YOUTH ARE _____

CULTIVATING YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP
TO BUILD VIOLENCE FREE COMMUNITIES
VSDVALLIANCE.ORG

VIRGINIA SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION ALLIANCE'S YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL

THIS CURRICULUM WAS DREAMED UP AND CREATED BY THE 2019-2021 YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL COHORT:

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with any questions or technical assistance needs!

The curriculum is divided into three main sections: Youth are Survivors, Youth are Leaders, and Youth are Cultivating Change. The curriculum culminates in a poster-making activity.

The Curriculum Builders:

The Youth Action Council (Y.A.C.) is a group of youth ages 18-24 from across Virginia working with the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Virginia's statewide coalition. The Youth Action Council grew out of the Action Alliance's Honeycomb Retreat, a leadership opportunity grounded in creative expression as a tool for social change.

Using the skills they cultivated in their communities, learned at the Honeycomb Retreat, and built further in Y.A.C. meetings, the Y.A.C. focused on creating a workshop curriculum for adults and peer leaders working with youth to support and empower youth leadership in the movement to end sexual and intimate partner violence.

Why this Curriculum?

We know that youth are inherently powerful. We also know that there are systemic and cultural barriers that inhibit their leadership including, but not limited to, adultism, white supremacy, transphobia, homophobia, sexism, ableism, and xenophobia. When our movements support youth leadership, they not only strengthen the future of our organizations and work, but also the work we are doing in this moment. Youth bring vision, strategy, creativity, and lived experience to building a world without violence, and it is the duty of adult allies to support them in and breakdown barriers to leadership.

While facing these systemic and cultural barriers to leadership, youth are also experiencing high rates of sexual and dating violence:

- Research shows that 1 in 16 reproductive-age women's first experience with intercourse was involuntary. [1]
- Among students who reported dating, 12% of girls and 7% of boys had experienced physical dating violence and 16% of girls and 5% of boys had experienced sexual dating violence in the past 12 months. [2]
- 23% of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual teens in relationships said they were sexually coerced. [3]
- Youth who identified as transgender/gender-queer reported the highest rates of dating violence and sexual coercion, with 89% reporting physical dating violence. [4]

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This curriculum aims to support youth in seeing the ways in which they can be leaders and make transformative change in their relationships, schools, neighborhoods and beyond. We know that when youth have resources and community support, their leadership can have an impact on their own development as well as on their larger communities.
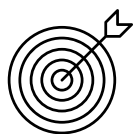
Research shows that youth empowerment and organizing have positive effects on individuals and communities:

- The Search Institute names "Empowerment" as one of their Developmental Assets, building blocks for healthy development. Two other Assets this curriculum seeks to bolster are "Community valuing youth," young people perceive that adults in their community value youth, and "Youth as resources," young people are given useful roles in their community.[5]
- The Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) has found that "involvement in youth organizing contributes to the social-emotional and academic development of young people in powerful ways, while also promoting their civic and community engagement."[6]
- Additionally, FCYO has found that youth organizing, which engages young people in building power for social change, supports holistic development that "reaches young people who are often at the margins of society, including youth from low-income backgrounds, youth of color, LGBTQ youth, and undocumented and immigrant youth."[7]

References:

1. Hawks, L., MD, Woolhandler, S., MD, MPH, & Himmelstein, D. U., MD. (2019). Association Between Forced Sexual Initiation and Health Outcomes Among US Women. JAMA Internal Medicine, 179(11), 1551-1558. doi:https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2751247 [9]
2. Black MC, Basile KC, Breiding MJ, Smith SG, Walters ML, Merrick MT, Checn J, Stevens MR. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CEnter for Disease Control and Prevention
3. Dank, M., Lachman, P., Zweig, J.M. & Yahner, J. (2013). Dating Violence Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, And Transgender Youth: In Press: Journal of Youth and Adolescence.
4. Ibid.
5. The developmental assets framework. (2019, November 05). from https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/
6. Shah, S., Buford, W., & Braxton, E. (2018). Transforming Young People and Communities: New Findings on the Impact of Youth Organizing (Rep.). Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing. doi:https://fcyo.org/uploads/resources/transforming-young-people-and-communities-new-findings-on-the-impacts-of-youth-organizing_resource_5a4d1955857485674a21f4d2.pdf
7. ibid.

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A Violence Prevention Workshop Curriculum by the Youth Action Council of the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Overall Learning Goals:

- Build collective definitions of *survivor*, *healing*, *resilience*, and *leadership*
- Vision a world where community care is valued
- Identify the skills and roles youth have in their community
- Empower participants to envision themselves as leaders in their community
- Learn about the history of youth leadership in social change movements
- Value the different roles in social change
- Identify what roles in social change that participants envision themselves playing
- Value self in social change
- Analyze the importance of ecosystems and networks

Time for all Sessions:

4 hours

Audience:

This training was created with the intended audience of middle & high schoolers

Materials for all Sessions:

Flip chart paper. Markers, Sticky notes, Pens, Paper, Scissors, Glue, Collaging Supplies, Printed Timeline Materials and/or Virtual Timeline, misc. art supplies

Remote/Online Adaptations:

We know that remote facilitation requires different types of creativity and adjustment. We encourage you to think about the ways tools like **Jamboard, Mentimeter, Padlet, and others** that can make your online Prevention sessions engaging and fun. For more technical assistance on how to adapt your programming, please do not hesitate to reach out to prevention@vsdvalliance.org.

General Resources on Virtual/Online Facilitation:
- **Humanizing Online Teaching** by Dr. Mary Raygoza, Raina León, and Aaminah Norris for approaches to meeting remotely.
- **Leading Groups Online: a down-and-dirty guide to leading online courses, meetings, trainings, and events during the coronavirus pandemic** by Jeanne Rewa and Daniel Hunter

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Facilitation Tips:

Facilitating a supportive and meaningful curriculum takes intention and thought before even starting the first activity. This is especially true when trying to create space for world building and visioning! Take a moment as you prepare your facilitation style by reviewing the following tips.

- **Use group agreements so everyone can participate and has clear expectations.** Youth are often bombarded with rules on how they can and cannot move through spaces (school, after-school programs, home, etc.) that can be oppressive. Group agreements are a great tool to empower young people to name the ways they can collectively make the space feel best for themselves and create a structure for accountability.

- **Address mandated reporting laws at the beginning of the first session.** Let participants know if you are a mandated reporter (and make sure you know exactly what that means in your state and with your agency!) so that youth can make informed decisions about how and if they want to disclose abuse or trauma. This should not be framed in a scary way, but as a way to build trust and be transparent.

- **Create space for multiple types of participation.** Allow youth to fidget, doodle, snack, etc.! Often activities that are deemed as "distractions" actually allow youth (and adults) to concentrate better. Participation and engagement can look many different ways; allow youth to show up to the space in ways that feel best for them.

- **Right to pass and leave the room.** Let youth know that participation is not mandatory and that they have the "right to pass" on certain questions or activities. If the space you are in allows for it, let the youth know that it is also okay for them to leave the room if they need to take a breath and a break. Make sure that you have support people in the room who can check-in with youth who step out and provide crisis intervention if necessary.

- **Meet the youth where they are.** Younger folks might need questions and examples to be more concrete. Some questions might need to be repeated or rephrased. Rather than having a concrete idea of how a conversation needs to go, let the youth lead themselves and each other through a meaningful conversation about the zine activities, their experiences, and discussion questions.

- **Make space for icebreakers and games!** While these tools are sometimes seen as "optional," we encourage you to bring your favorite icebreakers and games to your facilitation to foster silliness, joy, and relationship-building.

YOUTH ARE survivors

love

healing

resilient

powerful

inclusive sex-ed

consent

brave

support

therapy

community

anti-racism

Learning Goals:

- Collectively define: *resilience*, *survivor*, and *healing*
- Destigmatize survivorship
- Build empathy
- Analyze community connectedness
- Vision a world where community care is valued

Time:

60 minutes

Materials Needed:

Flip chart paper. Markers, Sticky notes, Pens, Paper, Scissors, Glue, Collaging Supplies,

Building a Collective Understanding (15 minutes):

- Put pieces of flipchart paper around the room with words "survivor," "resilience," and "healing" written on each. Ask participants to take their time, go around the room, and, with sticky note and/or markers, write what each word means to them and/or what they think about when they hear those words. You can also invite participants to draw images or symbols rather than words.

- This activity can be done silently, with music playing, or in small groups depending on the dynamics and number of participants.

- After giving participants enough time to go up to each word, bring everyone back together and go over what is written and/or drawn on each flipchart. Affirm the contributions and connect any larger themes that you see, ask participants to talk more about what they wrote/draw if they would like to share.

- Point out that together you are starting to build collective definitions of these terms. Ask participants about how these definitions feel different from other representations of these terms in mainstream culture and media, or when they hear about these ideas being discussed in their communities. Point out that sometimes there are narrow definitions of what survivorship, healing, and resilience can be or looks like; make sure to uphold and reinforce that survivorship looks very vast and different.

YOUTH ARE *survivors*

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Community Care and Connection Spectrum (15 minutes):

- Designate one side of the room as "Totally agree" and the other side of the room as "Totally disagree." Use tape and/or signs as markers if helpful and ask participants to move to the middle of the room.

- Explain to participants that you will be reading a few statements and that after each statement they should move to a point on the spectrum based on if they agree or disagree with that statement. Explain that they can choose a point anywhere between the two ends of the spectrum and there isn't a "correct" answer.

- Read each statement aloud, repeating if necessary, and give participants enough time to find a space on the spectrum. Notice where folks are in generalized ways and ask follow-up questions. For example, "It looks like we have folks all over the spectrum for this statement, does anyone closer to the 'totally agree' part of the spectrum want to say a few words about why they chose their spot." Or "Looks like we have a lot of agreement on this statement! Anyone want to explain why they chose to go to the middle of the spectrum?"

- Statements to read:
    - People in my community feel comfortable communicating about consent
    - People in my community value getting to know people who are different from them
    - People in my community respect the voices and needs of young people
    - Possible follow-up question: What are the ways that people in your community have shown they respect the voice and needs of young people? What are the ways that they have not?
    - People in my community respect the voices and needs of survivors
    - People in my community feel connected to each other and support each other when community members are in need
    - People in my community have the tools, resources, and knowledge to support survivors and prevent harm from happening
        - Possible follow-up question: What tools or resources do you think your community needs to better prevent harm from happening and supporting survivors of harm?

YOUTH ARE *survivors*

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- Finish the activity with a small group reflection and debrief:
  - What did participants notice about how the group responded? What was their own response?
  - What did participants think about ask they responded to the different statements?
  - Did this activity illuminate any gaps or needs in the communities they live in? If so, what are they?

Collaging our Visions for Community (30 minutes):

- Based on the activities they just completed, ask each participant to create a collage that illustrates the communities they want to create, shape, and live in. Have participants consider the following questions while collaging:
  - How do community members show up for one another?
  - How does this community respond to violence and harm?
  - How does this community support, center, or create space for healing?

- After giving participants time to create their collage, ask if anyone would like to share what they've created and what their vision for caring communities looks like.

- If the facilitator notices any recurring themes or images around the room as participants share, ask why participants think there is a lot of this image/word popping up. How do the things popping up around the room differ from the mainstream messages we hear about care, safety, or healing?

Remote/Online Facilitation Tips:

- The Community Care and Connection Spectrum can be done online by creating spectogram slides on <u>Canva</u>, Jamboard, Google Slides (or a similar program), sharing your screen, and asking participants to use the Zoom annotation tool to indicate where they'd like to be on the spectrum.
- Participants can create virtual collages on programs like Canva or Jamboard using icons, shapes, or images found on the Internet.

YOUTH ARE _LEADERS_!

VIRGINIA SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION ALLIANCE'S YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL

Learning Goals:

- Collectively Define *youth leadership*
- Identify the skills and roles youth have in their community
- Empower participants to envision themselves as leaders in their community
- Learn about the history of youth leadership in social change movements

Time:

60 minutes

Materials Needed:

Flipchart Paper, Markers, Printed Timeline Materials and/or
Virtual Timeline (https://padlet.com/ActionAlliancePrevention/YouthLeadership)

Collaboratively Defining Youth Leadership (10 Minutes)

- Place a flipchart paper on the wall with the word "leader" written at the top and ask participants to name what comes to mind for them when they hear the words "leader" or "leadership," this can be words/phrases, specific people, or positions/roles.

- Then ask about youth leaders and youth leadership. Do they think young people, people their age, can be leaders based on the words, phrases, people, and positions they named previously?

Youth Leadership Mind Mapping (20 Minutes)

- This question will be answered by a mapping activity. The facilitator will guide the participants in thinking about the different spaces in their community in which they can provide leadership, the different leadership roles youth take on in their communities, and what that leadership looks like in action.
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- On a new sheet of flipchart paper (you may want to create an even larger drawing space with multiple sheets), write, "Youth Leadership" in the middle and circle it. Tell youth that they will be thinking about the multiple areas of their lives: school, jobs, home, religious groups, clubs, sports, etc. Tell participants it is good for them to name even the most "obvious" answers so you can get a full picture with your map.

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- Start with the *where*: "Where are youth involved in community?" or "What spaces do you spend a lot of a time in?" Write down answers, circle them, and draw lines connecting them back to the center circle.
  - Examples: School, home, religious centers, sports fields/courts, community centers, after-school programs, neighborhood parks, etc.

- Then think about the *how*: "How do you and other youth participate in your communities?" or "what are the different roles that you and other youth play in your communities?" Write down answers, circle them, and draw lines connecting them back to the center circle and the "where" responses.
  - Examples: Student, older/younger sibling, peer advocate or educator, student council member, sports team member or captain, neighbor, friend, etc.

- Finish up with *what*: "What activities, roles, or jobs do you take on when you are in these spaces?" or "What do you do in these spaces?" Write down answers, circle them, and draw lines connecting them back to the center circle and the "where" and "how" responses.
  - Examples: tutor peers or younger students, babysit for neighbors and siblings, do errands for elderly neighbors, help parents or other adults with gardening, cleanup after practices, teach friends new skills in sports or the arts.

- After all responses are documented and connected to corresponding "where," "how," and "what" responses, the poster should look like a giant web. Comment on any connections you immediately notice, ask participants if they notice any themes and connections.

- Once the activity is over, lead them through reflection questions such as:
  - Do you feel like a leader in the roles, activities, and jobs illustrated in this map/web? Why or why not?
  - What are the barriers to you feeling like a leader?
  - When do you feel most empowered as a leader in your life?

YOUTH ARE *leaders*

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Building Connections Across Time & Space (20 Minutes):

- This activity allows your participants to visualize history and see the multitude of ways young people have been a part of and have led movements for social change. It also allows for the group to make and build a shared history.

- Post printed timeline cards around the room if in-person. Share the link to the digital timeline (https://padlet.com/ActionAlliancePrevention/YouthLeadership) if facilitating online. Ask participants to walk around the room (or swipe through the digital timeline)

Facilitation Tip:

The Padlet timeline is viewed best in "full screen" which can be accessed by clicking the three dots at the top right of the screen.

- Reflection questions after the activity:
  - What did you notice? What stood out to you?
  - What's missing from the timeline? What would you like to add?
  - What does this timeline illuminate about youth leadership? Did you learn something new? Were you reminded of something you may have learned previously?

Closing/Circling Back (10 minutes):

- Return to your "Leader/Leadership" notes and ask participants to reflect on the mapping and timeline activity. Lead the group in a conversation:
  - Has their definition of "leaders" or "leadership" changed or shifted after these activities?
  - Has their understanding of youth leaders or leadership changed or shifted?
  - What skills would like they like to learn to further support their leadership in their communities?

Remote/Online Facilitation Tips:

- Use a polling program like Mentimeter or Poll Everywhere to build your collaborative definitions of "leader" and "leadership." Create a word cloud to ground your conversation.
- You can use Zoom's whiteboard feature, or a platform like Jamboard to create your youth leadership map.
- Put participants into breakout rooms to have small group discussions about the virtual timeline hosted on Padlet.

YOUTH ARE *cultivating change*

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Learning Goals:
- Value the different roles in social change
- Identify what roles in social change that participants envision themselves playing
- Value self in social change
- Analyze the importance of ecosystems and networks

Time:
60 minutes

Materials Needed:
Flipchart Paper, Markers, Pens, Sticky Notes

Introduction and Icebreaker (10 minutes):
- Have participants think about what their role would be if there were a zombie apocalypse; Ask for participants to share their roles and record answers on a big poster paper or white board, while uplifting their choice in roles.
  - Examples to share with participants: scavenger, childcare, comedian, cook, storyteller, builder, etc.
  - Facilitators can also reference pop culture references such as The Walking Dead, to spark ideas on the different roles each character played, while also thinking about the limitations of the roles played.

- Explain to participants that in social change work, we tend to think there is one big role that keeps us moving towards our goals, but it requires a collective.
  - Refer back to their zombie apocalypse roles; connect them to how together we can accomplish a lot, and that we need diverse sets of skills to build a better and freer world.
  - Explain that if we were all scavengers, once we got back to camp, who's going to cook to help us stay nourished? Who's making sure camp is safe if we are all scavenging? Who's taking care of the children?

YOUTH ARE *cultivating change*

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Our Role in Social Change Ecosystems (40 minutes):

This activity was inspired by and uses the <u>"Social Change Ecosystem" framework created by Deepa Iyer, Solidarity Is, and the Building Movement Project</u>:

- Review and share an overview of the Social Change Ecosystems framework and go over the 10 different roles offered.

- If it is helpful, brainstorm with participants understandings of the words at the center of the ecosystem (equity, liberation, justice, and solidarity). Use flipchart paper to write down student's answers.
  - While definitions can be helpful at times, what are other ways you can describe these words through storytelling and narrative?
  - For example: in an equitable world with justice, liberation and solidarity, people have access to the resources they need, are free to build safe, healthy, and loving families and communities without fear of oppression or violence, neighbors work together and show up for each other even when they are not directly impacted, etc.

- Ask participants to circle up to 4 roles they identify with or feel pulled towards when thinking about the better world they want to live in. They could also choose role that they admire when they see other people in their communities taking it on.

- Have participants get in pairs. In the pair, have participants talk about which roles they feel drawn to, which ones that they feel like they currently embody or have embodied in the past, and which ones they would like to embody in the future. If they choose similar roles, have them talk about the different ways they approach those roles. If they choose different roles, have them discuss how those roles are complimentary.

- After the pairs have time to talk, have the participants get into two groups of pairs (4 people total). Give them a large piece of paper or poster and ask them to describe, using only images or symbols (no words or letters) how they see the ecosystem of roles working together, and how the roles they identify with or feel strongly about support the others and vice versa.

- Have each group share their poster with the larger group. Affirm contributions and drawing connections where you see them.

YOUTH ARE *cultivating change*

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- More questions to ask participants can be found in the reflection guide created by Deepa Iyer and the Building Movement Project if they need more guidance and/or if you would like to dive deeper into the the framework.

Closing (10 minutes):

- Place a flipchart or poster board on the wall that says "Our Social Change Ecosystem"

- Have participants write on different sticky notes their answers to these two questions:
  - What role do you want to embody in this moment?
  - What changes do you want to make in your community while in that role?

- Ask participants to put their sticky notes on the flipchart or poster and read folks' contributions out aloud.

Remote/Online Facilitation Tips:

- Breakout rooms can be used for the conversations between pairs and groups of 4.
- Jamboard or Google Slides can be used to create their group poster using only images and symbols. Invite participants to share their screen when presenting their posters.
- Mentimeter, Poll Everywhere, and/or Jamboard can be used to collect responses to reflection questions.

YOUTH ARE _____

Learning Goals:

- Demonstrate art as a tool for self-expression and social change
- Design artwork inspired by previous lessons

Time:

60 minutes

Materials:

Flipchart paper, printed copies of the blank YOUTH ARE handout, markers, stickers, colored pencils, collaging materials, and general art materials

Facilitator Tip:

This lesson should be facilitated in conjunction with *at least* one of the other lessons, if not all three. We do not recommend facilitating this lesson on its own.

Art as a Tool for Social Change (15 minutes):

- Introduce this last activity by asking participants for examples of ways they've seen art or creative expression being used as a tool for social change in their communities, online, or in the media:
  - examples can include: poster and banner making for protests, political education zine making, story telling, and music, murals on buildings, etc.
  - Were there any examples of art in the "Youth are Leaders" timeline?

- Then ask students to brainstorm why they think art and creativity are used for social change? Use a new sheet of flipchart paper to record these answers.
  - How do we use art to think about and transform who are are as individuals?
  - Why is art such a useful tool when communicating new or big ideas?
  - How does art allow us to vision the world we want to live in?

Visioning the Power of Youth (45 minutes):

- Pass out copies of the blank YOUTH ARE handout and make sure an abundance of art supplies are available. Tell participants that they will have the opportunity to create their own piece of art centered around social change and the power of youth.

YOUTH ARE *making posters!*

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- Ask participants to pick a word or phrase (adjectives or actions) that they feel like describes themselves, their friends, or the youth in their community:
  - What did they learn about the power of youth in the previous lessons?
  - What story or narrative about youth do they feel is not told enough?
  - Think about the "Social Change Ecosystem," do they feel inspired by one of those roles?
- After participants have chosen their word or phrase, ask them to write it in the blank space at the top of their sheet. Then ask them to use the art materials to create a dynamic image. Use some of the sample posters in the curriculum as inspiration!

- After giving participants time to work on their posters, ask for volunteers to share what they've created!

- As you close out the workshop, as participants to think of ways they can share their artwork with their communities whether that be on social media, by making copies and putting them up in their school or community center, or through collecting all the posters and creating a collaborative zine.

Remote/Online Facilitation Tips:

- Mentimeter or a similar tool can be used to brainstorm ways in which art is used as a tool for social change and the importance of art in social movements.
- If participants cannot print a copy of the blank YOUTH ARE handout at home they can use a blank sheet of paper and art supplies they have at home *and/or* facilitators can support participants in using a platform like Canva or Jamboard to create digital artwork and collages.

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