This Facilitator’s Guide is meant to serve as a companion resource to “Your Life, Your Relationships: A Guide for Youth in Transition.” This publication is intended for individuals, agencies, and programs serving “unaccompanied alien children” (UAC) who enter the United States, and are transferred from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), to the custody of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR is responsible for housing unaccompanied children and providing essential services in facilities and through foster care programs throughout the United States.

As a provider working with unaccompanied children, you have a unique opportunity to help UAC become happy and healthy young adults, and remain safe even after they leave your care. Since many of the youth in your care were exposed to violence or abuse at an early age, and have been separated from close relatives, their conceptions of healthy relationships may be distorted and they may have difficulty cultivating positive self-esteem. While you cannot assure the future well-being of youth following release, you have a small window to educate them on fundamental topics relating to self-respect, love of self and others, appropriate boundaries and consent, violence, and diversity. This guide does not provide medical information on reproductive and sexual health. We encourage you to include this information in the training you provide, in consultation with your ORR program officer and based on the approved state curriculum in your jurisdiction. Many adolescents in your care have never been exposed to reliable, age-appropriate and factual information about healthy relationships or sexuality. This guide is designed to complement the basic sexual and reproductive health training all adolescents need.
“Your Life, Your Relationships: A Guide for Youth in Transition” is designed to be flexible, depending upon time and resources. Ideally, programs will be able to devote at two to three hours to teaching and discussing this material. The material presented in this facilitator’s guide can be found in the workbook, but also includes some new activities and talking points specifically for your use when teaching this curriculum. Participants may be able to fill out their workbooks on their own time, but the topics are important enough that we encourage UAC programs to go through and teach the Guide directly, or at least to create the space and time for UAC to discuss what they have read with a facilitator. We encourage you to facilitate each module in a way that allows UAC to talk about their experiences and concerns, explore questions, and support each other as they pass through adolescence and transition to a new life in the United States. The themes discussed in this curriculum and in the guide are essential to their healthy adjustment, not just as new immigrants, but as adolescents and teenagers whose emotions, physical changes, and new surroundings all make this a particularly challenging, but exciting, time in their lives.

A FEW TIPS FOR FACILITATION

You don’t have all the answers:

It can be intimidating to facilitate conversations with young people when there is an expectation that as the adult, you will have all the answers. The best modeling a facilitator can offer is to show that it’s normal to not have an answer; to show that it is okay to conduct research or find an expert on the topic, and demonstrate steps to take in doing so. This teaches youth not just what to learn but how to learn.

Be aware of your own values:

It is okay to have your own values and your own beliefs about what’s right and wrong. You have the right to your personal beliefs; one of your responsibilities is to ensure participants are given all the information and support they need to form their own beliefs and values. It is helpful to explore your own values on some of the topics discussed in this curriculum and consider how you would discuss the topic with a young person in a way that is comprehensive, open, and judgment-free.

Avoid making assumptions:

The youth in your care will share a lot in common but will still have diverse life experiences. When choosing your language, be careful not to make assumptions about participants’ relationships with themselves, their relationships with friends and family, their romantic and sexual histories, their use of drugs and alcohol, their gender identity, or their sexual orientation.

Who are resource people?

Many young people have complicated relationships with their families of origin. It is important to use inclusive language when making reference to resource people, to whom one can turn to for questions or if in need of help. Avoid language that assumes someone has parents or other adults in a child’s family who are automatically available as a source of support. It is helpful to use language such as, “You may
want to find an adult in your life you can turn to…” Or, “We are affected by many messages we receive growing up, such as from family or friends, the adults in our home growing up, or the people who helped raise us.”

**Be inclusive:**

The goal is to be inclusive, no matter the subject matter and no matter the format of the discussion. Ask yourself if there is anything you are saying that could, in any way, make someone feel excluded, silenced, or ignored.

- *Don’t stigmatize those who have engaged in sexual relations.* Some of the UAC in your care may have been sexually active, either by choice, economic necessity, or through coercion. Be mindful of the language and tone you use, because you don’t want to marginalize or shame participants who have been sexually active in the past.

- *Automatically linking sexual behavior to reproduction.* This can be marginalizing for lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people. Instead of emphasizing that sex can lead to pregnancy, try saying, “unprotected sex between males and females creates a risk for pregnancy.” When it comes to health, it is important to be as specific as possible.

- *Using gendered pronouns and language.* Consider why or when you use gendered pronouns (such as he, him, his, she, her, and hers) including when talking to an adolescent about a boyfriend or girlfriend. When we assume that an adolescent is attracted to the opposite sex or assign a gender identity, we are sending a signal that the adolescent cannot be open about who he or she is. We recognize that many languages, such as Spanish, are highly gendered and avoiding gendered pronouns may not be possible. To the extent possible, try using gender-neutral pronouns and/or referring to people by their names.

**Be clear about mandated reporting:**

Youth might share intimate information when talking about their relationships and experiences. Ensure that you communicate your legal obligation to report any danger or abuse to another under your jurisdiction’s mandated reporting law BEFORE these conversations occur. In most jurisdictions, you are required to report if someone discloses abuse or risk of harm to themselves, someone else, a child, or elder. In UAC programs, staff members have the obligation to share all significant information internally with supervisors, clinical staff and others charged with the child’s well-being.

**What do I do if someone discloses sexual activity within the UAC facility?**

If a child discloses sexual activity within a UAC facility while under the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, you must immediately provide this information to your supervisor. Address the issue privately, reinforcing the reasons UAC programs cannot permit sexual contact between residents, but do so without shaming the youth. Please review your internal policies and procedures, including your mandated training on critical incidents.
What do I do if someone discloses a current or past history of sexual assault to me?

It is possible a participant will disclose sexual assault or abuse. In addition to providing them with resources and reporting as necessary, remember the following:

1. Thank the person for trusting you enough to share the information, acknowledge that you heard and understood what was said, and make sure the person knows you consider the information important. Never suggest that you don’t believe the person who discloses a sexual assault, even if you privately have questions. It is vital for the survivor to feel supported, believed and validated.

2. Say, “This was not your fault.” No matter what the survivor did or didn’t do, sexual violence is never the survivor’s fault. Despite this, survivors may blame themselves or have been blamed by others. It is essential to let them know they are not to blame.

3. Say, “You have options,” and provide them. At the time of an assault, a survivor’s choices are taken away. The healing process hinges on survivors recognizing their choices and reclaiming their power. It is important to give survivors as many options as possible.

Have Fun!
We hope you will use this time to reflect on your own values and the messages you received as a young person. Enjoy this opportunity to get to know the youth in your care on a more personal level and build community in the residential facility.
Part 1: RELATIONSHIPS WITH OURSELVES

The first part of the Guide is intended to help children and adolescents in your custody develop a comfortable and healthy sense of themselves, to accept and embrace what makes them unique, and to understand how to exercise critical thought when exposed to negative messages from others or from the media. Healthy relationships with others start from healthy relationships with one’s self.

You can introduce the program by talking about transitions: Everyone at the facility is going through changes in their lives as they cross borders, and are reunited with family members or live with new families. At the same time, they are becoming teenagers and adults, and developing relationships of their own, whether they are new friendships, romantic relationships or relationships with teachers, employers and others.

Discussion questions: What makes you unique? How can you develop healthy relationships with yourself and others? What do you wish for yourself and your community?

Key message: We find a sense of belonging with a group of people, in a place we feel most comfortable, or by spending our time in school, at work, or at play. Not everyone is going to find they belong in the same places, with the same people, or doing the same things as their friends, family, or neighbors. We all have unique skills and talents. It is a good thing that not everyone is the same, not everyone thinks alike or acts the same way. Part of becoming an adult is learning to accept and be accepted by others who may think or act differently from us.
SELF ESTEEM

This section introduces the concept of self-esteem. Most adolescents have negative thoughts and feelings about themselves, but some UAC may question whether they belong anywhere, whether they can plan or anticipate a future, and may feel that they do not have the freedom to be who they are. Everyone has a right to be here, a right to be useful to others, and a right to be themselves. Facilitators should help participants understand that developing healthy relationships with others requires developing a healthy relationship with oneself.

You can encourage participants to write their answers in their books, or you can use these questions to start a discussion, or both. The first two questions ask participants about where they feel they belong, and if they have ever felt that they didn’t belong.

Where do you feel like you belong? This might be a particular place, a part of the world, or a community, or with friends or family.

Have you ever felt like you do not belong? How did that make you feel? What did you do or can you do to change that feeling?

These first two questions can trigger very emotional responses from some UAC, and the facilitator should reinforce the message that everyone has a right to be here, and that everyone has a responsibility to respect others and make them feel like they belong, especially in the UAC facility. Belonging to a family, a community and a place are all essential needs felt especially strongly by teenagers, who are trying to define themselves. Exclusion from community erodes self-esteem and confidence.

What can you do well? This might be something that you are good at or something you feel good doing.

Besides belonging, everyone has a need to feel that they have “agency,” or the ability to act, create, and accomplish. This is also an emotionally sensitive area for many teens, who may mistakenly feel that they are lacking in skills or talent or value. The facilitator should reinforce the notion that everyone has a unique talent or skill, even if they don’t yet know what it is. Most teenagers have an internal narrative or story about themselves, and feel the need to be different or to differentiate themselves from others. This is normal and worth reinforcing as it is an integral part of the process of developing a healthy sense
of self. The facilitator should reinforce the idea that just as every teenager has unique skills and characteristics, everyone has a responsibility to respect what is unique about others.

**What are the special things that make you YOU? These might be characteristics or values that make you special and different from other people.**

The facilitator should introduce the idea that we don’t need to change who we are to please others, as long as we are respectful of others. Part of adolescence is differentiating one’s self from parents and developing one’s own identity, but along with this comes tremendous pressure to emulate peers.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: “I am” poems**

Participants describe themselves by writing “I am...” poems. This exercise helps individuals reflect on what they like about themselves and what things they would like to change. This offers participants an opportunity to share how they feel about themselves, what they like to do, the challenges they are experiencing, and their hopes for the future. Each line should be an “I am” statement, which can be positive, negative, or neutral. Have participants volunteer to share their poems with the group once they are finished.

**Materials needed:**

- Paper
- Pens or markers

**Example:**

I am Roberto.
I am a man.
I am happy to be in the United States.
I am nervous about going to a new school.
I am most comfortable around my grandparents.
I am an artist.
I am sensitive about being skinny.
I am confident in my athletic skills.

**Impacting Each Other’s Self-Esteem**

The facilitator can introduce this discussion by talking about how others’ opinions can affect the way we feel about ourselves. We all have a desire to have other people like and respect us, and we have a desire to belong. These natural desires can sometimes leave us vulnerable to insults or even to insult others. They can also cause us to do things that we know are wrong or not smart, in order to belong. So how does the opinion of others affect us? And what can we do about it?
The workbook includes the following questions, which participants can either respond to in writing or in discussion:

**Who are the people that make you feel good about yourself? What do they do?**

Message to reinforce: Everyone needs to hear a compliment from time to time, and to be invited to participate.

**What are things you can do to remind yourself of your own self-worth?**

Message to reinforce: “Though others affect how we feel, we still have control over our self-esteem.”

**Who are the people you help feel good about themselves? What do you do to help others build self-esteem?**

Message to reinforce: “Just as others can affect our self-esteem, we can affect how other people feel about themselves.”

**Have you ever made someone feel bad about him/herself? How did that make you feel later? What are some reasons we act out in this way?**

You can expand this question by asking the following discussion questions:

1. What are some reasons for why we insult other people? Does it make us feel more powerful? Better about ourselves?
2. Has anyone ever done something they regretted because they felt that they would be insulted or excluded if they didn’t?
3. What do we do to our community, including here in our facility, when we try to bring other people down?

**Key message:** “Feeling good about yourself helps you act in positive ways toward other people. You have the right to feel good about yourself and the responsibility to help others do the same.”
Our image of our body is intimately connected to our image of our self. This is especially true for teenagers, who experience rapid physiological changes and for whom personal appearance often creates deep insecurity at a time when romantic attractions and sexuality first develop. They are vulnerable to insults or criticism and to expectations from media and society at large. This section helps teenagers accept their bodies, focus on their health, and push back against negative messages.

As facilitator, you can start off by stating the obvious: As we become teenagers and young adults, and as we become interested in romantic relationships, we also become more interested in how we look and in the changes that are happening to our bodies. This is completely normal. But we can take this too far. We can become too influenced by what others think about our appearance and the messages we get from society around us. We can forget that everyone is beautiful to someone else, and that just as we have the right to feel good about ourselves, we have the right to feel comfortable in our own bodies.

You can start the discussion by asking “Where do our feelings about our bodies come from?” Questions in the work book include:

**Who in your life affects the way you feel about your body?**

**Who in your life makes you feel the worst about how you look? What could you say to this person?**

**Who in your life makes you feel the best about how you look?**

**What do they do to make you feel this way?**

As facilitator, you can bring up the fact that people, particularly teenagers, are always checking out each other’s bodies, including both those who they may feel attraction for, and those who they either want to emulate, or those who they want to criticize. People compare their bodies to others all the time, and people notice differences. You can introduce a discussion of how and why people notice each other’s bodies, and how this can be normal and healthy or harmful. Do your participants think people comment on each other’s bodies? When is it OK to compliment someone, and when could a compliment make someone feel uncomfortable? When and how is it OK to offer advice on someone’s appearance?

**Key message:** Noticing how your body looks and works is normal and is an important way to get to know yourself as you become an adult.
**Key message:** Talking about other peoples’ bodies can affect the way they feel about themselves. We all deserve to feel good about ourselves, so stop and think before you say something bad about someone else’s body.

**Key message:** No two bodies are the same. Who would want to live in a world where everyone looked the same? What is unique about a person is what makes them attractive!

**Key message:** We are much more than how we look. Think about all the things we use our bodies for and all the things that are happening on the inside. If you try to keep your body healthy, you will look your best and you will feel good about your body.

**YOUR BODY IMAGE:**

The previous section discussed body image in the abstract. Adolescents don’t experience body image as an abstract concept. They are concerned about how they look and how others perceive them. In this section, participants will get the chance to talk about their own body image, and hopefully, become more comfortable with themselves and the ways in which they think about their own appearance.

**What is Your Body Image?**

You can introduce this discussion by asking the participants how they form an opinion, either negative or positive, about how they look to others and to themselves. Do we form that opinion just by ourselves? Or do we listen to others and to what we see on television and in other media? Do we compare our own appearance to others, and decide that we look good or not? How we feel about how we look is part of our self-esteem.

Define body image: “Body image describes how we feel about the way our body looks in comparison to what we want it to look like.”
The exercise in the workbook asks participants to describe three different parts of their bodies they like and three parts they would like to change, and why. Give an example first. (You could even give an example about yourself):

1. My teeth are straight and white, and I have a nice smile.
2. I like my size – I’m not too tall and not too short.
3. I’ve got a bigger belly than I would like! I would like to change that. I would like to lose some weight!

When the youth have a chance to respond to what they like and what they don’t, ask them: “Did you use the word “TOO” when describing any part of your body?” Sometimes, we use the word “too” to describe things we want to change.” Direct the conversation to reinforce the idea that it’s OK to be satisfied with some aspects of one’s body, and dissatisfied about others... but that we can focus too much on appearance or on comparison to others, and try too hard to look like what we think other people want us to look like.

Key message: We need to love our bodies and not let anyone else distort the way we feel about ourselves because of the way we look.

You can supplement the work book with this activity:

Activity: Cross the Line

Participants will learn about each other’s experiences with their bodies and feel less alone. Participants will understand that everyone has things they like and dislike about their bodies, reminding them why it’s important to respect others for who they are and to never make assumptions about how others feel.

Materials:
• “Cross the line if...” questions
• Tape

On the floor, use a piece of tape to create a line. Have all participants stand on one side of the line. Explain that you will be reading statements and that after each statement is read, participants should cross the line if it applies to them. After a moment, students who have crossed the line can return to their original position.

Sample statements: Cross the line if...

• You have black hair.
• You are tall.
• You are short.
• You can think of one thing you love about your body.
• You can think of one thing you want to change about your body.
• You are always comfortable with your body.
• You are often uncomfortable with your body.
- Someone has made you feel bad about how you look before.
- You have made someone feel bad about how they look.

**Discussion questions:**

1. What surprised you about this exercise?
2. Why do most people have things they would like to change about their bodies?
3. How can we help people feel good about who they are?

This exercise should allow youth to recognize that we share a great deal in terms of our appearance, that appearance is subjective, and that most everyone has heard something negative from friends or family about how they look.

**Key message:** Everyone deserves to feel good about themselves and their bodies, including you. You have a responsibility to help others feel good about their bodies too!

The last panel in this section talks about the importance of health, when adolescents consider changing their bodies. Time permitting, you can discuss the pressures people may feel to change or alter their bodies because they want to look good, attract someone they like, or fit in with their friends.

**Key message:** Taking care of your health makes you more attractive. Eating right, exercising, sleeping, and avoiding harmful behavior improves your appearance and makes you feel better about your body and yourself.

**Key message:** Can a person who has a physical disability be beautiful? Of course! Even if your body is not the body of an athlete you can still look good and others will find you attractive.

**MEDIA LITERACY**

This section covers how we understand and react to the messages we get from advertising and media, and how that impacts our self-image. Media literacy is included because adolescents feel intense pressure to comply with standards set by advertisers and society at large, and because media literacy helps youth develop their identity, opinions and beliefs more independently.
You can start this section by defining what media is, and why media literacy is important. Media includes television and radio, magazines, internet sites, and other sources for news, information and advertisement. Media literacy means understanding what the media is telling you, who is providing the information, why they are telling you something, and learning to decide for yourself whether you agree or not. Most of the time, we are surrounded by media and we accept a lot without thinking about it.

You can explain that media is good because it opens us to new ideas, it allows us to learn, it is fun and it forms a lot of our shared ideas and preferences for music, movies, the way we dress and look, and what we do with our friends. Media can be a problem if it makes us feel bad about ourselves or others, gives us information that is not true, or encourages us to act in ways that are unhealthy for our bodies, or causes us to be cruel to others. We need to enjoy media, but we also need to learn to think for ourselves about what we are seeing, hearing, and reading.

**Activity: Magazine analysis.** Participants will review and analyze popular magazines to identify common messages in advertising and discuss how these messages have influenced different communities.

**Materials:**
- Magazines with advertisements

**Directions:** Split up participants into groups of five. Give each group a couple magazines to look through. Ask the participants to read through the magazine in search of ads. Have each group answer the following questions and then report back as a full group to observe common themes and trends.

1. Who is the audience? (Who are they trying to reach?)
2. What words or images let you know this?
3. What is the main message?
4. Is it positive or negative? Why?
5. How does this advertisement make you feel?
6. Does this advertisement help people, or hurt people, or neither?

**Discussion questions:**

1. What are the similarities that you see between the different advertisements you all looked at?
2. What are the positive messages? What are the negative messages?
3. Do the ads tell you how you should look or what you should do, and do you always agree with that?
4. Do you think the television shows you watch and the music you listen to send similar messages?
5. What can we do to counter negative messages from the media?
**Key message:** You don’t need to believe media or advertising that tells you that you are not good enough, or that you are missing something, or that you should compare yourself to others.

**Key message:** It’s OK to be influenced by media, but know your own values and make choices based on what is right for you and others.

You could end the discussion by encouraging the participants to talk about how they send messages to the world around them. Everyone expresses his or her own style, and opinion, and tells the world what they think and what they support. How do you express yourself to the rest of world? What messages do you send?

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**Part 2: Relationships with Others**

This second part of the curriculum teaches the basics of healthy, respectful relationships with others. Unaccompanied adolescents find themselves missing relationships in their countries of origin, while they attempt to create new friendships, build or renew family relationships, and anticipate romantic relationships in the future. This is a key time to talk about how to understand and honor boundaries, communicate, and make smart decisions in relationships.

As the facilitator, you want to encourage the participants to think about all the different relationships they have, and why they are important. You can start by asking the participants: How do these relationships differ? Which ones will last a long time, even a lifetime, and which ones are more temporary? Is there anything that is similar about all relationships? What are the differences? How are respect and acceptance of one’s self related to respect and acceptance of others?

**Key message:** “Everyone deserves relationships that are healthy and positive”
Defining Healthy Relationships

This section helps youth learn to recognize relationships that are healthy, versus those that undermine self-esteem and wellbeing. May of the youth in your care come from loving homes, and have models for healthy relationships. Others have experienced family violence, abuse and abandonment. Those children in particular need to recognize healthy relationships, and fully understand that they have the right to experience them in their lives as they transition to adulthood.

It’s hard to come up with a concise definition for a healthy relationship. You might start the discussion by saying that healthy relationships are relationships in which both persons feel respected and supported. Healthy relationships are based on kindness and mutual respect. Sometimes a relationship can be both healthy and unhealthy in different ways. But even if it is hard to define a healthy relationship, there are some things that healthy relationships share.

**Key message:** Healthy relationships require (1) Knowing and respecting one another’s boundaries; (2) having good communication, and; (3) being able to make decisions in our own best interest. We will talk about what each of these things means.

**Activity:** Read the descriptions of relationships found in the workbook. Ask participants to decide whether they think the statement describes a healthy relationship, an unhealthy relationship, or a relationship that could be either healthy or unhealthy.

**Discussion questions:**

1. How did you decide if the relationship described was healthy, unhealthy, or neutral?

2. Think about the adults in your life. What part of their relationships are healthy, or unhealthy, and why?

3. What kind of relationships do you want to have in your life?

4. How is this different from the relationships you have seen with others?

5. If you’re in an unhealthy relationship, what can or should you do?
You can encourage the participants to come up with some ideas for characteristics that healthy relationships share. Most of those things will fall within the three categories described above: respect for each other’s boundaries, open communication, and shared decision-making in which both parties in the relationship gain something and neither feels that they are being taken advantage of or used.

**BOUNDARIES:**
In this section, youth learn about appropriate boundaries and that they have the right to say “no”. Adolescents come under intense pressure to act, including among peers, in order to be part of a group. The pressure is even more intense when adolescents begin to experiment with their sexuality. This section should draw the connection between positive self-esteem and having the ability to decide for one’s self what to do, consistent with their values and needs, without being coerced by anyone.

Start this section by defining what a boundary is: A boundary is a separation between people. It can be physical or emotional. Everyone has boundaries that they want to be respected. “Consent” is how we find out what the boundaries are. People ask for and give consent all the time for a variety of things. Simple examples include: “May I sit at this table with you?” “Can I borrow your book?” More complicated boundaries include whether or not two people want to be in a friendship or in a romantic relationship. Consent always involves at least two people. You cannot decide if another person consents for them.

**Key message:** You deserve to have your boundaries respected, and you have a responsibility to respect other’s boundaries.

**Key message:** Consent requires that both persons are free to make a decision about boundaries and that neither person feels forced or coerced into making that decision.

You can introduce this concept through the following game, and then have a discussion afterwards.
Activity: “Yes or No”

This exercise allows participants to discuss their rights and responsibilities when it comes to respecting boundaries.

Materials:

- “Yes” sign
- “No” sign

Read aloud the following statements and ask participants to respond “yes” or “no” by going to one of two sides. At each side, hang up the corresponding signs. Allow time for one or two participants from each side explain their reasoning and engage the group in a discussion. See additional talking points below each statement.

1. **You have the right to say “no” to anyone.**
   *Yes. We have our own values and beliefs. So, when you’re asked something and it feels wrong inside, you can listen to the voice inside of you and know that you have the right to say “no.”*

2. **You have a right to share your feelings.**
   *Yes. You have the right to express yourself, and also the responsibility to respect other people’s feelings. This includes taking responsibility for when we do or say something that hurts someone else.*

3. **Sometimes people can touch me even without my consent.**
   *No. Boundaries include our right to physical space; not wanting to be touched—no matter where, when, or by whom—is your choice and your right.*

4. **It’s okay if your boyfriend or girlfriend insults your physical appearance.**
   *No. You have the right to feel good about yourself and your body. This means that others do not have the right to say things to you that hurt you.*

5. **You have the right to change your mind.**
   *Yes. If you are kissing someone or you are with them in private, and you become uncomfortable about going further, you have the right to say “no.” This is true for males and females! If a person says “no,” that means “no.” It’s okay for boundaries to change and it’s okay to change your mind at any time! (Note to facilitator: Reinforce that this information is for after discharge from the UAC program – no kissing or physical contact of a sexual nature is permitted while at the UAC facility!)*

6. **There are some circumstances when it’s okay for somebody to hit his/her partner. This could be a boyfriend hitting a girlfriend, a girlfriend hitting a boyfriend, a boyfriend hitting a boyfriend, or a girlfriend hitting a girlfriend.**
   *No! It is never acceptable for partners to engage in physical or emotional violence and abuse of any kind. This is illegal and can result in jail time, and even deportation.*
**Discussion questions:**

How do we know someone else’s boundaries? Can people communicate with words and by other ways? Let’s start with words – let’s talk about how we communicate what our boundaries are through words.

Do we always say exactly what we mean? If you like someone and you ask if you can go on a date with that person or kiss him or her, how do you know if the person consents?

- Did the person say “yes” with excitement or caution?
- Did they pause or hesitate?
- Did they say “no” or “maybe” and only said yes after you ask them many times?

How did the person behave or act, other than with words?

- Did the person smile and appear happy?
- Did the person avoid looking at you?
- Did the person move away from you or look uncomfortable?

Has anyone ever crossed your boundary? How did you know? How did you feel?

Was there ever a time when you respected someone else’s boundary? How did you know? What did you do?

**Key message:** “Just as you want someone to respect your boundaries, you have the responsibility to respect others’ boundaries. If someone says ‘no,’ you must listen and be respectful and never force them to do something against their will.”

**Sometimes we say “yes” but...**

It is important for young people to know that they can be confused about what they want, and that they should learn to listen to their inner voice telling them what is safe and smart and what is not. They may be under a lot of pressure to engage in certain behaviors. “Yes” does not always mean “yes,” and youth need to be able to change their mind and say “no.”
Discussion question: Do people sometimes say “yes” when they mean “no” or “I don’t know”? Why?

- We think others are saying “yes” and we feel pressure to be included.
- We want to be nice and not hurt someone’s feelings
- We want to say “no” but we said “yes before”
- The person who asked is someone we don’t think we are supposed to say “no” to, like a friend or someone we are dating, or a teacher or other adult.

Was there ever a time when you said “yes” when you really meant “no”?

Key message: Consenting means that the other person agrees freely, without being pushed or tricked or pressured. This is important for every relationship. You have the right to say “no”, even if others say “yes”, even if you have said “yes” before, and even if the an important person like a parent or teacher asks you to do something you think is wrong.

Emotional Respect:

Rejection is one of the hardest things for youth to navigate, particularly in romantic relationships. The previous sections were intended in part to help those who experience unwanted sexual or romantic attention to define and assert boundaries. But there’s also a need to assure that young people are able to express themselves, including their romantic feelings toward others, without suffering bullying, gossip or emotional harm.

The workbook provides a case example that you can discuss. Pedro and Leticia want different things out of their relationship – in other words, they have different boundaries. Pedro wants and expects a more permanent and exclusive relationship, while Leticia is experimenting and is not ready for a committed relationship. How is this resolved? What can Pedro say to Leticia, and what can Leticia say to Pedro? As you direct this conversation, it is important to refocus if participants dwell on Leticia as a person who is tricking or harming Pedro, or otherwise reinforce negative gender stereotypes of women and girls. It is also important not to focus on Leticia or Pedro as bad people for having a sexual relationship, regardless of one’s belief’s regarding sex outside of marriage. Sexual relationships happen, and while one may not approve of sex between minors, one can and should support the individuals involved.

Key message: Rejection happens to everyone! It is everyone’s responsibility to develop healthy ways to deal with rejection. It is natural to feel that a particular relationship is the most important thing in a person’s life or that there will never be another person for whom they experience the same intense attraction. Although it may feel this way, almost everyone feels strong attraction to different people over time, and someday this feeling will be reciprocated.
**Key message:** Sometimes people are shy and are embarrassed to ask someone out on a date or show their feelings. It is OK to ask! Just as everyone has the right to say “yes” or “no”, you have the right to ask and to be treated with respect and not be teased or for the other person to make fun of you. Respect is a two-way street and you deserve respect too!

**Key message:** You have the right to change your mind about a relationship and the right to share your feelings. If someone wants something that you do not, you have the right and the responsibility to say no! You may not be able to prevent another person from feeling bad, but it will hurt less if you express yourself honestly, privately and with consideration for the feelings of the other person.

**COMMUNICATION:**

This curriculum teaches three keys to healthy relationships. The previous section introduced the concept of boundaries. This section discusses communication, and the third section will discuss decision-making. In this section, you can discuss verbal and non-verbal communication, and how describing how we feel can improve our ability to manage difficult conversations.

You can start this section by asking about different ways to communicate. Can anyone give an example of “body language” – non-verbal communication? Rolling one’s eyes? Shrugging? Avoiding eye contact? What are some less useful ways of communicating? Shouting? Just shutting down and not communicating at all? You can introduce the concept of “I feel” statements, which allow a person to talk about something difficult in a way where they have the right to say what they need to say.

There are three parts to an “I feel” statement. You can use this as an example for participants to practice:

“I feel _____________ when you ________________ because ____________________.”

**Activity:** Ask the students to develop their own “I feel” statements.

**Key message:** If you have a hard time communicating something, you can talk about how you feel. Nobody can argue with your feelings because they are your own, and you have a right to them.
The third and final cornerstone to healthy relationships is decision-making. Good decision-making is made easier by developing healthy self-esteem, knowing one’s boundaries in any relationship, and communicating those boundaries. Sometimes decisions are made for us because there are laws and rules. In other situations, youth may find it difficult to make decisions – especially if the youth was powerless in the past.

This section sets forth four steps in making a difficult decision. They include (1) Knowing your options; (2) Knowing the likely or possible outcomes; (3) Considering your feelings and those of others; and (4) Knowing your values. You can discuss each of these factors. Very often, a person doesn’t know all the options, and sometimes a person does not have an accurate picture of what the outcomes might be. Often people overestimate benefits and underestimate risks. Sometimes people are so focused on a small risk that they miss an opportunity. Can the participants give some examples of this?

Decisions involve others. Participants should learn that it is a good idea to consider both the impact of a decision on how a person feels about him or herself, and to think carefully about how a decision affects others. The impact on one’s self or others is related to the fourth step – is the decision consistent with one’s values? What are values, anyway? Can they be religious, or personal, or moral, or all of the above? How does one make a decision based on values? Can the participants give an example? The work book gives a few additional sample questions that you can ask and answer together.

Key message: Discuss tough decisions with a person or people that you respect. Sometimes decisions have to be made alone, but it is smart to get different opinions and perspectives.

Key message: Listen to your inner voice. If you know doing something goes against your values, or harms someone else, then listen and make your own decision based on your values, even if others pressure you.

Key message: Just as you don’t like others making decisions for you, listen carefully and give advice to your friends, without forcing them to agree with you. If you think they are making a dangerous decision, consult with a trusted adult. In a romantic relationship, the other person has an equal right to a decision, without you making it for him or her.
Part 3: Health and Appropriate Romantic Relationships

Unaccompanied minors in ORR-supported facilities are not permitted to engage in sexual activity. This point needs to be emphasized to program participants. However, some UAC have been involved in romantic relationships in the past, possibly including sexual relationships, and many will be in the short to medium-term future following family reunification. This third part attempts to teach participants the basic ground rules for romantic relationships, even if these cannot occur within the facility.

Physical Expression and Safety:

The adolescents in your care are intensely aware of the changes happening to their bodies and those of others, as they begin to experience strong romantic attachments. Physical expression of sexuality and romantic attraction are realities for adolescents. The young people’s presence in the UAC facility provides a brief window to prepare them to negotiate these very difficult transitions safely, establishing ground rules to allow healthy expression within cultural, religious or family limits, while preventing coercion or harm.

You can start the discussion by returning to the conversation about non-verbal communication that you started in the last section. Can the participants list some forms of non-verbal communication? When these forms of non-verbal communication involve physical contact with another person they require the consent of both persons. This includes kissing, holding hands, and similar forms of non-verbal communication. Consent can be verbal, or people sometimes consent using physical or facial expression.

Key message: Consent requires that both persons are free to make a decision about boundaries and that neither person feels forced or coerced into making that decision.

Key message: A person can withdraw consent at any time.
CONSENT:

It’s not enough just to get someone to say “yes”. Consent has to be freely given by someone who has the ability to consent. How do participants know if someone is free to consent? A person who is incapacitated for any reason, or who is in an unequal age or power relationship cannot give consent. It is illegal for adults to engage in sexual activity with minors, or for anyone to engage in sexual activity with someone who is incapacitated, or otherwise unable to consent.

You can start this discussion by asking about relationships. Do participants know older brothers or sisters who have had romantic relationships? What makes a good, mutually respectful relationship? You can direct the conversation to acknowledging that romantic relationships work best between people of similar ages and interests, and then bring up the issue of power inequality. When one person has the power to make the decisions in a relationship, this can distort the relationship. What are some examples? Allow the participants to come up with their ideas some, but make sure you also mention the following even if they don’t:

- One person has a lot more experience dating
- One person is older than the other
- One person has more money or one partner depends upon the other for basic needs
- One person is a boss or a teacher, or someone who has authority over the other person

In all of these situations, one person may have too much power over the other person for there to be true consent. If a person is much older, or in a position of responsibility like a teacher or supervisor, that person could be committing a crime! What if a person is not completely conscious or aware of what is going on? Can that person give consent? Ask the participants to give some examples. Make sure you mention all of the following, if the participants don’t mention them first. A person cannot consent if:

- The person is asleep
- Does not speak the same language
- Has used alcohol or drugs or for any other reason, is not in control of him or herself.

Key message: How would you feel if someone did something to you in one of these situations? You have the right to respect. You have the responsibility to respect others!
Activity: Red/Yellow/Green Light

Read the situation and have participants fill in:
- **Red Light** if the person should stop
- **Yellow Light** if the person should move slowly or
- **Green Light** if the person has full consent. Discuss participants’ responses after each prompt.

Materials:
- “Your Life, Your Relationships” Book

1. Maria met Jose. Maria likes Jose a lot. Jose is funny and makes Maria smile, especially when Maria is sad. One day, Jose and Maria sit in a park. Jose asks Maria if he can kiss her. Maria says yes and smiles. Does Jose have a Red, Yellow or Green light to kiss Maria? ________________

2. In this situation, does Jose have a Red, Yellow or Green light to also take Maria’s shirt off? ________________

3. Daniela and Marcos have been dating for 1 year. Daniela thinks Marcos is cheating with someone else. Daniela is very upset and confused. One day, Marcos tries to kiss Daniela’s neck. Daniela starts to pull away, and then sits still while it happens. Does Marcos have a Red, Yellow, or Green light to keep kissing Daniela’s neck? ________________

**Discuss after each question.**

What else should Maria, Jose, Daniela or Marcos do? Should they talk with friends or an adult they trust? Ask for an apology? Who asks whom? Spend more time with the person? Ask them more about what their boundaries are if they don’t tell you directly?

Then bring the discussion back to the idea that relationships should not be one-sided. Both people have the right to have their boundaries respected, to communicate what they feel, and to make decisions without being pressured. *These are the ground-rules for relationships*. Carefully thinking about whether you have a green-light, a yellow-light, or a red-light helps keep the relationship a real relationship.

**Key message:** “Everyone deserves relationships that are healthy and positive”
Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation:

Adolescents face a lot of pressure to conform to all sorts of norms, including gender norms. Those who feel attraction toward individuals of the same sex, or who do not comply with cultural expectations of gender or gender roles, can find themselves isolated or bullied. Some youth may feel that they have the right or responsibility to enforce gender norms, even though this goes against the basic rules of healthy relationships and respect.

The facilitator can start this discussion by talking about what we mean by “man” and woman”, “male” and “female”, and “masculine” and “feminine”. Are they the same thing? Who gets to decide?

Male = Man = Masculine
Female = Woman = Feminine

What happens if someone named Carlos is born male but feels like he is female and is feminine since he was a child?

Biological sex: Male
Gender identity: Woman
Gender expression: Feminine. Carlos acts the way people expect women and girls to act and likes most things that women and girls like. But Carlos can still like some things that are masculine too.

You can have a discussion about how we assign gender roles, and what this means. For example, boys are supposed to like football, and girls are supposed to like clothes. We have all sorts of gender roles and expectations. What are some of them? What if following these roles does not fit with who we are or what we like? What if Maria is born female, and considers herself a girl, and likes being a girl... but she likes some activities and things that we usually associate with males? And she likes to dress like a boy?

Biological sex: Female
Gender identity: Woman
Gender expression: Maybe both masculine and feminine? She enjoys some things that boys like and sometimes acts the way we expect boys to act. But she considers herself a girl and may also like things and act in ways that we usually associate with girls.
Key message: Biological sex, gender and the way we express our gender are not the same thing for everyone. A man can be a man and not like or do everything that people say is masculine. A woman can be a woman and not like or do everything that people say is feminine. Sometimes a person can feel like they are a woman even if born male, or a person can feel like a man, even if born female. It seems confusing, but it is OK to be who you are.

Discussion questions:

1. Are there places in our communities we think are only for one gender (boys vs. girls / men vs. women)?

2. What messages do you get about how to act because of your biological sex? Think about comments from family, friends, television, and music.

3. How do you feel when you see and hear these messages? Do they affect how you act when you are alone? When you are in a group of people?

4. When was a time you were treated differently because of your sex or because someone thought you weren’t acting enough like a boy or a girl? How did that make you feel? Rewrite an ending to the story that you feel would be fair.

5. Do you think it’s important to define ourselves and others? Why and in what ways? How can this be positive? How can this be challenging, and even negative?

6. What happens when we treat people differently because of their bodies?

Activity: Discrimination stories. Have participants write about a time when they felt discriminated against. Why were they targeted? How did this make them feel? Have participants volunteer to share their stories.

People throughout the world are discriminated against just because of who they are. People discriminate based on where they came from, their religion, their race or ethnicity, their gender, because they come from a poor family or they don’t have education, because of sexual orientation, gender identity, or even just appearance.

1. What would this world look like if everyone were the same: looked the same, felt the same, believed in the same things?

2. What negative impact do we have on our communities when we discriminate against people?

3. What can we do to promote acceptance of people who are different from us?
**Key message:** Being an adult means knowing yourself and respecting others. Knowing yourself and being comfortable with yourself is important and a good thing. Forcing someone else to fit your idea of who they should be, or making fun of them or being violent against them for being different is never OK.

**Key message:** The media and the society around us can tell us how to act and what it means to be male or female, man or woman, masculine or feminine. But we can think for ourselves about these messages and decide for ourselves whether they fit us as unique human beings. Just because the television says that a girl or boy should dress or act a certain way, doesn’t make it true for everyone.

**Sexual Orientation:**

Whether or not you are aware of the sexual orientation of adolescents you work with, sooner or later you will be responsible for a minor who is lesbian, gay or bisexual. You have a responsibility to this child to prevent harm and an opportunity to help him or her develop self-esteem and be prepared for healthy romantic relationships in the future, just the same as for straight kids.

As the facilitator, you can start this discussion by acknowledging the obvious – you are speaking to a room full of adolescents, and everyone knows what it is to be attracted to someone. You can start by asking “What is sexual orientation?” It is who you are attracted to. “If a boy likes a girl, or a girl likes a boy, do each of them have a sexual orientation?” Yes! “Is this a good thing?” Yes! As we become adults, sexual orientation is an important part of who we are. “Can someone is attracted to a person of the same sex?” Yes! It’s just the same as if a boy has a crush on a girl. You will want to emphasize, first, that sexual orientation is something that everyone naturally has, that it is not a choice, and that it is a basic part of who they are. Second, you want to emphasize that while most people will be attracted to the opposite sex, some people are attracted to the same sex, and this is OK. It’s the same thing.
Discussion questions:

1. What are the terms we use for people who are attracted to people of the same sex? For example, what do we call males who are attracted to other males?

2. Are these words positive or negative? Why are negative words used to describe how other people feel?

3. Are there positive words for people who like others of a different sex? Why do we have positive terms for people with some sexual orientations but not for others?

4. Why are people discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity?

5. How can we support people who act, feel, and/or think differently than we do?

Key Message: Discrimination and violence against people because they are different is wrong. It doesn’t matter if this is because they speak a different language or they look different, or they have a different body, or because a boy acts like a girl or a girl acts like a boy. Discrimination will not be tolerated in the UAC facility – but you should remember this lesson and take it with you when you leave.

Talking about Sexual Orientation: Feel free to rephrase or elaborate on the section in the manual

• Some people like to talk about who they like or their sexuality. Other people do not like to talk about these things. This is true no matter what your sexual orientation is.

• Someone who is gay might tell someone else because he or she is proud of being who they are, is worried about their safety, or has questions.

• Someone who is gay might not talk about this because he or she is worried that people will tease him or her, or because they think others will not understand, or because they are not sure about how they feel, or simply because it is private information. Those are all good reasons. Remember the discussion on boundaries? Nobody has to talk about these things with anyone else if they don’t want to.

• If you have questions or want to talk about any of these issues, it is OK to talk to a nurse or doctor or to the counselor at the UAC program. They are trained to listen and they will support you.
Advocating for Yourself in Health Care:

We include this section because adolescents who are now or may become sexually active need to have accurate health care information, and because health care professionals may be the only adults some young people can talk to or trust with sensitive information, including if they are at risk of self-harm. Advocating for one’s health is a skill to learn early and continue throughout one’s life. The introduction to this conversation should emphasize two points right from the start:

**Key Message:** Respectful health care is a right. You have the right for a doctor or nurse or counselor to listen to you and answer your questions, and provide the essential care you need so that you can be healthy.

**Key Message:** Health care professionals want you to be healthy, but this requires that you are honest with them. You should talk directly with your doctor, nurse or counselor and tell them the truth. Even if you are ashamed of something or feel as if you did something wrong, talk to them anyway. They have heard all sorts of things before and they will not judge you.

Discuss confidentiality and its limits. Doctors and other health care providers are required to maintain your confidentiality unless they think that you are harming yourself or someone else.

Describe how important it is to have a good relationship with the doctor, nurse or counselor who is helping you. Part of this is being clear about what you need.

**Discussion question:** “How do you want to be treated when you ask for help with your body?”

You can give them some time to answer, but make sure that the following issues are covered, even if they don’t bring them up. Many times, UAC may not have had good health care in the past, and these questions may seem very strange.

- I want someone who will listen to me
- I want full information on any treatment I am given
- I want someone to help me write down the information so I can remember it
- I want to be free to ask questions about my health or my body
- I don’t want anyone to judge me or make me feel embarrassed to ask questions, even about sex or relationships
“What You Can Do” (to manage your own health)

Emphasize that everyone is responsible for preserving and improving his or her own health. “This requires three things: Knowing yourself, knowing your resources, and knowing your rights. We will go through each of those.”

Knowing Yourself

- What happens when you are tired, or hungry or stressed? (How do you take care of yourself?)
- What do you need from your doctor, nurse or counselor? What do you want to ask them?
- Are you nervous about going to the doctor? Why?

Know Your Resources

- Who can you go to if you are sick or injured or in trouble?
- Who can you go to if you have a question about your body? Who can you go to if you have a question about your feelings?
- Is there someone who knows you well and who you trust who can help you come up with questions for a doctor or nurse?
- Do you want to bring someone with you, or do you prefer to go alone?

Know your rights. You can:

- Ask for an interpreter if you are not fluent in English and the health care provider is not fluent in your language.
- Go to an appointment alone or meet with the doctor, nurse or counselor alone. You also have the right to bring someone with you if you prefer.
- Receive a copy of your records if you need them.
- Have the doctor or nurse explain before doing a procedure or touching you
- Ask for more information or another appointment
- Take notes during your visit
- Talk about things that are embarrassing or uncomfortable, like sex or using alcohol or drugs
- Ask to see someone else if you are uncomfortable talking with that doctor, nurse or counselor
- Ask questions!
Know your responsibilities:

- Be honest and tell your doctor, nurse or counselor the truth, even if you are shy or embarrassed
- Show up for appointments on time
- Take medicine or follow the doctor’s orders, or if you can’t, then explain why not to the doctor
- Treat yourself and your body with kindness and respect

After the UAC leave the program, when they are living with family or eventually on their own, they should make sure that their health care provider will respond to them in the way they need, and if not, they should change providers.

Activity: You can conclude this section and the program by asking the participants to think about some questions they will ask the doctor, nurse or counselor the next time they see them. You can also ask them to write in their book the name of the person they will go to if they have a question or need help with their health, their body, or their relationships. Tell them to keep the Healthy Relationships Guide with them and think about these things when they leave the UAC program.
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