Self-esteem: Participants develop ways to build their self-esteem; participants discuss obstacles to high self-esteem. While these lessons specifically address the topic of self-esteem, most lessons in the Girls Only toolkit help build self-esteem.

Lesson plans:

- 1) "I am..." poem
- 2) Qualities I Love
- 3) Compliments
- 4) Silhouette
- 5) Beauty

Lesson: "I am..." poem

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How do you identify yourself? How do you see yourself?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants describe themselves using "I am..." statements; participants practice saying positive things about themselves; participants build empathy by learning about each other and observing commonalities.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: According to cultural scholars, our identities are not static, but rather ever-changing based on our experiences as we move through the world. Describing elements of your identity can help you engage in self-reflection and focus on aspects of yourself you are proud of or aspects of yourself or your life you would like to change. When young women **"know who they are," that is, when they are confident in their identity and with the fact that** some parts of who they are will change, they are less likely to give in to peer-pressure and be involved in risky behavior such as drugs, violence, and early sexual interactions. This exercise **allows participants to identify who they are and how they feel at this moment in their life (ex: "I am a student" or "I am scared that I will not graduate from high school").**

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils, markers, crayons
- Small mirrors
- Picture frames
- Craft supplies: stickers, colored paper, special pens

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 hour-1 and a half hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Set up craft supplies and a frame for each participant.

2. Explain that in this activity participants will get to describe themselves in a poem. They will get to share how they feel, how they see themselves, what they like to do, what they are good

at, and what they wish for. There are no rules except that each statement should begin with "I am..." Statements can be positive, negative, or neutral, but they should be true. The poems will be about 10 lines and each stanza will begin or end with "I am <u>"participant's name</u>" 3. Give an example of your own "I am..." poem.

I am a teacher. I am a woman. I am a dancer. I am Gabriela.

I am a child of divorce. I am worried sometimes. I am happy when I am cooking. I am Gabriela.

I am a volunteer. I am hopeful. I am grateful for my friends. I am Gabriela.

4. Give each participant paper and a pen or pencil. Direct them to write 10 to 15 "I am..." statements on their paper. If they need help thinking of statements, provide them with suggestions of adjectives, feelings, or descriptions of themselves based on what you know about them. Give participants 10 to 15 minutes to write their statements.

5. When each participant has written 10 to 15 "I am..." statements, direct them to get into pairs. Have participants choose which partner will go first. This partner will read their "I am..." statements first.

6. Pass out a mirror to each pair.

7. Have one partner be the listener and hold up the mirror so that the partner who is reading can see themselves in the mirror. When you say to begin, have all of the readers read their poems out loud while looking directly at themselves in the mirror. When everyone is finished, have them read their poem again, this time looking directly at their partner, not at themselves in the mirror. Remind the participants who are listening that it is ok to look into someone's eyes; it shows that you are interested in what they are saying, even if it feels a little uncomfortable.

8. Switch partners and repeat the activity.

9. When all participants have read their poems aloud, collect the mirrors. Ask participants to quickly share: How did it feel to read your poem while looking at yourself in the mirror? How did it feel to read it while looking at your partner?

10. Have participants return to their seats.

11. Direct participants to choose their favorite "I am..." statements to include in their finished "I am..." poem. They can choose them all or only a few. Their poem should be about 3 stanzas. Have them write out a draft of their poem, including the "I am "<u>participant's name</u>" lines. 12. Give participants time to write out a final copy of their poem on paper that will fit into the frames. Allow them to decorate their poems and their frames creatively! Clean up supplies when finished.

13. Display the "I am..." poems throughout the Girls Only space. Have participants walk around to look at each other's poems and creativity or give time to do this another day. Allow participants to take their poems home at the end of the Girls Only session.

JOURNAL PROMPT: How did it make you feel to describe yourself? Do you like who you are? What would you not change about who you are? What do you want to change?

EVALUATION: Did participants write "I am..." poems? Were participants engaged in describing themselves? Did you observe participants gaining confidence as they described themselves in the mirror and to their partners?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create "You are..." poems where they practice giving and receiving compliments by describing positive aspects about their peers.

Lesson: Qualities I Love (adapted from TKF) ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What characteristics do you love about yourself?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants identify qualities about themselves they like and are proud of; participants create a craft project representing those qualities.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Self-esteem is defined as how you see yourself, how much you value yourself, how important you think you are, and how you feel about your accomplishments. Recognizing and being proud of your strengths is different from bragging or believing you are perfect. Having self-esteem means knowing you are worthy of being loved and accepted. Even if there are many things you may want to change about yourself, focusing on your positive **qualities or those that you don't want to change is a powerful exercise in building confidence.** Teaching young people to love themselves and value their bodies, especially as they mature through puberty, helps them navigate pressures and difficulties they face as they enter adulthood.

MATERIALS:

- Colored paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Stickers or other decorative craft supplies
- Pens, pencils, crayons

LENGTH OF LESSON: 25 to 30 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be thinking about themselves and all the qualities they are proud of or love about themselves. These qualities can be physical (ex: I love my hair, eyes, strong arms, feet that allow me to walk and dance) or otherwise (ex: I love that I am loyal to my friends, I love that I try hard in school, I love that I treat people with respect). 2. Remind participants this project is not about bragging, we are not trying to make anyone feel bad if they do not have the same quality. Tell them this project is about being proud your own strengths and loving yourself. Tell them that even though there may be some things we want to change about ourselves, it is also very important to recognize the things we would not want to change.

3. Direct participants to write 5 to 10 qualities they possess in their journals. Assist as necessary. Give 5 to 10 minutes for them to brainstorm.

4. When participants have finished writing in their journals, pass out the scissors, paper, glue, pens, pencils, and crayons, and other craft supplies.

5. Explain that they will be making flowers out of paper. On each petal of the flower, they will write a quality they love about themselves.

6. Demonstrate cutting out flower petals and remind participants their petals can look however they want them to. Participants should cut out 5 to 7 petals. Demonstrate cutting out one small/medium sized circle to be the center of the flower. Participants can use any color paper they wish.

7. Direct participants to write their top qualities from their journal onto each flower petal. They can write their name in the center.

8. When participants have finished writing their qualities on the petals, demonstrate putting glue on the back of center piece and gluing each petal to the back. Direct participants to glue their petals to the back of the center piece. Assist as necessary.

9. When participants have completed their craft, invite them to share the qualities they love about themselves with the group.

10. Hang the "Qualities I Love" flowers around the Girls Only space or allow participants to take them home.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is a quality you **like about yourself you don't often show others? How** can you show it more? What is a quality you like about yourself that you do often show others? How can you show it more?

EVALUATION: Were participants able to identify positive qualities about themselves? Did participants create a "Qualities I Possess" flower craft?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Participants can practice giving and receiving compliments by making similar flowers identifying qualities they admire in their friends. This activity can be expanded to teach participants about types of flowers, flower parts, and plant life.

Lesson: Compliments

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How do you give a compliment? Why do you give a compliment? How do you receive a compliment? How do compliments make you feel? OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants practice giving and receiving compliments verbally; participants gain confidence by identifying personal talents and practice being respectful by identifying admirable qualities in others.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Think about how good it feels to hear someone say something nice **about you, about how you look, about something you did, or something you created. That's the** power of compliments! Young women sometimes have trouble giving compliments to each other for fear that the object of their admiration will find them jealous or insincere. Similarly young women sometimes have trouble accepting compliments, often thinking the giver of the compliment is making fun of them, is jealous or insincere. Teaching young women not to be afraid to give a compliment and how to accept a compliment can help them maintain healthy friendships and be proud of their own strengths, thereby resisting peer pressure, avoiding friends who don't treat them with respect and helping build self-esteem.

LENGTH OF LESSON: 20 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Have participants sit comfortably in a circle in chairs or on the floor. Sit in the circle with participants.

2. Explain that today they will be giving each other compliments or saying nice things about each other. Explain that telling someone something nice about how they look, something they did, or something they created makes them feel good. Just think about the last time someone **gave you a compliment and how it made you feel! Compliments can make someone's day! Tell** them that it also makes you feel good to give a compliment because it makes someone else feel good! Explain that they will be getting and giving compliments today.

3. Explain how the pattern will go. Someone will start by giving a compliment to their neighbor. That neighbor will say "thank you" and then give a compliment in return. Then they will turn to their other neighbor and repeat the pattern.

4. Give an example as the facilitator by turning to your neighbor and giving them a compliment followed by their name: "Your hair looks beautiful today, Sarah" or "I like that you are always helpful, Sarah." Direct that participant to accept the compliment graciously by saying thank you and then the giver's name: "Thank you, Ms. Lopez." Then direct the participant to give a compliment in return: "Your outfit is nice today, Ms. Lopez." Accept the compliment graciously: "Thank you, Sarah." Direct the participant to turn to the neighbor on their other side and give them a compliment.

4. Continue around the circle until everyone has received a compliment from each of their neighbors, graciously received each compliment, and given a compliment in return

5. When compliments have been given and received all around the circle, ask participants to share how it felt to get compliments. Ask participants to share how it felt to give compliments.

6. Remind participants they might not always get a compliment back or get a satisfying response as they did in this practice, but it will feel good to make someone else feel good anyways. Remind participants they have nothing to lose by giving compliments and they should give them freely!

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is the best compliment you ever received? How did it make you feel? What is the best compliment you ever gave? How did it make you feel to give it?

EVALUATION: Did participants practice giving compliments? Did participants practice receiving compliments? Did participants share how it felt to give and receive compliments?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants practice giving compliments to their parents, siblings, and friends and to report back.

Lesson: Silhouette Reflection ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What do you admire about your friends?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants identify positive attributes in each other; participants create likenesses of each other decorated with positive descriptions.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Girls ages 8 to 12 are physically and developmentally changing as they mature and go through puberty. As young people begin to form their sense of self and their own opinions during their impressionable pre-teen years, they are bombarded with messages from numerous cultural and social influences, including their parents, family, siblings, friends, peers, teachers, extra-curricular activity leaders, and the media. Teaching young women to recognize admirable qualities in others, give compliments, and accept compliments helps them maintain healthy friendships and can help them be proud of their own strengths, **thereby resisting peer pressure, avoiding friends who don't treat them with respect, and** helping build self-esteem. Recognizing and being proud of your strengths is different from bragging or believing you are perfect. Even if there are many things you may want to change **about yourself, focusing on your positive qualities or those you don't want to change is a** powerful exercise in building confidence. Teaching young people to love themselves and value their bodies, especially as they mature through puberty, helps them navigate pressures and difficulties they face as they enter adulthood.

MATERIALS:

- Large pieces of butcher paper
- Crayons or markers

LENGTH OF LESSON: 20 to 30 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Prepare large pieces of butcher paper long enough to fit participant's bodies.

2. Begin by explaining that today participants will be thinking about all the good things they think and see about each other. Remind them that sometimes it is difficult to remember all the great things about yourself, especially if people sometimes say mean things to you or about you. But sometimes other people can see positive things about you even if you have trouble seeing them or remembering them. Give an example: "Theresa may not know it, but I think she is brave and smart for asking questions during Girls Only." Explain that today they will be giving each other compliments or saying nice things about each other. Remind them that telling someone something nice about how they look, something they did, or something they created makes them feel good. Just think about the last time someone gave you a compliment and how it made you feel! Tell them it also makes you feel good to give a compliments today; they will see how they look reflected in someone else's eyes.

3. Explain the activity. Participants will trace an outline, or a silhouette, of each other and then write positive words about each other on the silhouette.

4. Divide participants into pairs or small groups. Pass out butcher paper, crayons, and markers.
5. Direct participants to have the first model lie on the floor on top of the butcher paper. Have the other partner trace an outline of their partner's body using a crayon or marker. After the person is traced, have all members of the group decorate the silhouette to look like the person and write positive words about that person (examples: kind, helpful, funny, smart, enthusiastic, etc).

6. Repeat until all participants have been traced and have positive words written about them.

7. When everyone has been traced, ask participants to share: How did it feel to describe your friend? How did it feel to hear the positive things your friend said about you?8. Participants can take their silhouettes home and hang them up to remind them of all the wonderful things other people see in them.

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you made a silhouette reflection of yourself, what would you write on it? How did it feel to describe your friend? How did it feel to hear the positive things your friend said about you?

EVALUATION: Did participants trace a silhouette of their partner? Did participants identify positive characteristics in each other?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create a silhouette reflection of themselves as if they were looking into a mirror.

Lesson: Beauty (adapted from SDCOE) ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is beauty?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants create their own definitions of beauty; participants identify beautiful elements of themselves; participants deconstruct popular ideals of beauty.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Unrealistic and unhealthy body expectations, including "ideal" sizes, weights, abilities, and physical attributes, influence girls' understandings of what is beautiful. Body image, or how one views one's own body, is an essential element of self-esteem: in general, those who view their bodies positively have higher self-esteem than those who view their bodies negatively. Girls ages 8 to 12 are at an age in which their minds and bodies are changing and developing: body hair begins to grow, menstrual cycles begin to flow, and hormones influence emotions. Standards of "normal" and "beautiful" put forward by the media, parents, peers, and society at large (i.e. thin body, small clothing size, large breasts, no hair except on your head) mean that girls at this age often feel pressured to look a certain way. This pressure sadly manifests as low self-esteem, eating disorders, desire for plastic surgery, self-mutilation, and bullying or aggression. The average age at which girls begin dieting, Baeza notes, is nine-years-old (Baeza 1). Although beauty is ultimately subjective, escape from the pressure to attempt to conform to these bodily expectations is challenging. Encouraging girls to accept and appreciate their bodies as they are, expanding the definition of beauty and recognizing beauty everywhere, providing opportunities for a variety of physical activities, discussing healthy eating habits, providing healthy snacks and meals, teaching girls how to give and receive compliments, deconstructing media images, and presenting positive role models who embody a variety of sizes, weights, abilities, and appearances are effective strategies for promoting self-esteem and positive body-image.

MATERIALS:

- Pens and pencils
- Small pieces of paper, 3 per participant
- Small bowl
- Pictures of plastic surgery
- Videos or online videos about women and beauty

LENGTH OF LESSON: 30 minutes to 45 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Pass out three small pieces of paper to each participant. Ask participants, without discussing, to write down their answer to this question: what do you see or feel about your body when you look in the mirror? Tell them their answers are anonymous.

2. Have them fold their papers in half and drop them in the bowl.

3. Explain that you will draw each paper out of the bowl, read it out loud, and then they will have to decide if the comment on the paper is positive, negative, or somewhere in the middle.

For example, if a paper says, "fat thighs" or "ugly face" you would put it in the negative pile. If a paper says, "strong arms" or "pretty face" you would put it in the positive pile. If a paper says, "tall" or "long hair" you would put it in the neutral pile.

4. When all the papers are sorted, ask participants to check and see which pile is the biggest. Was it the negative pile? Ask participants why they are so critical of themselves and where they think that comes from.

5. Now ask participants to name things that are beautiful. Ask them to explain what makes that thing or person beautiful. Examples include: sunset, [name of celebrity], my mom, the clouds in the sky, a necklace, the ocean, someone being kind to someone else, someone singing. 6. Remind participants of the variety of things they just identified as beautiful. Lead a discussion based on the following questions: What makes someone or something beautiful? Who decides what or who is beautiful? Does everyone see the same things as beautiful (is beauty objective or subjective)? Ask them why they might not have included themselves on that list of things that are beautiful. Do you really believe you are not beautiful? Is beauty on the inside or the outside or both? Is there a difference between bragging and being proud of yourself? Is looking "perfect" the same as being beautiful? Ask for examples of ways people can be beautiful. Ask them to expand their definition of beauty beyond how something looks and if it is popular. 7. After the discussion, show videos and photos about women and beauty, the fashion and cosmetic industry, plastic surgery, and eating disorders. Continue the previous discussion, asking participants to reflect on what they see. Prompt them with further questions such as: Why might someone get plastic surgery? Why might someone hurt themselves in order to look thin? What would you say to a friend if they are unhappy with how their body looks? What can you do to remind yourself how beautiful you are?

8. After the discussion, have participants turn to a neighbor and say three things they think are beautiful about themselves. Then have them turn to another neighbor and tell that neighbor three things they think are beautiful about that person. They can say elements of inner beauty or outer beauty or a combination of both.

9. Finish the lesson by telling all participants that they are beautiful! Remind them that you see how smart, unique, and creative they all are and that that makes them beautiful to you. Remind them to be confident in themselves and that loving yourself for exactly who you are at this moment is what is beautiful.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What makes you beautiful? Describe something beautiful you saw. What made it beautiful?

EVALUATION: Did participants define beauty? Did participants identify beautiful elements of themselves? Did participants deconstruct ideals of beauty?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants keep a beauty log, keeping track of everything, everyone, and every event they find throughout the week that is beautiful.