier in your life than sad?

What did you learn about being healthy and happy?

Did you have any difficulties in imagining happiness?

Is there a first practical and realistic step you could take to increasing your sense of happiness and good health?



## Happy and Healthy

Feeling good  
Good sense of humour  
Ugly  
Energetic  
Given up  
Can ask for help  
Moody  
Amazing  
Understanding  
Invisible  
Full of life  
Angry  
Good listener  
Feel different  
Awkward  
Rude  
Dangerous  
Reckless  
Confident  
Not Liked  
Bored  
Can't be bothered  
Optimistic  
Aggressive  
Supportive  
Fun  
Laughing  
Friends  
Unattractive  
Helpful  
Likeable  
Ungrateful  
Trustworthy  
Unloved  
Clever  
Kind  
Honest  
Stressed  
Strong  
Don't fit in  
Distant  
Bored  
Attractive

# **Section Three**

## **My Life My Future**

**Introduction**

**What is education?**

**A Part to Play**

**Options after school**

**Are you ready?**

**What is work?**

**Superwoman**

**What are my rights?**

**Money, Money, Money**

**My Ideal Job**

**Women work / Men Work**

## INTRODUCTION

### MY LIFE, MY FUTURE

Throughout our lives we all work in different capacities and through this work we contribute to our families, our society and the wider world. Some of this work is paid and some is not. The pattern of work in Ireland has changed greatly over the past number of years with a larger number of women now remaining in paid employment for longer periods of their lives. Working arrangements have become more flexible, including more part time work, job sharing and short term, contract work. This has benefited the country and succeeded in bringing more people into the workforce. It has particularly benefited women, who can now opt for working in a way, which complements family responsibilities, as it is mainly women who are the primary care givers.

Work is an important part of our lives, whether it is paid or unpaid. It can be challenging, fulfilling and help us to develop our skills in many directions. In Ireland today, well over one-third of women are in paid employment and many others are working at home, child rearing, caring for elderly relatives at home and so on. Recent figures, however, indicate that on average, women still currently earn 15% less than men.<sup>1</sup> Much of the work in which women are involved, for example, housework, childcare and other caring - is unrecognised and unquantifiable.

For some young women, the prospects of accessing third level education and obtaining a job are better now than they were 20 years ago. However, for others there are still barriers to completing school and getting into the workforce. Factors such as childcare responsibilities and lack of training opportunities keep many young women from gaining the work experience necessary to develop a career.

The estimated spend in Ireland on childcare is approximately 20% of annual income, compared to an average of 8% in the EU.<sup>2</sup>

Despite recent economic growth, the figures for those living in poverty in Ireland are still high and include a disproportionate number of women, particularly single women with young children.

Lack of childcare facilities and financial support to pay for childcare are among the most significant barriers to women's participation in employment, education and training, which are the major routes out of poverty. More than half of those earning below the minimum wage are women. Lone parents are consistently at high risk of poverty, and this is getting worse. For example in 1994 32% of lone parents were below the 60% poverty line and by 2000 this had increased to 46.7%.<sup>3</sup> Women in Ireland are absent from powerful positions, illustrated by the fact that there is only one female chief executive among Ireland's 50 top companies. Within the university sector, while 21% of the academic staff are women, only 4% of professorships. Less than 3% of the top executives in Ireland are women.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ICTU 2004

<sup>2</sup> ERSI 2004

<sup>3</sup> Combat Poverty 2004

<sup>4</sup> Putting Women in the Picture. Jobs for the Boys NWC1 2003

In this section of the resource pack, we aim to give young women an opportunity to explore their options after school and to choose a career which will be challenging and fulfilling. We also examine the fact that women's work often goes unnoticed or is under valued. We highlight some of the stereotypes around particular jobs and encourage young women to challenge these and explore options, which they may not have previously considered.

Finally, we address the issue of finance and young women, the importance of saving, the value of money and how to budget. For many young women, their first experience of budgeting and prioritising how they spend their money comes when they get their first part-time job. It is important to be aware of the many options for saving and managing money and to make a decision as to which option is the most suited to the individual needs of the young women. For example, many people are not aware of the benefits of a credit union, a bank or a post office and it is useful to understand how each of these work.

## What is Education?

“To educate is to believe in change”. Paulo Freire

**Objectives:** To introduce the topic of education  
To recognise and consider the many different aspects of education  
To reflect on how we are educated at home

**Materials:** Flipchart paper, markers, and copies of worksheet and pens.

**Introduction:** Begin the exercise by explaining the importance of education in our lives, for example, as a means of passing on information, norms, knowledge and culture, teaching us skills, developing attitudes and generally preparing us for life. This exercise also looks at how we learn informally in our families and at home and how this prepares us for formal education.

**Education as defined in the dictionary simply states “ the activities that impart knowledge or skill”.**

**Method:** In the large group, brainstorm the word "education". What understanding do they have of the term education?  
Brainstorm all the positive and negative aspects of education on a flipcharts  
Discuss the findings and ask the group –"who is educating us?"  
Have a general discussion about education.

Introduce the idea that education is an on-going process and takes place in a whole range of life-settings, not just within the formal education sector.

Proceed to the next section by referring to the education, which we receive informally at home.

Give everybody a copy of the worksheet to fill in individually. Allow 10 – 15 minutes.

In groups of 4 – 5 discuss the responses.

### Questions for Discussion:

Are there different types of teaching and learning?

What are the differences between how you learn at home and how you learn in school?

### Questionnaire for What is Education?

- Who was most involved in your education at home?
- What did you learn from your mother (including adopted /foster and stepmothers)?
- What did you learn from your father (including adopted /foster and stepfathers/grandfather)?
- Who taught you the most?
- If you have any, were your brothers taught different things?
- Were they taught differently?
- If you did something wrong, what happened?
- If you did something right, what happened?
- What do you think you learned at home?
- What would you like to have learned?
- What was good about how you learned at home?
- What was bad about how you learned at home?
- If you have children, what would you do differently?
- What is the difference between what you learned at home and what you learned in school?

## A Part to Play

**Objectives:** To explore the education system and how it meets people's needs.  
To develop skills of co-operation and participation in decision making at school and club level.

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers, paper, pens.

**Introduction:** Even in these days of supposed equality, we can still see discrimination in society mirrored in the education system. This is sometimes evident for example in subject choice, expectations of pupils, contents of books, language used and who gets more attention in the classroom or club, where you live, resources in the school or club and how decisions are made? This exercise will let the participants explore who really makes the decisions and how they can have a role in this process.

**Method:** Ask the participants to go into pairs and the activity will be to review how decisions are made in their school or club.

In pairs take a note of:

- Who decided what is taught or what activities will be arranged?
- How is the school or club administrated?
- How are budgetary and spending decisions made?
- How are policies developed and agreed?
- How much say do young people have?

Ask each of the pairs to combine to make small groups of four people. Ask each group to consider the positive and negative aspects of having a democratically elected body to make decisions about their education at the local level. Such a body might be a student council in a school or a board in a youth club or youth organisation.

If your group already has a council or a board, then they should review how it operates and develop plans for it to function more effectively. If there is no council or board then the group should decide what type of council they would like and to consider how they could establish one.

Some questions to bear in mind for the council or board:  
What would the ethos of the council be?  
Is it truly representative of young people?  
How would decision be reached?  
Does it recognise the diversity of young people?  
Is it gender balanced?

## Options After School

**Objectives:** To examine the options open to us after school

To increase our understanding as to what influences our decisions and options

**Materials:** Flipchart paper, markers, pens, magazines, glue, scissors and newspaper.

**Introduction:** Many of our life choices are influenced by our experiences at school, the expectations of our family, teachers, peers and finance. These choices include decisions about leaving school, what exams to take, what courses and jobs to apply for.

**Method:** Leave newspapers, magazines, photos, scissors, glue and markers in the middle of the floor.

Ask everyone to make a collage of what they would like to do over the next 5 years – e.g. travel, study, work - using the materials provided. Or they can do this by filling in the worksheet supplied.

Bring the group together and encourage a discussion on their collage, aspirations and ambitions at a level comfortable to the group.

#### **Questions for Discussion**

If you had completed this collage 3 years (or 5 years) ago, how different would it have been? Why?

What might it be like in 5 years time?

What do you think has influenced you in your choice and options?

What can people do to achieve their goals?

Do all young people have the same choices open to them?

How are our choices influenced by where we come from?



## Worksheet for Options after School

ME

## Are you ready?

**Objectives:** To identify the type of work people would like to do or the lifestyle they would like to have  
To plan for what is needed to achieve this  
To recognise the obstacles to this plan  
To find ways of overcoming these obstacles

**Materials:** Paper, pens and copies of the worksheet for everybody

**Introduction:** Our work options and choices are often determined by the decisions we make at school. To take greater control over our futures, it is therefore a good idea to plan ahead, see what we can do now to achieve our hopes for the future and begin working towards these.

**Method:** Each person thinks of two options of types of work/lifestyle she'd like for herself.

Then working back from this, consider:

What qualifications, experience, references does she need? What subjects/part-time work/summer work could help? What is required of her personally to achieve this plan?

Share these plans with the group.

As a way of encouraging people to put their plans into effect, discuss the subjects, training and experience each person needs to achieve on these goals.

### Questions for Discussion:

What are the obstacles to achieving your plan?  
How could you overcome these?  
What might help you achieve your plan?  
Do you need more information or support?  
Where can you get this?

### Suggestions:

Within your programme continue to encourage the group members with their goals in terms of confidence building and skills development.

As an option, encourage the young women to make a personal contract for achieving these goals.

## **Worksheet for Are you Ready?**

### Work Sheet

#### **More space in the lay out.**

1st Choice    2nd Choice

Options of Work

Education/skills

Qualifications required

What am I doing now to help me achieve my goals?

What skills/experiences do I have already?

What do I need to include in my plan?

What personal qualities do I need to achieve my plan?

What steps do I need to take to work towards achieving my plan?

What help and support will I need and where can I get this?

## What is Work?

**Objectives:** To define what we mean by work  
To explore the notion that there are different work patterns such as part-time, contract, voluntary, domestic, caring and temporary work  
To assess the advantages and disadvantages of these

**Materials:** Flipchart, pens, markers, worksheets

**Introduction:** Do we all mean the same thing when we talk about work?  
What does work mean for us? What do we understand by paid, unpaid, working from home, full/part-time, contract, self-employed, job-sharing, seasonal work, FAS schemes, co-operative work? What do we mean by “job satisfaction”?

**Work: “An activity directed towards making or doing something. The occupation for which you are paid for”.**

**Method: Part A** Break the large group into smaller groups and ask each group to come up with a definition for the word work.  
Take feedback from small groups and discuss.  
Present formal definition for comparison.  
Brainstorm the different work patterns in the large group. List one advantage and disadvantage of each.  
Discuss the following questions as guidelines if necessary.

### Questions for Discussion:

- What is the most important factor in defining work?
- Is it being paid?
- What is your ideal working arrangement?
- Are there enough employment and work opportunities for everyone?
- How do you think you would feel if you were made redundant or became unemployed?
- Can you imagine a world without work?
- What do you want from a job?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of working?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of not working?

**Method: Part B** Introduce this part of the exercise by stating that work forms part of our identity and affects our everyday lives.

Give out copies of the worksheet "Identity Chart" and ask each person to fill it in individually.

In small groups, share what each person wrote on their charts.

### Questions for Discussion:

How does work influence us?

Which of the areas of the worksheet are most important- why?  
Typically what sectors do women work in? **Need a Graphic**  
Are there differences in terms of their pay and job security?

# Worksheet

## What is work?

Identity Chart

How does work influence parts of our life and identity?

**Graphics of** House/ Apartment / Family / Bank / Office / School / Desk / Money / Holiday / Books / Clothes / Car / Health / Happiness / Children / Doctor / Sport / Gym / Bicycle / Group of Friends / Networking / Staff Meeting / Clothes / Books / Music / Art

## Fact Sheet on Employment Rights

Many young people take up part time jobs during school term or during summer holidays. In Ireland there is legislation in place to ensure that young people are treated fairly by employers. Under the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1996; if you are under 14 you are generally not allowed to work. People aged under 16 may not hold a regular full time job and there are strict limits on the number of part time hours they can work. These are set out in the table below.

### Age and Hour Limit

Age	Under 14	Aged 14	Aged 15
School Term: Hours Per Week	Nil	Nil	8 Hours
Holiday Work: Hours Per Week	Nil	35 hours (7 per day)	35 Hours ( 7 per day)
Daily rest Break	Nil	14 Consecutive Hours	14 Consecutive Hours
Weekly Rest Break	Nil	2 days (consecutive as far as practicable)	2 days (consecutive as far as practicable)

During the summer holidays, 14 and 15 year olds are entitled to time off work for a period of at least 21 days.

For those aged 16 or 17 the maximum working day is 8 hours and the maximum working week is 40 hours. They are also entitled to 12 consecutive hours off per day and 2 days off per week, as far as possible to be consecutive.

There are also limits on night and early morning work. Under 16s may not be required to work before 8am in the morning and after 8pm at night. These restrictions and those relating to 16 and 17 year olds are given in the table below.

Age	14 or 15	16 or 17
Early Morning	After 8am	After 6am
Night work (With school the next morning)	Up to 8pm	Up to 10pm
Night Work (With no school the next morning)	Up to 8pm	Up to 11am

There are limited exceptions to the above rules relating to young people regarding employment in cultural, artistic, sports or advertising activities for which employers have to obtain a licence from the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. During the school work experience schemes, 14 and 15 year olds are allowed to work a maximum of 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week.

For further information you can contact the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Labour Relations Commission and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

## Superwoman

- Objectives:** To examine the many different activities and skills which make up a woman's average day.
- Materials:** Flipchart paper, pens, markers and paints.
- Introduction:** Many women seem to be able to juggle numerous jobs in their everyday lives. Caring for children, partners and other relatives, housework, paid work, voluntary activities in the community and so on. In this exercise we look at what is involved and how they do it.
- Method:** Brainstorm ideas among the group members on what is entailed in a day in the life of a typical woman.
- In groups of three, design a poster depicting the average day of a woman's life e.g. working in the home, full-time paid worker, minding children.
- Introduce each poster to the larger group.
- Cost the work the woman carries out in a day to establish how much this would be worth in the job market.  
Identify how much of the work is actually paid?  
What does this tell us about how women's work is valued?  
What could be done to change this?



## RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

- Objectives:**
- To learn about our rights
  - To increase our understanding of the responsibilities that come with our rights
  - To be able to identify when our rights are not being respected
- Materials:**
- 6 sheets of flipchart paper, 1 marked '16', 1 marked '17', 1 marked '18' etc. up to 21. This is their ages.
- Method:**
- The leader explains that as we grow up and get older we are entitled to do different things such as drive a car and vote. These entitlements are based on national laws and they may differ from country to country.
- In Ireland, in previous years, women were often discriminated against and their entitlements were different to those of men.
- Pin the flipchart pages with the various ages on them around the room. Using the fact sheet on the following page, call out an entitlement such as 'the age at which you can vote' and ask participants to move to the piece of paper which says the age at which you can do this in Ireland. Continue this using four or five more examples.
- Hand out copies of the worksheets to participants and divide the group into groups of 4/5. Ask each group to discuss the fact sheets using the following questions:
- Do you think these entitlements are good?
  - Would you change any of them? If so, which ones?
  - Do you think that there is also a responsibility attached to each of these entitlements? Give an example for each entitlement.
  - Do you know which of these entitlements have changed over the years? (For example voting for women, age at which you can marry)
  - Do you know of any differences between the entitlements in Ireland and in other countries? (For example 21 is the legal age to drink alcohol in USA, 16 to have sexual intercourse in Sweden).
- Ask the groups to come back together and to give feedback on each small group's discussion.
- Ask the group whether there are entitlements, which are of particular importance to girls and young women?
- Ask participants whether there are changes that could be made in society in order to ensure that young women have fair entitlements.

## Fact Sheet on Rights

- To be legally entitled to marry, both of you must be over 18 years of age.
- Every citizen in Ireland between the ages of 18 and 70 years is eligible for jury service.

There are some exceptions.

- To be eligible for membership of the Dáil:
- You must be a citizen of Ireland
- You must be over 21 years of age
- You are eligible to vote in all elections at 18.
- You may obtain a provisional licence for a car at 17 and a motorcycle at 16.
- You can work part time from the age of 14.
- Attendance at post primary is compulsory for students who are under 15.
- You must be 18 before you can consume alcohol.

## MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!

**Objectives:** To raise issues of finance and budgeting with group members.  
To give some useful information on finance issues  
To examine spending priorities

**Materials:** Copies of the worksheet, copies of information sheet, large sheets of paper with the names of types of financial institutions on them (e.g. credit union, bank and post office)

### Insert Small Graphic

**Introduction:** Introduce the exercise by saying that we all need to understand about budgeting and planning our finances. This is particularly true when we begin to earn our own money from something like a part time job or babysitting.

Remember that some young women or their families may have got into debt. In addition, the issue of credit cards, hire purchase and catalogue buying may have raised problems for some of the group. Included on the information sheet is information on the Money Advice and Budgeting Service – MABS, which is a free and confidential money management service.

**Method:** **A)** Give participants the worksheet and ask them to complete them individually  
In pairs, compare the worksheets.

Come back into the large group and discuss the issues raised in the worksheets using the following questions:

- What do you spend most of your money on?
- Roughly what percentage of your money do you spend on this?
- Do you save money? If so, for what?
- When you get money for a week/month, do you plan how to spend it?
- If you do (or would like to) save money, where would you put it and how would you choose?

**B)** Put flipchart sheets up around the room, each with the name of a financial institution written on it: Credit Union, Bank, Post Office, Building Society, etc

Ask participants to write on the relevant sheet what they know about each of these. Give examples such as

- their opening hours,
- how to get a loan,
- how to take out money when you need it,
- what is good about each place etc?

Hand out the information sheet on these institutions.

**C)** Divide the group into small groups of three. Give each group the following task.

You have 80 euros for the week. Out of that you have to cook a meal for 4 people buy clothes and go out on Saturday night and maybe you want to save too. Devise a budget for the week.

## WORKSHEET FOR MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!

Demonstrate how you spend your money by dividing the circle below into segments indicating all the things you spend money on. Give a segment each to clothes, going out, music/books/videos, rent, savings and holidays.

The biggest segment will be the thing you spend most of your money on and the smallest one is the one you spend least on.

## **FACT SHEET ON SOME SAVINGS OPTIONS**

### **Post Office**

Post offices have a range of savings options for everyone and post offices are located in most towns and cities in Ireland – there are 1,400 Post Office Savings Bank branches nation-wide. If you want to open a deposit account with the post office, you can ask for an application form in any post office or you can download the form from the Web. Complete the form and hand it in at the counter. You must have appropriate identification with you and then you will receive your savings book. To withdraw money you can go to any of the 1,400 Post Office Savings Bank branches nation-wide, subject to appropriate identification. Interest is paid on savings and you should check the Interest Rates Board for information on current interest rates.

Other saving options in the Post Office include savings certificates, savings bonds, prize bonds and instalment savings.

### **Banks**

There are a large number of banks and a wide range of savings options. Each of the banks has a personal savings plan and to open one you have to complete an application form and present identification (passport or driving license). Banks now have a facility for internet banking where you can keep track of your savings. Check out if there is a charge for this facility from your bank.

### **Credit Unions**

A Credit Union is an organisation of people that save together and lend to each other at an affordable rate of interest. It is owned by and exists solely to serve its members and is run by volunteers to represent members' interests. Each member has an equal say in the running of the credit union, irrespective of how much savings you have. There are over 530 Credit Unions in operation throughout Ireland. Most credit unions in Ireland are affiliated to the Irish League of Credit Unions and adopt the same set of operating principles with core values of equality, equity and mutual self-help.

Members receive a dividend (annual return) each year on savings of up to 12,697euro. Each share or saving you hold for that year is eligible for a dividend and the more shares you have, the greater the dividend you will receive. Your savings and the savings of other members are used to make loans to you and other members of the credit union. There are a number of savings accounts that can be held, although not all are in operation at every credit union. A savings plan can be worked out to help you build up substantial savings. Savings are easily accessible unless they are pledged as security on a loan.

Everyone is entitled to become a member of a credit union but must have something in common with fellow members – they must either live or work in the same locality (community bond), work for the same employer (occupational bond) or work in the same occupation (association bond). Once you are within the common bond you can apply for membership in your designated credit union. There is an entrance fee of 1.27 Euro to become a member and you will also need to hold a minimum of savings (shares) between 1 Euro and 10 Euro.

### **Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS)**

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free and confidential service for people in Ireland with debt problems and money management problems. There are 52 MABS offices in Ireland, staffed by trained Money Advisers and their role is to:

- Help individuals deal with debts and make out a budget.
- Examine the individual's income to make sure they are not missing out on any entitlements.
- Contact the creditors on behalf of the individual and offer payment if the individual is unable to do so themselves.
- Help the individual to decide on the best way to make the payments.

The MABS service provides free advice, assistance and information. All contacts with MABS are in strictest confidence.

You can contact MABS directly by phone, by letter or by calling in person. Many MABS offices have an outreach service that means that you may not have to travel into the office if it is far away, particularly for offices that are outside of Dublin. Their website is [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie)

## My Ideal Job

- Objectives:** To identify your skills  
To find out what kind of job you like  
To explore the steps necessary to get the job you want
- Materials:** Copies of worksheet on My Ideal Job and interview tips, flipchart, pens, markers, tape-recorder and blank audio tape.
- Introduction:** Introduce the exercise by saying that we all have our own idea of our ideal job. Some people make a career decision in their teenage years. Others may change jobs many times. Acknowledge the difficulties in finding a job, or training programme and the anxiety we may feel when attending interviews or starting a new job.
- Method:** Give the participants copies of the worksheet "My Ideal Job" . Request that each participant completes' the work sheet individually. Break the group into pairs in order to discuss their work sheets. Come back to the large group and ask for volunteers to share their ideal job with the group.
- Divide the group into two's. One person volunteers to role-play an employer and the other person plays the role of an interviewee going for their first job.
- Ask for two pairs to volunteer to role-play the interview, which the leader will tape if there is sufficient time and interest. Everyone can have an opportunity to do the role-play. Play back the interview to the large group and ask those who did the role-play to comment on their own performance – make sure they discuss what they did well as well as what could be improved. Give the information handout to group members and discuss this.
- Suggestions:** Get the group to bring in a variety of Newspapers (national, local and regional) and ask them to pick from the advertisements real jobs that interest them. Make them familiar with the language of advertisements, get them to read between the lines, for example, what is the job advertisement really saying?
- Showing them the advertisements also illustrates the diversity of jobs available and moves away from the stereotypical job thought of as 'women's work'.



## Worksheet 1 for My Ideal Job

1.

Type of Work

Place of Work

Conditions of Work

Ideal Job

Hours per week

Holidays per year

Wages

2. What qualifications or experience do I need for this job?
3. How will I go about getting these?
4. What skills and qualities do I already have that will help?
5. What is my first step?
6. Could I make contact with somebody who already does this job to find out more about it and learn about it from them?
7. Where do I see myself in five years time?

## **Sample Curriculum Vitae for My Ideal Job**

Name:

Address:

Phone No.:

Date of Birth:

School/College attended:

Qualifications and Exams:

Employment experience including part time/holiday jobs:

Hobbies/Interests:

Other skills/relevant experience:

Referees:

## Handout for My Ideal Job

**Note:** Always send a cover letter with your CV. A cover letter should state where you heard/read about the job, some main points about yourself (from CV) and where you can be contacted.

### Completing an Application form

Photocopy the form before you write on the original, so you make any mistakes on the photocopy.

Read the form through before writing anything.

Note the general instruction e.g. using black ink or capital letters.

Ask your referees for permission to name them for references immediately, don't leave it too late!

Use dark ink

Write legibly

Keep a copy of the application form

Prepare answers for all the questions in particular for difficult questions before writing anything. Be sure to mention any courses, which you have done, relevant summer jobs or hobbies and interests.

Give the names of at least two referees.

### The interview – preparation

#### Some questions you may be thinking about before the interview are:

What school did I go to?

What work experience do I have?

What are my achievements?

What are my interests or hobbies?

What motivates me?

Where do I see myself in five years time?

What should I wear?

At what time should I arrive?

What questions should I ask?

How do I answer difficult questions?

What is the employer looking for?

#### Some “Do’s” for your interview - Do

- Find out about the job and company beforehand so that you are well-informed and interested.
- Dress neatly and respectably in clothes that are comfortable.
- Bring any necessary documentation with you, e.g. certificates, references.
- Arrive ten minutes early, allow for late buses and traffic jams.
- Greet the interviewer with a pleasant smile, warm handshake and friendly "Good Morning, Ms Smith".
- Sit in a comfortable, not over-relaxed position.
- Listen carefully to the question you are asked check anything you don't understand and think before answering.
- Tell the truth
- Do not answer a question that you do not understand
- Be polite and friendly, smile and look the interviewer in the eye.
- Answer clearly in a firm and confident manner.
- Never complain, be positive
- Make sure you do at least 75% of the talking – but also listen
- Ask questions at the appropriate time

- Thank the interviewer when the interview is over

**Some “Don’ts” for your interview - Don’t**

- Wear flashy clothes or strong perfume.
- Be late, but telephone if some mishap means that this is inevitable.
- Sit down before you are asked.
- Argue, even if you think the interviewer has got her/his facts wrong.
- Fidget or fiddle.
- Run down or make unpleasant remarks about previous employers or school.
- Be negative –talk about what you can do, never about what you can't.
- Tell lies about your achievements or abilities.

## Women's Work – Men's Work

**Objectives:** To identify and compare traditional work areas for women and men  
To understand how this can limit job choices for both women and men  
To learn that work should not be defined by the gender of the person doing it

**Materials:** Box with cut-out job titles, flipchart, markers, glue.

**Introduction:** Men and Women have been stereotyped in to what is perceived to be a women's job and what is perceived to be a man's job. This exercise will let the participants explore those stereotypes and should attempt to define the attributes that are required to perform a job and the ability that is required as opposed to the gender.

**Method:** The group sits in a circle and places the box with job titles in the middle.

Each group member takes one cut out job title, reads it aloud to the group and decides to list it under one of the two headings

➤ Women's Work

➤ Men's work

If necessary, introduce a third section for

➤ Either

Discuss in the group the specific skills required to do the work – do these necessarily relate to gender? Why would the job be defined as a man's job or a women's job?

### Questions for Discussion:

Do you think that a person's gender has something to do with their choice of work?

Why are certain jobs traditionally associated with men or women?

Which jobs are women under-represented in?

In recent years there has been a gradual increase in the number of women entering traditionally male oriented jobs and vice versa. What impact has this had?

**Activity:** Divide the group into pairs.  
Give each pair a list of jobs

Tick which jobs you could do and whether these would be easy or difficult for you.

Return to the larger group and discuss using the following questions:

What jobs were difficult for the participants?

Which could they do with some difficulty and which could they do easily?

Ask them to outline the reasons why?

How could you overcome these difficulties?

What do you notice about the career prospects and income levels of 'easy' jobs compared with 'difficult' jobs?

Are more of these 'easy' jobs related to women traditionally? What does this tell us?

Is it difficult for girls and boys to do a job, which is typically associated with the opposite sex? How could this be made easier?

**Suggestions:**

Invite in women or men from non-traditional work areas such as a male nurse and a female bus driver.

Replace written job titles with pictures from magazines, newspapers, drawings etc. of people doing these jobs as another way of doing this exercise to show the gender stereotyping of work.



# **Section Four**

## **In the Picture**

**Introduction**

**Irish women in the media**

**Star trek versus Shirley Valentine**

**Young Women's Magazines**

**Once upon a time**

**My Kind of Rhythm**

**Violence in the news**

**Page 3**



## Introduction

It is almost impossible to imagine our lives without the presence of advertising and the media. Both have become an integral part of our everyday life. We wake up to a radio, watch breakfast TV, read the newspapers, listen to music and watch videos and dvd. Our behaviour is influenced in many ways by the images that are portrayed through the media. We model ourselves on the people and situations around us, including the images we see in the media. We begin to internalise the norms and values portrayed around us and to a greater or lesser extent we conform to these roles and ideologies about how women should be. We identify with images of women, which change according to fashion or popularity.

The media can have both a positive and a negative impact on us and can be a source of entertainment and education as well as portraying violent, negative or demeaning images of women in our society. Today, with the prevalence of satellite television and the Internet, there is a constant bombardment of messages from the media. For example a recent Irish Times survey shows that many Irish teenagers watch 3 hours of television a day. The challenge is to sift through all of this and select what interests us most.

In this section we encourage young women to be critical about what they choose to watch and read and to be aware that the media can have a strong impact on our day to day lives. The media can also be used as a vehicle for getting across particular points of view and it has successfully been used in the past to highlight significant issues for women and other groups. It also serves as a platform for successful Irish women performers in many different art forms. Over the last number of years we have seen many new Irish productions and new Irish TV channels all of which provide us with even more choice and hopefully more opportunities for women.

Promoting change within the media and advertising industries is hard work. Fighting against sexism in the media uses much energy and time but we have seen many changes over the past decade or so as a result of members of the public using the various methods to have their voices heard. The main avenue for making complaints is to write to the particular paper/TV station etc. To make your complaint, set out the issues, which you feel are offensive or unfair. The Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland is the body to which you can complain about specific advertisements.

In relation to young women in particular, there is a wide range of magazines and TV programmes, which specifically target young women. The advertising carried in these can be wide-ranging and very influential. Young women are seen as a priority area for targeting products and the competition is great. Magazines specifically for young women have always been central to the sub-culture of young women. Over the years, the style and approach of these have changed greatly and the target group has widened with specific magazines targeted at almost every age now. While many of the magazines deal with very real issues such as careers, fashion, health and travel, there is still a large emphasis on boyfriends, romance, clothes, looks and make up, even in the magazines targeted at the very young readers. This is one of the many ways in which young women can believe that to be successful and to be liked you need to be thin, pretty and have a boyfriend and that anything outside of this is not the acceptable 'norm'.

In this section of the book, we look at some of the images of women, which are portrayed in the media and we encourage young women to think about these and to decide for themselves what each of these say about women. We promote the idea of reading and establishing a book club, remember that many books are available on cassette tape or CD from local libraries. We also look at developing a magazine for your own group and deciding what type of things your group would like to see covered in this. We consider newspapers and how these portray images of women and compare this to the coverage of

issues relating to men. Finally we explore the world of music and encourage young women to listen critically to different types of music and to see how women are portrayed in these.

The main objective of this section is to promote a sense of choice, and to develop an analysis and critical awareness of the world of the media, particularly about how women and young women are portrayed. We all enjoy relaxing through various media and it can be a very positive vehicle for the promotion of women's issues. So if we exercise an element of critical choice, we can make it an even more powerful form of communication for us.

## Irish Women in the Media

**Objectives:** To examine the portrayal of women in different parts of the media  
To compare the image of the 'ideal woman' to that of the real Irish woman  
To question those images which may unfairly portray women

**Materials:** A selection of Irish glossy women's magazines and celebrity magazines. A selection of Irish newspapers. Flipchart paper, glue, scissors.

**Method:**

Put the glossy magazines on the floor/table and ask the girls to look through them.

In smaller groups of 5 or 6 ask the girls/ young women, to cut out images of women in the advertisements and in the celebrity/star sections. Stick these images onto a sheet of flipchart paper.

Display these collages around the room.

Now ask the same groups to look through the Irish newspapers and cut out any pictures of women. Stick these on another piece of flipchart paper. Display these pages around the room.

In the large group, discuss the images using the following questions:

- What are the differences between the women in the magazines and the women in the papers?
- What is the effect of portraying 'perfect' women in magazines?
- Would you like to change how women are portrayed in magazines? What might be the effect of doing that?
- What are the women in the newspaper there for?
- Which categories of news, sport, fashion, business etc?
- Is there a difference between how men are portrayed in newspapers and how women are portrayed in newspapers?
- Which types of news do men feature mostly in?

**Suggestions:**

Have a discussion about the ads which people like and dislike. How are women portrayed in these?

If there is an advertisement which you feel treats women unfairly, you can contact the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland to make a complaint.

## Star Trek versus Shirley Valentine

**Objectives:** To analyse the different female characters and roles in films, tv programmes and drama and how these influence our sense of identity  
To have fun and to view positive role models of women in films

**Materials:** Access to a TV and dvd / video machine, film, dvd or video, flipchart paper and pens.

**Introduction:** Women are portrayed differently in different types of films. Often they may have the main role. It can be empowering for young women to examine the messages about women in films and to have a critical awareness of this.

**Method:** Before beginning select a programme or film in advance. If possible pick one which is centred on women and also chose a film which is more mainstream. If the group is already familiar with the film, ask different group members to observe particular characters while watching.  
Watch the film(s) or clips with them.

Points to watch out for might be: age, clothes, status, personality, body language, typical 'female behaviour', how they are treated by others, relation to other characters. It may be helpful to take notes.

If you are watching two films, compare the way women are portrayed in these.

In the large group, take feedback of the observations about the characters; discuss their images, personality and actions.

In your discussions, focus on how these images may influence our own behaviour and our feelings about what women should be like.

### Questions for Discussion:

Do you think these characters represent women in every day life?

What roles do women have in the film(s)?

Are these good role models for you?

How do the images of the women affect us? (for example in relation to our weight, fashion, looks)

Do you have a favourite film star? Who is it? Why?

### Suggestions:

Show some music videos or dvds.

- How are women portrayed in Gangsta Rap Videos?
- How do women artists e.g. Christina Aguilera, Kylie Minogue, Britney Spears, Madonna, Shakira use their sexuality?
- Do you think this is a positive or negative role model for girls?

Switch off the volume, what does the character say through body language?

Watch films with positive role models and discuss why these are positive.

## Young Women's Magazines

**Objectives:** To examine the content of young women's magazines  
To design our own magazine

**Materials:** A selection of young women's magazines, flipchart, markers, access to photocopier, scissors and glue.

**Introduction:** There are a wide variety of young women's magazines currently available. These magazines are a very important part of young women's culture. In this exercise, we examine some of the current magazines and their content. We will then ask the participants to design and compile a magazine and to decide what they would like the magazine to look like to reflect their own real experiences.

**Method:      **Session 1****

Divide into two groups. Ask each group to discuss what  
a) they like about the magazines aimed at young women and b) they dislike about them.

Feedback the responses to the large group.

Using a selection of magazines, list all the different contents such as features, problem pages, beauty tips, gossip and music.

Now introduce the idea of making our own magazine.

What would they like to include which is not normally covered in magazines but would be positive and helpful for other young women to read?

Decide on the contents and on how many feature articles there should be and what news to include.

Give each person a piece of the magazine to design or write for the following week. Include pictures and drawings if possible.

One article to include could be the opinions, experience and perspectives of local young and adult women. Suggest the girls carry out interviews with other young women and with adult and older women too.

**Method:      **Session 2****

Edit the magazine.

Get the articles typed up and put the magazine together.

Photocopy it for everyone in the group.

Introduce some basic desk-top publishing skills.

**Suggestions:** What do you think would be included in a magazine for young men? How would this be different from young women's magazines and what does this tell us about male and female stereotypes, gender roles and conditioning?

## Once upon a Time...

- Objectives:**
- To question the importance of books in our lives
  - To create an awareness of how books differ in their contents and readership
  - To share individual preferences in books and their meaning in our lives
  - To encourage reading as a positive factor in young women's lives
- Materials:**
- Flipchart, markers, and copy of worksheet and pens. Ask members to bring in their favourite book if they have one. This could be a book from their childhood or a current favourite.
- Method:**
- Ask each group member to choose a partner and to find a space in the room.
- Allow ten minutes for each woman to fill in the worksheet by herself. Then each pair interviews each other about their favourite book and introduces their partner's book to the large group.
- Have a discussion around the different types of books and girls individual preferences.
- Questions for Discussion:**
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of reading?
  - Do you like reading? If so, why and if not, why not?
  - How do books differ from each other?
  - What do you want from a book?
  - Do you think books use the same techniques/methods as films?
- Suggestions:**
- Keep a record of the chosen books and make up a list of the group's top 10 favourites.
- Encourage the exchange of books.
- People can do this exercise with favourite films, magazines, advertisements and T.V. programmes and modify the worksheet accordingly.
- Start a library and encourage young women to try reading something they usually wouldn't. To collect books for your library, look for cheap and second-hand books e.g. in charity shops or at car-boot sales or ask for donations through the local press.
- Let members know that books are available at local libraries and if there is an opportunity, visit a local library and arrange to be shown round.
- Many novels are also available on cassettes from libraries and bookshops – you might want to play a tape in instalments at the end of group meetings so you can share a story together.

**Worksheet for  
Once upon a time....**

Title:

Author:

Number of pages:

Where did I get it from?

What is my favourite character in the book?

In what year/time is the book set?

Is it easy to read?

Brief summary of the story:

Why do I like this book best?

In 3 or 4 lines, write a brief recommendation of this book.

## My Kind of Rhythm

**Objectives:** To listen to different types of music, and watch the accompanying video if possible  
To compare different types of music and videos/dvds

**Materials:** Tape recorder/stereo, video/dvd machine, copies of songs and accompanying videos/dvds (if possible), flipchart and markers.

**Introduction:** Music is an important part of young women's lives. Songs about love, heart-break, rebelliousness and confusion are all relevant to the current events in young people's lives. In this exercise, we look a little closer at the different types of music and the messages they give us.

**Method:** Ask group members to bring in their favourite piece of music and the accompanying video/dvd, if possible. Also, bring a copy of the lyrics of the song.  
Each person introduces their choice of music and also explains why they like it.  
Ask the group to choose two different songs on the video/dvd. Examine these under the following headings:  
What is the song about?  
What is the video/dvd about?  
Do they give the same message?  
What does this song say about young women/young men today?  
Is this a true reflection?  
List the different types of music e.g. rock, traditional, punk, classical, gangsta, rap, country and western.  
Do the different types of music give different messages? Are they about different issues? What are these issues?  
Do different types of music portray women differently?

### Suggestions:

Ask the young women to name their favourite female artist and perhaps bring in a video/dvd of their concert for an evenings entertainment.

Some music for example some rap is criticised for being misogynistic. Explain what this term means (women-hating, encouraging violence against women, treating women as inferior and demeaning to women) and ask young women which music and videos might be rightly accused of this? What might the effect of misogynist music be, for women and for men?

Discuss the negative and violent images, which some music portrays. Why do you think this is so?



## Violence in the News

**Objectives:** To identify violent situations reported in the newspapers  
To discuss how these instances are portrayed  
To identify who are the victims and who are the aggressors

**Materials:** Newspapers, flipchart paper, scissors and glue.

**Introduction:** Everyday, the newspapers and television programmes report many instances of violence in our towns and neighbourhoods. In this exercise, we will look at these instances and discuss some of the issues around the growing problem of violence.

**Method:** Put a selection of newspapers in the centre of the room.  
Ask participants to pick a partner for this exercise.  
Each pair looks through a selection of newspapers and cuts out articles or photos, which report or depict violent situations.  
Stick the pictures or articles onto a sheet of flipchart paper.  
Each pair then presents their findings to the main group.  
In the large group, have a discussion.

### Questions for Discussion:

Are you surprised at the number of violent incidents reported in the papers?

Do different papers report the events in different ways?

What do you think are the reasons for the violence in the pictures/reports?

From the newspaper cuttings, who do you think are most often the victims of violence? Who are most often the aggressors?

How could any of these situations have been avoided?

## "Page 3"

- Objectives:** To discuss what pornography is  
To work out our attitudes around pornography  
To explore our feelings about pornography
- Materials:** Paper, pens, newspapers, magazines and flipchart
- Introduction:** Introduce the exercise with an input on why people have different views and attitudes around the issue of "Page 3" and pornography
- Method:** Divide the group into two debating teams
- The subject of each debate will be;
- Page 3 photos do no harm and aren't pornography,*
- That they are pornographic, harmful and degrading to women and they encourage women to be self-hating about their own bodies.*
- Have newspapers and other magazines available to give ideas; allow time for preparation of ideas and research.
- Organise the debate.

### Questions for Discussion:

How would you feel if there were pin ups of nude women at work/in the training centre/in the youth club?

It is sometimes said the reason some women, either feel their bodies are inadequate, constantly diet or develop eating disorders is because of comparing themselves unfavourably to pin-ups or models. What do you think about that?

Why are there fewer nude men as pin-ups?

How do you react to sex scenes in films and videos?

Can nudity sometimes be acceptable – for example in fashion magazines?

Use the remaining time to discuss people's reactions and feelings. Try to define how pornography affects us as women.

# **Section Five**

## **Women Making a Difference**

**Introduction**

**Young women and participation**

**Use your Vote**

**Rights and Entitlements**

**Who makes the headlines**

**Women in Ireland – Statistics**

**Equality and Discrimination**

**Images of women**

**Female Role Models**

**If Granny could see me now**

**Feminism**

**Girls around the world.**

## **INTRODUCTION MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

All too often we go through life assuming that we don't really make much impact on our world and we cannot effect change. It's easy to forget that all the rights and privileges we have were only established because others took a risk or tried to change things. As a recent ad on television quoted 'I can only see further because I am standing on the shoulders of giants'. With every decade that passes, new developments come into being and for each generation things are different from how they were for their parents. For young women, society has changed rapidly and young women today see opportunities and possibilities, which were never available to their mothers or grandmothers. Along with this, there are often difficulties, which present themselves alongside any changes. Some of the challenges faced by many young people today include increasing social pressures, economic pressures and a diminishing sense of community involvement.

In this section of the resource pack we explore how young women can make a real and lasting impact on their own lives and on society in general. The past twenty years have seen more young people becoming involved in political activity in terms of action groups and pressure groups. In addition, through the rapid development of communication and information technology young people are aware of world issues in a way, which they never were before. All of this social awareness begins with believing that you can change something by participating in your own local area or by being part of a group, which promotes personal and social change.

This section of the book begins by encouraging young women to participate in their own community and identify what they would like to change. It also looks at the area of rights and responsibilities - it asks young women to consider these, to evaluate the benefits of the rights and to understand the obligations, which come with the responsibilities. Statistics show that young people in Ireland have not had a high participation rate in recent local and general elections and this section provides an opportunity to explore the reasons for this with your group.

At a wider level, we also look specifically at the position of women in Ireland and question why, at many of the senior decision making levels of Irish society, women are not proportionately represented. Key positions in all layers of government, the judiciary, the mass media and the professions continue to be dominated by men.

- Only 13% of those elected to the Dáil are women despite 51% of our population being women.
- At the current rate of increase it would take 370 years for the percentage of women in the Dáil to reach 50.
- Ten counties of the Republic of Ireland have no women TD's.
- Only 17% of those elected to the Seanad are women and only 15% of elected councillors are women.

In terms of the media representation of women and young women in Ireland today, women are also under represented in many areas and many stereotypes persist. Girls and young women today believe that in most, if not all areas, of their lives they have the same opportunities as their male counterparts. However, strong and successful women role models are not always reflected back in the media. In order to ensure that 'girl power' translates into a real change at every level of society we need to find mechanisms for young women to achieve, be visible and be counted.

In this section we also look at feminism and the achievements of the women's movement today and in the past. Many young women do not identify themselves with the language of the feminist movement and feel it is irrelevant to their lives today. However, as we have seen in previous sections of this book, issues surrounding facilities, services and choices for young women still need to be addressed if they are to have accessible and user friendly support in areas such as general health, sexual health, child care and training and education. Young women themselves are the best group to identify the issues relevant to them and to develop strategies, which enable them to take action to change. This Section offers many ways into developing that process with them.

## Young Women Participating

**Objectives:** To promote the importance of young women participating in their community and beyond  
To demonstrate how by participating we can make a difference in our communities

**Materials:** Flipchart and markers

**Method:**

Ask the girls in the group to each think of a time when they participated in an event, which was positive, and were part of a group.  
Ask them to call out how they felt at that time, record the answers on flipchart paper.

Discuss the findings. Did it feel good to be part of a group all working towards something? Did your participation make a difference to the group? If so, why?

In groups of 4/5 ask the girls to think of the facilities in their area, which are good for girls such as sports facilities, youth club, shops, cinema.  
Each group should also make suggestions for how their area could be improved for girls (more open space, better public lighting for safety, girl-only space, play groups and crèches).  
Feed back the findings to the whole group.

In the large group, pick one item, which the group could take on as a project to lobby for or improve provision for girls.

When the item or the idea has been chosen, begin to make your plan for taking action.

What are the steps that need to be taken?

Who will do what?

What resources or support do you need?

What is the first step you need to take?

Then begin to take action!

Make sure to review your plan, chart your successes (and failures) document the story of doing the project. Discuss and make note of the learning for future use.

Share any particular successes with others, for example by means of press releases, to increase the profile of girls who take action and change things.

## Use Your Vote

**Objectives:**

- To increase awareness of political systems
- To identify ways to use political systems
- To highlight the importance of using your vote

**Introduction:**

Your vote can make a difference. The right to vote is a democratic principle hard fought for in Ireland in particular by women. Traditionally the right to vote lay with large property owners. But because of the struggle of others, men and women in the past, today all the citizens of Ireland have the right to vote. When you vote you are making sure your input is being made in relation to the political party (and their policies and programmes) that will govern the country.

**Method:**

Discussion: Use the information sheet on Women in Ireland statistics.

Ask young women to brainstorm on how they think the political system works.

Ask them to list the number of women in politics and the positions they hold.

Ask them to research the number of women in key decision making roles.

Ask them to explore what they think is likely to happen if women are not at the table making decisions.

If women are at the table, what issues are more likely to be given some attention and priority?

Discuss how they can play their part in the democratic process.

What changes would they like to see?

How can they make these opinions known and get them listened to?

**Suggestions:**

Prepare a manifesto with issues for young women.

**As a model for this, have a look at the English YWCA's Girls' Manifesto produced for the 2001 General Election "Why Women, Why Now?"**

Get the group to carry out a mock election.

## Who Make the Headlines?

**Objectives:** To look at how women and men are portrayed in the newspapers  
To see if this is a fair portrayal of the position of women in Ireland today

**Materials:** Newspapers – a selection of three to four Irish daily newspapers, flipchart paper, glue, scissors and pens.

**Introduction:** Women in Ireland now represent over 30% of the workforce. They are more involved than ever before in many areas of public life such as politics, business, journalism and science. But is this change in women's involvement adequately reflected in the daily news?

**Method:** Divide the group into small groups of 3 or 4.

Give each group a newspaper and two sheets of flipchart paper. Ask the groups to cut out all the pictures of men and all the pictures of women.

On one sheet of flipchart paper, stick all the pictures of men and on another sheet stick all the pictures of women. Under each of the pictures write who the person is, their role and why they were in the paper.

Bring the sheets back to the large group and compare and contrast them.

Have a group discussion about the learning from this process.

### Questions for Discussion:

Are there more pictures of men or women in the papers?

Compare the positions/status of these men and women.

Do you think this is a fair reflection of life in Ireland? If not, what would you add or take away to give a more accurate picture?

What changes do you feel this comparison shows still need to be made?



## Women in Ireland

**Objectives:** To present some facts and figures on women in Ireland

**Materials:** Paper, pens

**Method:** Around the room display sheets of flipchart paper with a heading on each one such as local councillors, members of the Dail, city/county Managers, part time workers, clerical workers, lone parents and any other categories for which you have figures.

Ask the young women to estimate the percentage of women who make up this category.

Walk around the room and each person writes the figure on the appropriate piece of paper.

When this is complete, using a different coloured marker write in the correct figures (see Information Sheet)

Discuss the figures with the group.

- Are you surprised?
- Which ones surprise you most?
- Is it desirable to aim for a 50/50 balance in most areas of society?
- What would be the effects of doing this for women and for men?

In 1993, a UN report 'Human Development Report 1993', stated the following:

**“Women are the world's largest excluded group. Even though they make up half the adult population, and often contribute more than their share to society, inside and outside the home, they are frequently excluded from positions of power.”**

Imagine that your group has been asked by the Government to put forward suggestions on how to improve the participation of women at decision making level in society.

In groups of 4/5 brainstorm your thoughts and ideas of all the ways in which this could be encouraged.

Feedback these ideas to the main group and come up with a list of approximately 10 recommendations.

**Suggestions:** Continue to work on these recommendations over the following weeks.

Do some research in libraries or on the web.

Print up your final recommendations and invite a local councillor or TD to your group and present them with your document.

Look at what has happened in the Welsh National Assembly where 50% of their representatives (the equivalent of TDs) are women.

## **Information Sheet**

### **National Statistics**

- 50.35% of the total population of Ireland are women, 49.65% are men
- 97% of county / city managers in local authorities are men, 3% are women
- Among the grade of secretary in the civil service, 91% are men, 9% are women
- Among the grade of Assistant secretary in the civil service, 83% are men, 17% are women
- Of clerical workers in the civil service, 80% are women, 20% are men
- Of Chief Executive Officers in the top 100 companies in Ireland, 96% are men, only 4% are women
- Women earn 73% of the average male industrial wage
- 70% of part time workers are women, 30% are men
- 83% of councillors are men, 17% are women
- 87% of TD's are men, 13% are women
- 85% of Senate members are men, 15% are women
- Of lone parents 84% are women, 16% are men
- Of those in receipt of carers' allowance, 79% are women. 21% are men
- Childcare costs Irish parents 20% of taxed income compared with 8% for the rest of the EU
- More than 70 % of women do not have occupational pensions (due to their leaving the workforce to undertake caring work)

## Equality and Discrimination

**Objectives:** To learn a little about the equality legislation in Ireland and understand about discrimination  
To explore how different groups of people may experience discrimination

**Materials:** Flipchart and Markers

**Method:** Ask the group to brainstorm what they understand by the term 'discrimination'. Record the answers on flipchart paper.

Give the definition as outlined in Irish legislation which is:  
**“Discrimination is the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated”.**

Next ask the group to describe the groups of people who they think are discriminated against in Irish society. Record these on flipchart also.

Write on the flipchart the nine grounds on which Irish legislation outlaws discrimination:

Gender	Marital Status	Family Status,
Age	Disability	Race
Sexual Orientation	Religious Belief	
and Membership of the Traveller Community.		

Previous legislation in Ireland dealt primarily with issues of gender and specifically discrimination against women but this has been greatly expanded since 1998 to include all nine grounds above.

Divide the group into groups of 2/3 and give each group one or two of the nine grounds above (depending on the number in the group). Ask each small group to list the ways in which their group or group(s) could be discriminated against (e.g. turned down for a job, not allowed into a pub, called names or subject to attack).

In the large group, report back the findings and discuss using the following questions:

Why do you think people are discriminated against?

Can you think of any time when you were discriminated against for having some difference? How did it feel?

What would you do if you experienced discrimination?

Do you think there is discrimination against women? If so, why?

How is this demonstrated and what could be done to challenge it?

**Suggestions:**

Design a poster for display in your club, which promotes the idea that everyone should be treated equally.

Design a job advertisement, which promotes the idea that everyone should be treated equally.

## Discrimination against Women

**Objectives:** To highlight some areas where women have been/are discriminated against  
To try out some drama skills

**Materials:** Paper, Pens

**Method:** In the main group ask the girls to list the ways in which women were/are discriminated against.  
Write these on flipchart paper as a 'time line' (see next sheet)

Divide into groups of approximately four.  
Ask each group to take a decade from the time line. Each group is to develop a short drama piece showing women fighting for a particular change and what kinds of opposition they came up against. Ask each group to spend some time researching the era and what the lives of women were like.

Perform the short pieces.

Discuss the drama pieces using the following questions:  
Why do you think women were discriminated against in these ways?  
In each case, how did women overcome the discrimination or how was the law changed?  
Are there still things we need to change to promote further equality? If so, what are they?

**Suggestions:** Ask each group to research a topic or a decade in Irish History as it related to women for the purpose of a project, debate, documentary etc.

## Timeline

1898 Local government vote granted to women

1909 National University of Ireland Established and open to women

1910 Society of the United Irish Women founded which became the Irish County Women's Association (ICA) in 1935.

1918 Women over 30 given the Vote in Ireland. Countess Markievicz elected the first woman to the first Dáil Eireann.

1960 Contraceptives illegal

1967 Introduction of free second level education.

1972 Council for the Status of Women established (Now the National Women's Council or Ireland).

1973 Marriage Bar lifted (Until then women had to leave their jobs in the public service when they got married).

1979 Máire Geoghan Quinn appointed to the cabinet, the first woman since Countess Markievicz in 1919.

1995 Divorce referendum passed. Homosexuality decriminalised.

2003 Women still paid 15% less than men.

## Images of Women

- Objectives:** To give young women an opportunity to learn about stereotypes  
To look at common images and stereotypes of women
- Materials:** Copies of questionnaire, prepared selection of pictures of women placed around the walls of the room. These should include women politicians, female world leaders, ordinary women, pop stars, women writers and artists.  
Flipchart and pens.
- Introduction:** Give a brief introduction on the objectives of this session and encourage spontaneous reactions when filling in the worksheet.
- Method:** Have a selection of pictures of women (old, young, glamorous, "ordinary", motherly, professional etc.) placed around the walls of the room. Label them A, B, C, etc.  
As the group comes in or shortly after, give each young woman a copy of the questionnaire.
- Ask everyone to spend some time browsing around the pictures and then tick off their responses to the questions on the sheet.
- Allow 10 – 15 minutes to complete, then divide into two groups and share answers. It is preferable to have a leader in each group to stimulate discussion and draw out an understanding of stereotypes vis a vis women in everyday life.
- Questions for Discussion:**
- Which women do you like most/least? Why?
  - Do you know women like these?
  - Do you find you admire women because of how they look rather than what they might be like in other ways?
  - How are women shown in these pictures?
  - What are the women doing in these pictures?
  - What pictures are true to life?
  - What ones are unreal?
  - What is a stereotype? Do stereotypes affect us as women?
  - How does this compare with how men are seen in pictures?

## Worksheet for Images of Women

**Have a look at the pictures of women and fill in the boxes**

The woman I would like to be.....

**Why?**.....

The woman I would not like to be.....

**Why?**.....

The woman who looks like a mother.....

**Why?**.....

Who here is your ideal woman?.....

**Why?**.....

Which woman looks most sexy?.....

**Why?**.....

Which is the career woman?.....

**Why?**.....

Which woman looks most independent?.....

**Why?**.....

Who is the most unusual looking woman?.....

**Why?**.....

When I am ten years older I would like to look like.....

**Why?**.....

When I am thirty years older I would like to look like.....

**Why?**.....



## Female Role Models

**Objectives:** To look at role models for women  
To understand the advantages and disadvantages that come with being such role models  
To explore our own ideas about admirable women

**Materials:** Copies of worksheet, paper, crayons, markers and pens

**Introduction:** A role model is someone we look up to, admire, and want to imitate. Role models can have a powerful influence on us as we grow up and throughout our lives. They can be positive or restrictive, and can sometimes make us feel inferior if we don't conform to them. They can also inspire us to do great things. It's therefore very important for us to have a range of role models from which to choose so that our vision of ourselves as women is not restricted but is open to a whole range of possibilities.

**Method:** List examples of role models in the lives of group members. Do this quickly and prompt with examples if necessary. Try to concentrate on inner personal qualities in this exercise rather than those linked with appearance.

Ask each person to choose one woman who has influenced them. It may be a woman you know, or one you know of. It might be a relative or someone you have never met, or a fictional character like Buffy the Vampire Slayer you admire for her courage and determination.

Give out the worksheet and ask young women to fill these in individually.

In the large group share your role models and three qualities you admire most about them.

### Questions for Discussion:

- In what way would you like to be like your role model?
- How do these women influence you?
- Are their influences positive or negative?
- Is it possible for a role model to have a negative influence?
- What values do the women we look up to have?
- Do you agree with these values?
- Do we get our values/ideas from such role models?
- What qualities do these women have?
- How do they compare with the qualities men have?
- Would we ourselves like to become role models for young girls? If so, how could we become these?

Discuss the fact that it is often true that those qualities we admire in others are those which recognise in ourselves. Can we claim some of our role model's qualities for ourselves?

**Suggestions:**

Give out paper/crayons etc., and ask each young woman to draw her ideal image of a woman. It need not be artistically perfect, but her own expression of what makes a woman worthy of admiration.

Put these up in your meeting room or use them as a basis for decorating a T-shirt for group members at the next meeting.

You could do a composite picture of the group's ideal woman maybe by drawing round the outline of one of the girls in the group lying down on a piece of lining paper. The group could then draw and fill in their key qualities for a role model on this outline, e.g. a big heart for warmth, a shoulder to cry on, a brain for intelligence, strong hands for doing practical jobs.

## Worksheet for Female Role Models

### Tick the qualities you admire:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| The way she talks                              | The kind of clothes she wears |
| The way she treats other people                | The amount of money she earns |
| The kind of house she lives in                 | That she is great at her job  |
| That she doesn't care what people think of her | That she has a kind face      |
| That she has a great figure                    | That she works hard           |
| That she is kind to others                     | That she has lots of children |
| That she is fair to everyone                   | That she is not a snob        |
| That she is happily married                    | That she did it on her own    |
| That she fights for what she believes in       | That she is clever            |
| That she is ambitious                          | That she is good with money   |
| That she is good at sport                      | That she is independent       |
| That she is adventurous                        | That she is determined        |
| That she wears mad clothes                     | That she is articulate        |
| That she has a great sense of humour           | That she thinks for herself   |
| That she brought about social change           | That she is capable           |

## **If Granny Could See Me Now**

**Objectives:** To reflect on the changes in women's lives in Ireland  
To acknowledge and value women's experience

**Materials:** Paper, pens and copy of questionnaire.

**Introduction:** Women's lives have changed hugely in Ireland over the past 50 years. And they will probably continue to change in the next 50. Our lives today are very different from the lives of our mothers and grandmothers.

**Method:** Before the session, give each member of the group a questionnaire and ask them to fill it out together with their own mother, foster mother, grandmother or an older woman whom they know. Add more questions on to this if they wish.

Feedback the responses in the large group under the different headings in the questionnaire education, work and marriage

Compare your own lifestyle today with that of the older woman using the following questions:

### **Questions for Discussion:**

- Do you think it is easier/harder for young women today than it was for our mothers and grandmothers?
- What are the major differences between the generations?
- What are the similarities?
- Which changes have been good for women?
- Which changes have been difficult for women?
- Is there anything which was different for your mother or grandmother, which you would still like to have today?
- What differences do you think there will be between our lives and our daughters' and granddaughters' lives?

## Questionnaire for If Granny Could See Me Now

Name

Date of birth

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Where did you go to school?

At what age did you leave school?

What exams did you do?

What did you do after school?

What choices did you feel were open to you e.g. travel, further education?

Did you work? If so, at what age did you start your first job? What was the job?

What was your first salary?

Did you marry? If so, at what age did you marry?

Did you continue working?

If you have children, when did you have your first child?

How many children had you?

Did you continue working or did you go back to work after you had your children?

What do you think is better for young women in terms of life choices now compared with when you were younger?

What do you think is worse?

Add more questions as you think of them

## Feminism is...

**Objectives:** To identify some of the goals and achievements of the Irish women's movement  
To gather information on what the Irish women's movement has achieved  
To build and reflect on our understanding of feminism  
To get a deeper understanding of how the aims of feminism are relevant to our lives as women

**Materials:** Paper, pens, flipchart, markers and worksheet for leader.

**Introduction:** The Irish women's movement developed in the late 1960's. There were many issues for women at that time such as the marriage bar in the public service, contraception etc.. The women's movement is an umbrella term for a wide range of women's groups, all with differing aims and objectives, but with the common theme of improving women's lives throughout Ireland. Within the women's movement, there are many and varied opinions on a whole range of issues and unanimous agreement on many others such as issues of civil rights and human rights. Some ideas reflected in feminism may involve challenging our own traditions or beliefs. For young women it is important that they decide for themselves what they feel about these issues and how they affect them.

### Method: Part A

In the middle of the group place a large sheet of paper choose a record keeper and ask all group members to brainstorm

- a) What they think the Irish women's movement, is about?
- b) What it has achieved?

Allow time for discussion and opinions. Try to distinguish between facts, myths, images, what they have been told by others, assumptions and their own beliefs.

### Method: Part B

Place three sheets of paper on the floor in different parts of the room with the following headings written on them.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not sure

Read out some of the issues/debates of concern to and addressed by women over the past 20 years (see worksheet).

Ask participants to move to the relevant piece of paper, to describe how they feel about the issue raised.

Use this as a means of promoting discussion on the different issues, which have been taken up by the women's movement, over the last 20 years. List these and add others from the worksheet.

### Method: Part C

In groups of three, choose one issue you can identify with and give an account of it and argue for it. Based on your presentation, a committee would then decide whether your group receives financial support or not. You need it urgently!

The report is read to the large group, discussed and decided on.

**Questions for Discussion:**

- Do you think the goals of the women's movement have anything to do with you?
- Are many young women involved in the women's movement?
- What issues might most concern and involve them?
- Which areas can you identify with? Which seem irrelevant?
- What is the general attitude to the women's movement?
- Why might this be?
- Do you believe the women's movement is necessary?
- Does the movement have any influence and power in society?
- Can all women identify with the women's movement? Why? Why not?
- How best can change be brought about in women's lives?

**Suggestions:** Ask the group to draw up a charter of things, which they would like to see changed for young women.

**Statements** for Feminism is...

There should be better free childcare services and a crèche place for every child.

Everybody should have access to free contraception.

There should be access to abortion in Ireland.

Every woman should feel safe on her own and the issue of violence against women should be tackled.

Every woman should have access to emergency accommodation and there should be a women's refuge in every town.

Pornography should be banned.

Women's sports should receive equal coverage and funding.

Lesbians and Gays should have the right to adopt children.

All work areas should use quotas of 50%. Women/men staff and managers

Women and men should receive equal pay for equal work.

There should be equal opportunities for women at work in relation to training, promotion etc.

There should be equal recognition of different types of partnership and their protection by law.

Any form of advertisement, which abuses or demeans women, should be banned.

There should be equal numbers of women representatives in the Dáil

Women's work in the home should be recognised by the state.

Domestic responsibility should be equally shared by men.



## **Young Women around the World Giant steps! (Adapted from 'The Rights Stuff')**

- Objectives:** To explore some of the many different cultures around the World particularly the experience of women  
To make some links between young women in Ireland and young women in other cultures
- Materials:** Cut out copies of the role cards. List of statements for the leader to read out. Labels for the names and country for each girl.
- Method:** Brainstorm what the rights are which we need in order to develop – e.g. the right to food, shelter, education etc.
- Photocopy the role cards and give each person one to read. Ask them to make a label showing their name and country of origin and to attach it to themselves.  
(Depending on the size of your group, more than one person may have the same role).
- Ask them to think about who they are where they live and what their life is like. Then each person takes on the character of the girl on their role card and stands at the end of the room with their backs against the wall.
- Explain that you are going to call out statements. After each statement is read they must take a giant step, a baby step or stay where they are depending on what the statement means to them. Take a giant step if you can do it quite easily; take a baby step if you can only do it with difficulty and don't move if you can't do it at all.
- Emphasise that the aim of the exercise is to try to experience what life is like for the girl they represent – it is not about reaching the end first.
- Now read out the first statement. Once everybody has responded, ask them to explain the step they did take or did not take and why. Choose more statements from the list, read them out and allow participants to make their move or stay still. When all the statements have been read begin the debriefing.
- Debrief by asking:
- Who got furthest along? Why?
  - Who was most left behind and why?
  - How did you feel when each statement was read if you could move?
  - How did you feel if you weren't able to move?
  - How did it feel if this happened a number of times?
  - Are you surprised by any of the facts on the role cards?

- What are the main obstacles to opportunities which young women face around the world?
- Looking at the global situation, do you think young women in Ireland have good opportunities? What groups of young women do not have good opportunities in Ireland?
- Do you know any young women from other cultures? What do you know about their culture and what life is like for young women generally in their culture?

## Suggestions

Invite in a young woman/group of young women from another culture and have a discussion on the issues for young women living in different situations. What are the differences between you? And what are the issues you have in common?

Have a celebration of different cultures involving other young women, prepare a meal or do arts and crafts from other cultures.

Have a discussion using the fact-sheet on women around the world.

Take on an issue which young women face somewhere in the world, such as dowry killings, trafficking sex workers or Female Genital Mutilation. Carry out research on this and organise a campaign, which would heighten awareness of the issue and help to bring about change for the better. Organisations such as, Save the Children or Global Campaign for Education might be able to help you with this.

Try to establish links with young women from other cultures by contacting agencies and Girl's groups somewhere in the Developing World and begin with a pen pal arrangement between the young women. If you have access to the Internet you could even start an e-mail club or shared web-page.

## STATEMENTS FOR WOMEN OF THE WORLD

You have been to primary school

You can speak out in school about rules, which affect you

You could go to university

You can choose what subjects to study

You can wear whatever clothes or jewellery you want

You can play games or sports and do lots of leisure activities

You can live with your parents

You can meet your friends

You can criticise the Government

You have enough to eat and drink

You are paid a fair wage for your work

You can practice your religion

You can travel by bus

You can speak your own language at school

You can speak out about things that affect you

You can get information, which you need

When you are sick you can go to the doctor

When you are old enough, you can marry whomever you like

When you are older, you can get a good job

You can join any group or organisation you like

You have a rich culture and heritage

You live in a clean environment

## ROLE CARDS FOR GIANT STEPS

**FATIMA:** You are a 16 year old young Nigerian woman who has come to Ireland after your parents were tortured and killed because of their political beliefs. You live in a hostel and are awaiting a decision of the Irish Government on your application for Refugee status

**AINE:** You live with your mother and sister in a house in the outskirts of Cork city. Your hobby is woodwork. You would like to do this for your Junior Certificate but the subject is not taught in the girls' secondary school, which you attend.

**MARY:** You are a young Traveller woman and live on a halting site in a caravan. You move around a lot and went to four different primary schools. You are 13 now and don't attend school anymore. You help with the younger children at home. You are the second eldest of eight children.

**KANDESHIE** You live in Namibia and have just moved into a new modern house in the capital city Windhoek. Your father has been promoted and now has a good job with the Government. He is even talking about sending you to a new school in South Africa where you will get a much better education.

**MAYA:** You are 15 years of age and live in the Bronx area of New York. Your Mom is a single parent and tries to make ends meet by cleaning houses and living on welfare. Your neighbourhood is pretty dangerous and you don't feel safe at night. You try to work hard at school but it is hard when the school is run down and overcrowded.

**RANJEET:** You are 14 years old and live in Delhi, India. You work as a domestic maid for a rich family. You work from early morning to late evening, Monday to Saturday, minding young children, cooking, cleaning and washing. The family treats you quite well and provides food and a room. The money you get, you give to your family. On Sundays, you go to a free, local school.

**XI LI:** You are 13 and you come from China. You make small toys, which end up in the shops in the West. You work with very small parts and you do 12-hour days. The glue and paint smell terrible and often make you ill. If you complain, you get hit or are docked wages. You have no leisure time.

**SINEAD:** You are 15 and live in Galway city with your two sisters and your parents. You are in a wheelchair as a result of an illness when you were younger. You go to secondary school and hope to go to college when you finish, to study politics and history. You are concerned about whether you will be able to commute to college on public transport and whether the lecture theatres and other facilities are wheelchair accessible.

**SONIA:** You are 16 and come from Russia. You came to Germany as you were told you could go to a dance training college. All your life you wanted to be a dancer. When you arrived in Germany, you were put to work in a brothel and have been subjected to sexual abuse on a daily basis. You cannot afford to get out. Any small amount of money you make is sent home to your family in Russia.

**OYON:** You are ten years old and live in Mongolia in central Asia. Where you live, there are no trees and very few people. Your family breeds horses, cows, sheep and goats. You

have two brothers and a sister. Your mother is an accountant and your father looks after the animals. In the evening your mother milks the cows and you help with the animals too. You live in a large tent and move around a good bit. There is a stove in the middle of the tent and you use cow-dung for fuel.

FRANCOISE: You are 18 years old and in your final year of school. You live in Paris and enjoy going shopping with your friends at the weekend. You hope to travel next year and go to Australia and New Zealand. After that you will get a job in France and settle down.

## FACTSHEET FOR WOMEN OF THE WORLD

- Women are half the world's population, one third of the official labour force and do nearly two thirds of the world's work hours. Yet they receive directly only one tenth of the world's income and own less than one hundredth of the world's property.
- World-wide, 860 million adults can't read or write. Two thirds of them are women.
- Every year of schooling gained by each child increases her chances of escaping poverty, contributes to economic growth, and strengthens the fabric of democracy.
- Every year of schooling helps a mother to protect her children from malnutrition and disease, and enables young people to defend themselves from infection with HIV.
- World-wide, more boys than girls are immunised and treated by hospitals.
- Girls are at a higher risk of dying before the age of five than boys.
- Women own only 1% of the world's property
- Almost 30% of all families are headed by women on their own – these are amongst the poorest group in society.
- In industrialised countries, roughly two thirds of women's total work burden is spent on unpaid activities and one third on paid. For men, the shares are reversed.
- In virtually every country in the world women work longer hours than men, yet share less in the economic rewards.
- The 'invisible' contribution of women to global wealth amounts to \$11 trillion whilst the invisible contribution of men amounts to an estimated \$5 trillion. (UN report 1995)
- In Ireland women make up 13.7% of national parliament (2000)
- In the Middle East and North African area, non-Muslim women do not have the right to inherit from their Muslim husbands.
- 70% of the world's poor are women
- In Africa, 75% of the agricultural work is carried out by women.

## Section Six Activities

### ACTIVITY IDEAS

#### Introduction:

Working with girls gives them an opportunity to be themselves, to learn something, to be part of a team and to have fun. Working with a group over a period of time allows trust to be built up between the girls and also with the leaders. This trust is very valuable and the times when the group get together may be a very significant time for many of the girls. It is at this age that the peer group is so important for all young people and through the club or girls' group, if we do our work well, friendships will be made which may last for life.

A programme of activities for a girl's group can include discussions, debates, music, drama, cooking and sport, but above all it must be fun! In addition to the exercises on the previous pages it is important to ask the girls themselves what they would like to do. In this section we give ideas for a wide range of activities from short, two-hour sessions to day trips and residential. Add your own ideas to these also and ask the group themselves for more ideas.

#### Before you start

As some of this work may be carried out outside of the club premises, there are some safety issues which must be considered. Remember that you are responsible for the group and must ensure that adequate precautions are taken and that there are a sufficient number of adult leaders with the group. Remember the following:

- Check out your insurance policy
- Be familiar with your child protection guidelines and ensure all staff are trained in these
- Where necessary, get parental consent
- If you are doing adventure activities or other activities which carry a risk, ensure you have qualified leaders or tutors
- Have a sufficient number of adult leaders
- Let other leaders know where you are going and give contact numbers

#### Planning the activities

Planning the activities can be an exercise in itself. Remember that the girls will probably enjoy and participate in an activity more if they have been involved in the planning of it. This can enable girls to gain in confidence, in organisational ability, in being good at working as a team and in pride in their own achievements.

- Ask the group what they would like to do maybe have a suggestion box or a graffiti wall in the club where they can post their ideas.
- Compile all the ideas and discuss them with the group. Look at the positive and negatives of each. Consider practical issues such as budget, equipment, staying over and transport arrangements.
- Prioritise the ideas at a meeting of the group.
- Ask the girls to select one or two for the coming weeks or months.
- For each activity set aside some time for planning.
- Set up small task groups to work on particular areas – for example food, accommodation, equipment, social activities and transport.
- Organise fundraising activities if necessary.

## Ideas for evening (2 hour) sessions

### Practical skills

- Do a session on how to fix a plug.
- Decorating a room get some old magazines on home decorating and design a room. Decorate the meeting room in the club or offer to decorate some other community premises. Get a local person with skills such as wallpapering to act as a 'tutor'.
- Make bedside lamps, which the girls can take home.
- Make a notice board with some cork and wood or mobiles from wire coat-hangers and wire hung with small attractive objects.
- Invite in someone to talk about gardening. Pick a theme like window boxes or indoor plants. Do a session on herb gardens and the medicinal value of herbs.

### Arts

- Do some creative writing. Get the girls to write a poem or a short story or a rap about 'girl power'. Collect all the pieces and put them together. Make a small publication for the girls and their friends and families. This is an excellent way to learn desk-top publishing skills and put them into practice.
- Go to the cinema or watch a video and get the girls to review the film using a number of headings – acting, the plot, humour, easy/difficult to follow, photography, music etc.
- Borrow cameras (or buy disposable ones) or use a video camera to do a profile of the community. Try to take some unusual pictures or footage of parts of areas which people may not normally see.
- Set up a book club. Give 6 weeks or two months for the group to read a particular book and then review it together using particular headings. Use the local library – it's a great way of getting to read all the books you want and usually has even the latest publications.
- See if there is somewhere in the community or a school where you could do a large mural to brighten up the environment. Do a design first on paper and then copy this outside on the particular site.
- Write your own script for a short drama piece about being a girl or some particular issue, which the girls choose themselves. Once it's written, put on a small show for friends and family.
- Do a dance session. Invite someone in to the group to help develop a piece, which could be performed.

**Remember:** Don't forget to check out the Arts Council or talk to your local arts officer about getting funding or other resources to undertake an arts project.

### Sport and outdoor activities

- Organise a football/camoige /rounders/basketball game against another local youth group.
- Plan a short orienteering course around a local park. You can also do street orienteering around the town or a treasure hunt or scavenger hunt. All will familiarise girls with their surroundings and make them more confident out and about.
- Take photos around the town of particular things like a shop/house door, a bridge, any unusual features or derelict buildings. Print and copy the photos and give each team a set of photos. They then have to go out around the town and find the particular things in the photo. They put the address of where they found it on the answer sheet.
- Go swimming. Hire a local pool and go swimming for the evening. Share the hire cost with another girls group and organise a game of water polo.



- Do a session of tai chi, yoga, pilates, aerobics or another similar activity. Get an instructor in to lead the group.
- In the early summer, organise to get up really early some morning (5am!) and go to a local park to hear the 'dawn chorus'.
- Train once a week for the women's mini marathon (June). You can either run or walk it so everyone can take part.
- Go bowling.
- Go ice skating.

### **Visit other groups**

Visit young women from different cultures. For example, meet young women from the refugee/asylum seeking community or a group of young Traveller women.

Visit a young women's group in another part of town and organise some activities or a competition together.

### **Ideas for day trips**

- Contact your local adventure centre or see if you can get a qualified instructor to take the group out. Ideas for activities could include:
  - Hill walking
  - Orienteering
  - Canoeing/kayaking
  - Rock climbing and abseiling

These activities are really good for helping to develop self-confidence and self esteem in girls and also for fostering a team approach in the group. Talk about the activity before you go – what the girls want to get out of it, what kind of support they need, if they don't want to do the activity is there something else they can do at the same time?

- Go to the seaside for the day and make sandcastles! Bring a picnic.
- Go to an art gallery and then go out for lunch.
- Go to a museum. We often forget how much fun this can be. Many people go when they are children and then never go again.
- For groups in the city, organise to go to a farm for the day. See what the average day on a farm is like.

### **Residential trips**

- Go to a hostel for the weekend and organise some outdoor activities.
- Try camping – see if you can borrow equipment from other local youth groups/services or an adventure centre.
- Stay in an adventure centre and organise a varied programme of activities.
- Find a venue where you can have some pampering and relaxation activities.

### **Pampering/looking after yourself**

- Have a make up evening. Take turns doing each other's make up. Swap ideas and tips you have picked up.
- Using fresh ingredients make up facemasks and other pampering recipes. Try the ones in the box on the page here.
- Do an evening on trying different hairstyles.
- Do some relaxation activities such as deep breathing or guided visualisation
- Invite someone in to show the group how to do some basic massage. Start with just hand, head and neck or do a foot massage.
- Learn about aromatherapy. This can be through massage or just the use of essential oils and what each one is good for.

- Have a Swop-shop of clothes.
- Organise make-up and hairstyles sessions. Try to make these fun rather than competitive and striving for the 'perfect' look – for example by encouraging girls to give each other positive feedback about their looks or to play with theatrical make-up.
- Make beauty creams from yoghurt and cucumber; honey mask; salt and fresh cream for a body cleanser. A few easy recipes are:

**Face mask:** 125g natural yoghurt.  
3 inch long piece of cucumber.  
Grate the cucumber, strain the water from it and mix it together with the yoghurt. This should be removed after 15 minutes.

**Face mask:** 125g natural yoghurt.  
2 teaspoons of honey  
Mix both together, cover your face. Exclude areas around eyes and remove after 15 minutes

**Body cleanser:** 250 ml cream.  
2 tablespoons of salt  
Mix salt with cream Rub all over your body and wash it off.  
This is a body cleanser

## Section Seven

### Resources

Body, Mind & Society, by Melanie Revolva , Youth Clubs UK 2002.

C is for Confidence, A guide to running confidence building courses for women of all ages. Russell House Publishing 1988.

Class Act, NYCI policy on Lifelong Learning Educational Disadvantage and Access to Higher and Further Education 2002.

Compass. A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People, Council of Europe 2002.

From the Personal to the Political, A Women's Education Workbook, Aontas Women's Education Group 1991.

Gender Proofing Handbook, NDP Gender Equality, Dept Justice, Equality, Law Reform 2002.

Girls Don't Do Honours- Irish Women in Education in the 19th and 20th Century. Edited by Mary Cullen. Published by Women' Education Bureau 1987 .

Girls Power, Practical strategies for building self esteem, Sheffield Centre for HIV and Sexual Health, Jo Adams 1997.

Go Girls, Supporting Girls' Emotional Development and Building Self Esteem, Sheffield Centre for HIV & Sexual Health, Jo Adams. 2002.

Greater Expectations A source book for working with girls and young women. Tricia Szirom, Sue Dyson, Hazel Slavin. Learning Development Aids 1990.

Holding our own, A handbook for girls and women exploring leadership. Girls Incorporated 1996.

It's a girl thing, a manifesto for girls and young women, YMCA, Oxford England.

Looking Glass, A Positive communication work book – Russell House Publishing 2002.

More Missing Pieces, Her Story of Irish Women, Attic Press, 1985.

Sugar and Spice, NYCI, 1993.

Taking the Initiative, Promoting young people's involvement in public decision making in Ireland. NYCI

The Irish Women's Movement, From Revolution to Devolution, Linda Connolly. Lilliput Press 2003.

The Rights Stuff , An Education Resource on the UN Convention on the rights of the Child.

Women and Irish Society, Beyond the Pale Productions, 1997.

## Useful Websites

Advocates for Youth [www.youthshakers.org](http://www.youthshakers.org)

Amnesty International [www.amnesty.ie](http://www.amnesty.ie)

Barnardos [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

Body Image [www.bodypositive.com](http://www.bodypositive.com)

Bullfrog Films [www.bullfrogfilms.com](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com)

Centre for the Advancement of Women In Politics [www.qub.ac.uk/cawp](http://www.qub.ac.uk/cawp)

Centre for Excellence For Youth Engagement ( Young Women Connect , Canada)  
[www.tgmaq.ca/ywc](http://www.tgmaq.ca/ywc)

Centre for HIV & Sexual Health, Sheffield, England. [www.sexualhealthsheffield.co.uk](http://www.sexualhealthsheffield.co.uk)

Children in war [www.childreninwar.com/](http://www.childreninwar.com/)

Children's Law Centre [www.childrenslawcentre.org](http://www.childrenslawcentre.org)

Childrens Rights Alliance [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)

Combat Poverty [www.cpa.ie](http://www.cpa.ie)

Comhlamh [www.comhlamh.ie](http://www.comhlamh.ie)

Concern [www.concern.ie](http://www.concern.ie)

Crisis Pregnancy Agency, Dublin [www.crisispregnancy.ie](http://www.crisispregnancy.ie)

Council of Europe [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

Equality Authority [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

Equality for Women Measure. [www.ewm.ie](http://www.ewm.ie)

European Institute of Women's Health [www.eurohealth.ie](http://www.eurohealth.ie)

European Women's Lobby EWL [www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)

European Youth Forum [www.yef.org](http://www.yef.org)

FeMiNa, Site for, by and about women [www.femina.com](http://www.femina.com)

Girls Education Unicef [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

Girls Inc [www.girlsinc.org](http://www.girlsinc.org)

Girls source [www.girlssource.org](http://www.girlssource.org)

Groups Working on Girls Issues [www.girlsrights.org](http://www.girlsrights.org)

Health and Wellness website just for girls, IEmily [www.iemily.com](http://www.iemily.com)

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Congress) [www.ictu.ie](http://www.ictu.ie)

Irish Council for Civil Liberties [www.iccl.ie](http://www.iccl.ie)

Irish society for the prevention of cruelty to children [www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie)

International Labour Organisation [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

Irish Family Planning Association [www.ifpa.ie](http://www.ifpa.ie)

Irish Girls Guides [www.irishgirlguides.ie](http://www.irishgirlguides.ie)

[www.waggsworld.org](http://www.waggsworld.org)

The Irish Site For Eating Disorder [www.bodywhys.ie](http://www.bodywhys.ie)

MS Magazine [www.msmagazine.com](http://www.msmagazine.com)

National Children's Office [www.nco.ie](http://www.nco.ie)

National Youth Council of Ireland [www.nyci.ie](http://www.nyci.ie)

National Youth Federation of Ireland [www.nyf.ie](http://www.nyf.ie)

National Women's Council of Ireland. [www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie)

NDP Gender Equality Unit Department of Justice [www.ndpgenderequality.ie](http://www.ndpgenderequality.ie)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

Open Parent Exchange Network [www.oneparent.ie](http://www.oneparent.ie)

Pavee Point [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie)

Rape Crisis Network Ireland [www.rcni.com](http://www.rcni.com)

Sexual Health and Relationship Issues [www.yieldireland.com](http://www.yieldireland.com)

Travellers Centre [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie)

Trocaire [www.trocaire.ie](http://www.trocaire.ie)

Trust for the Study of Adolescence [www.tsa.uk.com](http://www.tsa.uk.com)

Unesco Education for all [www.unesco.org/education/efa](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa)

Union Students in Ireland [www.usi.ie](http://www.usi.ie)

United Nations Girls Education Initiative [www.undg.org](http://www.undg.org)

Well Women Centres. Ireland. [www.wellwoman.ie](http://www.wellwoman.ie)

Women's Aid [www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)

Women's Educational Research and Resource Centre, UCD [www.werrc.ie](http://www.werrc.ie)

Women's Health Council [www.whc.ie](http://www.whc.ie)

Women's Human Rights Alliance [www.whra-ireland.org](http://www.whra-ireland.org)

Women's Human Rights Network [www.whrnet.org](http://www.whrnet.org)

Women's Image Network, Winfemme International Film Festival

[www.winfemme.com](http://www.winfemme.com)

Women's Institute for Leadership and Development (WILD)

[www.wildforhumanrights.org](http://www.wildforhumanrights.org)

Women's Studies Centre, Trinity College Dublin [www.tcd.ie/womens\\_studies](http://www.tcd.ie/womens_studies)

Youth Action [www.youthaction.ie](http://www.youthaction.ie)

Youth Clubs UK [www.youthclubs.org.uk](http://www.youthclubs.org.uk)

Youth Parliament [www.dailnanog.ie](http://www.dailnanog.ie)

# A glossary of terms relating to sexism, feminism and women's rights

Anti Sexists	Strategies and methods to counter the behaviour, language and policies which discriminate against women
Discrimination	Making distinctions between people and denying them opportunities on the grounds of issues other than ability or qualifications for example gender.
Equal Opportunities	Ensuring that everyone has an equal chance to develop their full potential.
Equal Rights	The same rights in law and in society, free from discrimination e.g. to education, health and expectation regardless of gender, race, sexuality, age etc
Equality	The idea that no individual should be less equal in opportunity or in human rights than any other
Ethnic Group	A distinctive culturally characteristic group of people
Feminist	A women who is actively working towards a society based on equality for all people, of either gender.
Non sexist	Anything which treats or portrays men and women as equal.
Non sexist language	Language which includes women and does not for example use 'he' or 'men' or 'mankind' to refer to people of both sexes
Non-traditional jobs	Jobs which have traditionally been denied to women and considered as male-only occupations, e.g. building, engineering, plumbing.
Oppression and injustice	To keep people inferior and unequal through coercion
Patriarchy	A system based on the belief that men have the automatic right to power and to govern, regardless of merit
Positive Action	Action taken to redress past inequalities of opportunity. This aims to wipe out disadvantages which stop people competing on an equal footing.
Positive Discrimination	Actions taken to correct an unequal state of affairs, where



there has not been equality of outcome, by discriminating e.g. on the basis of sex. For example when previously under represented groups (such as women) are included.

Prejudice particular people	Preconceived opinions or bias against or in favour of
Role Models	People whose actions, behaviours and lives we look to and may model ourselves on
Sexism	Discrimination against women on the basis on their sex
Sexist on their sex	Anything that discriminates against women on the basis
Sexual Harassment	Unwanted and uninvited sexual attention such as touching, comments, suggestions or pressure to have sexual Intercourse
Sexual Orientation	How an individual expresses and directs his/her desire. People can direct their desire towards people of the same sex, towards people of the opposite sex and towards people of either sex.
Stereotypes	Preconceived ideas of individuals, groups, and objects
Suffragist/Suffragette	A person – usually but not always female – who actively struggled for the vote for women in the early 1900's
Travellers	A socially and culturally distinct group of Irish people with a different cultural identity.
Women Liberation	A movement of individual women and women's groups struggling to change social and financial systems, which disadvantage women
Women's Movement	A broad coalition of women engaged in activities to improve women's status in society.

