

# AND...ACTION!

A TOOL FOR YOUTH  
DEVELOPED BY  
YWCA MONTREAL'S  
YOUTH SERVICES



*WYCA*

And...Action is a program developed by YWCA Montreal's Youth Services to help youth aged 12 to 18 tackle issues related to teen healthy relationships such as identity, gender, sexuality, consent, mental health, racism, sexism, how the media influences us, and much more. From 2013 to 2017, more than 140 students in ten different high schools across Montreal participated in the program through various interactive media projects, group activities and discussions.

**We hope this booklet can help you reflect  
on what these ideas and answers mean to you!**



**CONTENT**

Hannah Miller  
Jade Goldfarb

**COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN**

Julie Rainville  
Raffaella Paolone  
Waxhead

**REVISION**

Janic Galibois  
Lilia Goldfarb  
Jennifer Vrouvides  
Jade Le Maire  
Alexandra Pelletier  
Tania Baladi  
Aula Sabra



# WHO AM I?

**This is a question that becomes especially important during adolescence as we choose who we want to be friends with, who we want to date and what career path(s) we might want to follow. There are many aspects to one's identity from more visible things like the colour of our skin and the style of clothing we wear, to less obvious things like our values, types of music we listen to, the languages we speak, our personal beliefs, strengths and hopes for the future.**

## FILL IN THE BLANKS:

My name: .....

I prefer others use the name ..... instead.

My age: ..... I use the pronoun (ex: he, she, they, etc.): .....

The country I was born in: .....

The languages I speak: .....

The religion I practice is: .....

The music I listen to: .....

I am attracted to: .....

My strengths: .....

.....

What I would like to improve about myself: .....

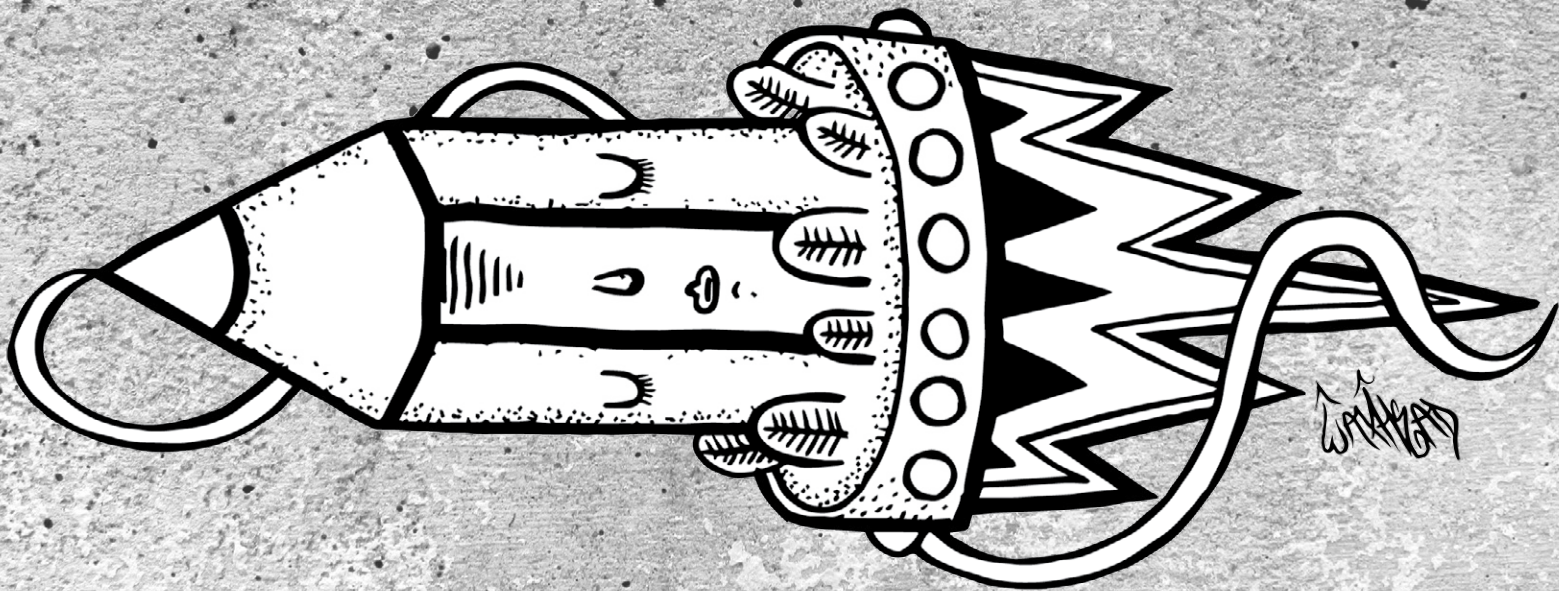
.....

What I am most proud of: .....

.....

I want others to remember me as: .....

.....



W. H. H. H. H.

## WHO AM I ATTRACTED TO?

# SEX, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

One important question during adolescence is related to our *gender identity* and *who we are attracted to*. This can be especially confusing to figure out if we think our friends, family or community won't accept how we look, act or who we date. Here are some terms and definitions to keep in mind but remember, these terms are changing over-time:

- ➔ **Biological sex characteristics** = Physical characteristics (e.g. having a penis, vagina, breasts, beard, etc.), genes (XX chromosomes, XY chromosomes, other combinations, etc.) and hormones (estrogens, progesterone, testosterone, etc.).
- ➔ **Intersex** = Someone born with both male and female physical characteristics, genes and/or hormones.
- ➔ **Gender** = The way society expects people to look and act depending on their biological sex.
- ➔ **Gender identity** = The gender one identifies with, be it male, female, other, a blend or neither.
- ➔ **Cisgender** = When one's gender identity is the same as the sex assigned at birth.
- ➔ **Transgender** = When one's gender identity is different from the sex assigned at birth.
- ➔ **Sexual orientation** = Who someone is attracted to physically, sexually, romantically, aesthetically or otherwise. One can be attracted to someone of the opposite-sex, same-sex, both, or neither.



### RESOURCES:

[www.gaiecouture.org](http://www.gaiecouture.org) (or call 514-866-0103 or email [aide@gaiecouture.org](mailto:aide@gaiecouture.org)), GRIS Montréal [www.gris.ca](http://www.gris.ca), [www.arcenciadafrique.org](http://www.arcenciadafrique.org)



# sex: HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM READY?

## ➔ ASK YOURSELF SOME QUESTIONS!

**There are many types of sexual activity, each of which carry their own risks – physical, emotional and otherwise. It can be easy to get swept up by excitement in the moment and so it's useful to ask yourself some questions beforehand, including:**

- X Do I want this for myself, or for the other person?
- X What type of sexual activity do I want with this person?
- X Why do I want to do this?
- X Do I feel ready physically, emotionally and intellectually?
- X What about the other person? Do we want the same thing?
- X Am I comfortable with the person? The timing? The environment?
- X What are my limits?

### RESOURCES:

[www.scarleteen.com](http://www.scarleteen.com) ; [www.headandhands.ca](http://www.headandhands.ca),  
[www.ywcairightsguide.ca](http://www.ywcairightsguide.ca), [www.sexted.org](http://www.sexted.org) (or text 514-700-0445)

- X Do I feel comfortable expressing my limits? Do I feel safe saying NO or STOP at any moment?
- X What are some ways of letting my partner know that I don't want to have sex?
- X Is the other person respecting my limits?
- X Am I respecting their limits – their words and their body language?
- X Am I clear on the potential consequences?
- X Do I feel prepared to deal with the potential consequences?
- X Are there actions I can take to avoid potential negative consequences?

**\* Remember that you can stop at any time! Consent needs to be given freely, without any pressure. You can't truly consent when under the influence of drugs and alcohol because it blurs your judgement.**





W. M. 10/17

# SEX: STAYING SAFE

## **DID YOU KNOW?** At 14 years old...

- You can see a doctor without your parents' consent.
- You can get an abortion without parental permission.

### **What are different types of birth control?**

Intra-uterine device/IUD

Contraceptive pill (often known as 'the pill')

Birth control patch

Birth control shot

Vaginal ring

Spermicides

Diaphragm

Cervical cap

Condoms

Female condoms

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Birth control does not help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs)? The only way to avoid unwanted infections is by properly and consistently using condoms, female condoms or dental dams.

### **RESOURCES:**

<https://www.educaloi.qc.ca/en/youth/are-you-old-enough>, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control>,  
Women's health center: <http://www.csfmontreal.qc.ca/>, <http://www.cliniquedelalternative.com/en/abortion.html>



W. H. R. 1977

# SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE

Unfortunately, we live in a world where not all human beings have equal access to power, wealth and resources. Oppression refers to systems of power where some groups exploit and control land and people in order to maintain their privilege.

*Privilege* can be defined as a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, geographical location, ability, religion, etc.)

Social justice is a movement that seeks to transform oppressive systems of power into one's that are empowering and shared by all.

## → SOME QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON:

X In what ways do I experience oppression in my own life? In relation to what aspects of my identity?

.....  
.....

X In what ways do I experience privilege in my own life? In relation to what aspects of my identity?

.....  
.....

X How can I be a better ally to others who experience oppression?

.....  
.....

X What causes do I feel passionate about?

.....  
.....



### RESOURCES:

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/09/what-is-privilege/>



# MENTAL HEALTH: DEPRESSION

**Sadness and worry are normal emotions that come and go throughout our lifetime. A key difference between sadness and depression is the length and strength of the emotions and whether they are interfering with everyday life:**

- X** Are the feelings of sadness lasting more than two weeks?
- X** Are the feelings constant?
- X** Are they having an impact on schoolwork, relationships, physical health, enjoyment, everyday activities?

**If you answered yes to these questions, talk to someone you know and trust or consult one of the resources below.**

## **RESOURCES:**

Herzl Clinic Teenage Health Unit for youth ages 13-19 (514-340-8242)  
Suicide Action Montreal : [www.suicideactionmontreal.org](http://www.suicideactionmontreal.org)  
Tel-Jeunes : (text : 514-600-1002), <http://en.teljeunes.com/home>

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

- ➔ By age 25, 1 in 5 Canadians will have developed a mental illness ([www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca))
- ➔ Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in 15-24 year old Canadians, second only to accidents ([www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca))
- ➔ Today, approximately 5% of male youth and 12% of female youth, age 12 to 19, have experienced a major depressive episode ([www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca))



# MENTAL HEALTH: SELF-CARE

**During adolescence, there are a lot of changes to manage on a physical, social and emotional level. Taking care of our mental health refers to our ability to manage these changes and stressors in our life in an optimal way - it is something that is constantly evolving and requires constant maintenance. Just like we take care of our physical health, we have to take care of our mental and emotional health!**

X Things I can do to improve my physical well-being:

.....  
.....  
.....

(Ex: staying active, eating well, sleeping well, avoiding alcohol and drugs)



X Things I can do to improve my mental well-being:

.....  
.....  
.....

(Ex: learning new skills)

X Things I can do to improve my social and emotional well-being:

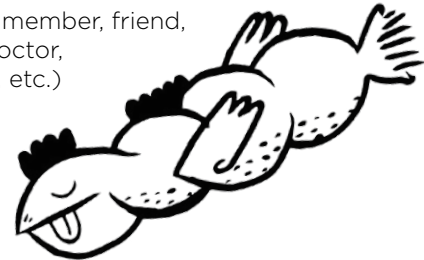
.....  
.....  
.....

(Ex: learning better communication skills, empathy)

X People I can talk to:

.....  
.....  
.....

(Ex: parent, teacher, family member, friend, coach, school counsellor, doctor, psychologist, social worker, etc.)







# HOW THE MEDIA INFLUENCES ME

**The media is a useful tool that allows us to communicate, socialize, and stay connected and informed with the world that surrounds us. Unfortunately, unless we take the time to think critically about the images and messages we receive from the media we can become impacted in a negative way. Here are some questions to ask yourself to develop your critical thinking:**

- X** Is the source of the information credible or reliable?  
.....  
.....
- X** Is someone trying to discretely sell me a product or service?  
.....  
.....
- X** Are the images unrealistic? Why?  
.....  
.....
- X** Is this image photoshopped? What for?  
.....  
.....

**X** What are the values behind this message or these images? Do these line up with my own values?

.....  
.....

**X** Will this content benefit or harm someone?

.....  
.....

## HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR SAFELY NAVIGATING THE INTERNET:

- ➔ Don't use the internet if you are feeling impulsive
- ➔ Think carefully about what personal information you want to share and with whom. For example, you can control the privacy settings of your online accounts
- ➔ Avoid sharing passwords with others



A tool produced by Youth Services



New paths  
for women  
since 1875

<http://www.ydesfemmesmtl.org/en/youth-services>

Made possible with the financial support of



ISBN: 978-2-923046-40-2

• Legal Deposit - Bibliothèques et Archives nationales du Québec, 2017

© Y des femmes de Montréal (YWCA), 2017