

Embracing an asset-based approach to implementing and evaluating adolescent sexual health programs

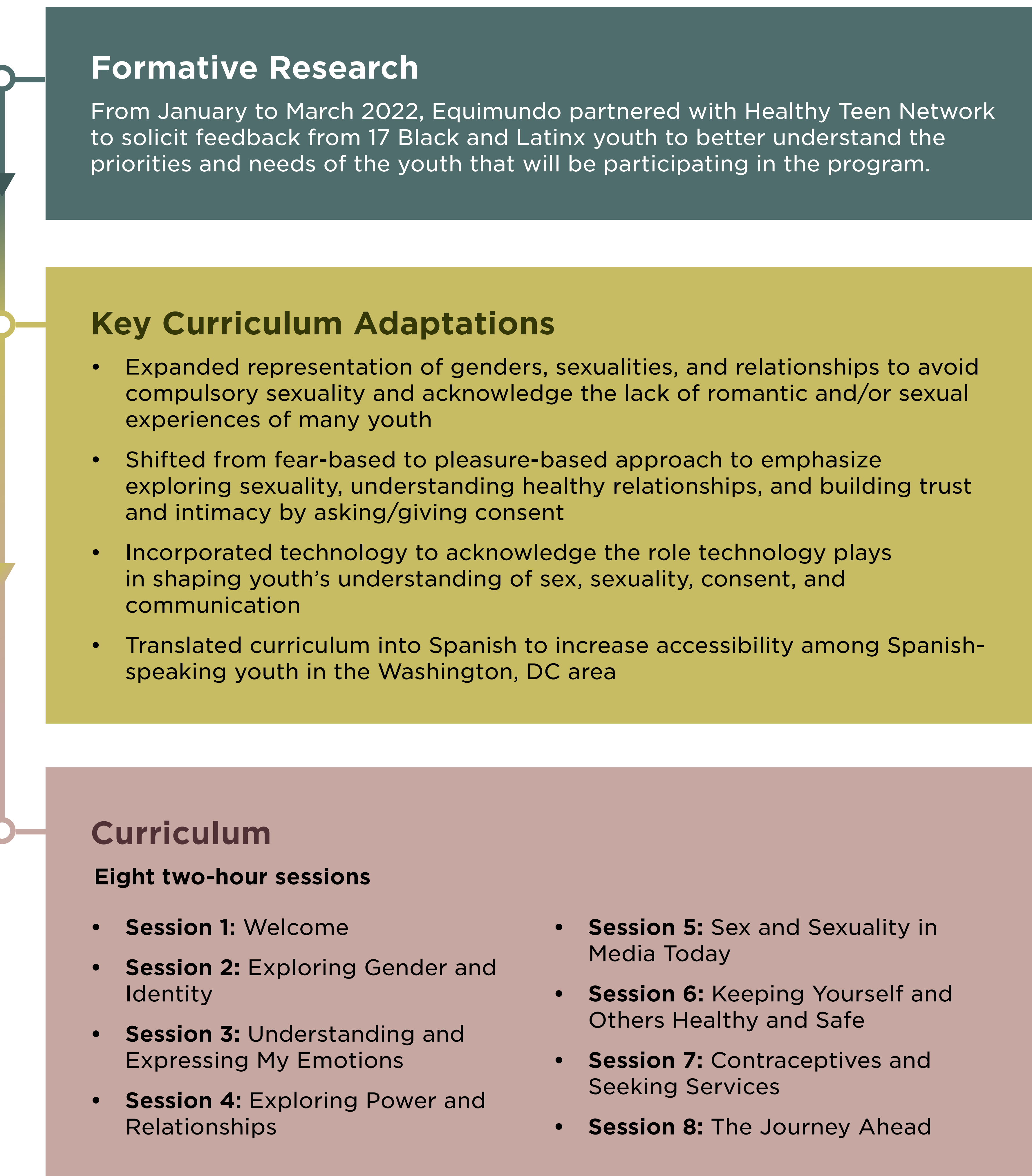
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PROGRAM

Many Ways of Being (MWB) is an innovative gender-transformative adolescent sexual health program for youth of all genders and sexual identities. The Many Ways of Being (MWB) program evaluation takes an asset-based approach—both in the curriculum content and the evaluation outcomes. It was developed with the goal of increasing positive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) behaviors and avoiding the promotion of shame and stigma around these topics.

Program Development:

MWB draws from two existing Equimundo curricula, Manhood 2.0 and Sisterhood 2.0, but incorporates several important updates to ensure the curriculum reflects young people's diverse lived experiences. These updates were largely informed by Equimundo's formative research.



The figure (left) is one of a series of posts that is shared with youth on a MWB Instagram account to supplement session content. All posts are shared in English and Spanish.

EVALUATION DESIGN

- Between 2023 and 2024, the study team will implement MWB with 350 primarily Black and Latinx youth ages 15-19 in the Washington, DC area.
- An additional 350 youth will be randomized to receive a job readiness control curriculum, Passport to Success.
- The evaluation focuses on the impact of MWB on sex-positive outcomes, including consistent contraceptive use and sexual and reproductive agency, empowerment, knowledge, and self-efficacy.

Evaluation outcomes:

MWB aims to help participants adopt the following sexual health-promoting behaviors:

- consistent and correct use of condoms and contraceptives
- use of SRH services
- communication between partners
- consent in relationships
- sexual agency
- sexual and reproductive empowerment.

Cognitive Interviews

Child Trends tested our survey items through cognitive interviews with six youth ages of 15-19 in the Washington, DC area. We conducted these interviews to assess if any of our survey items were in need of revision or removal and to gather feedback about specific words, phrases, or response options.

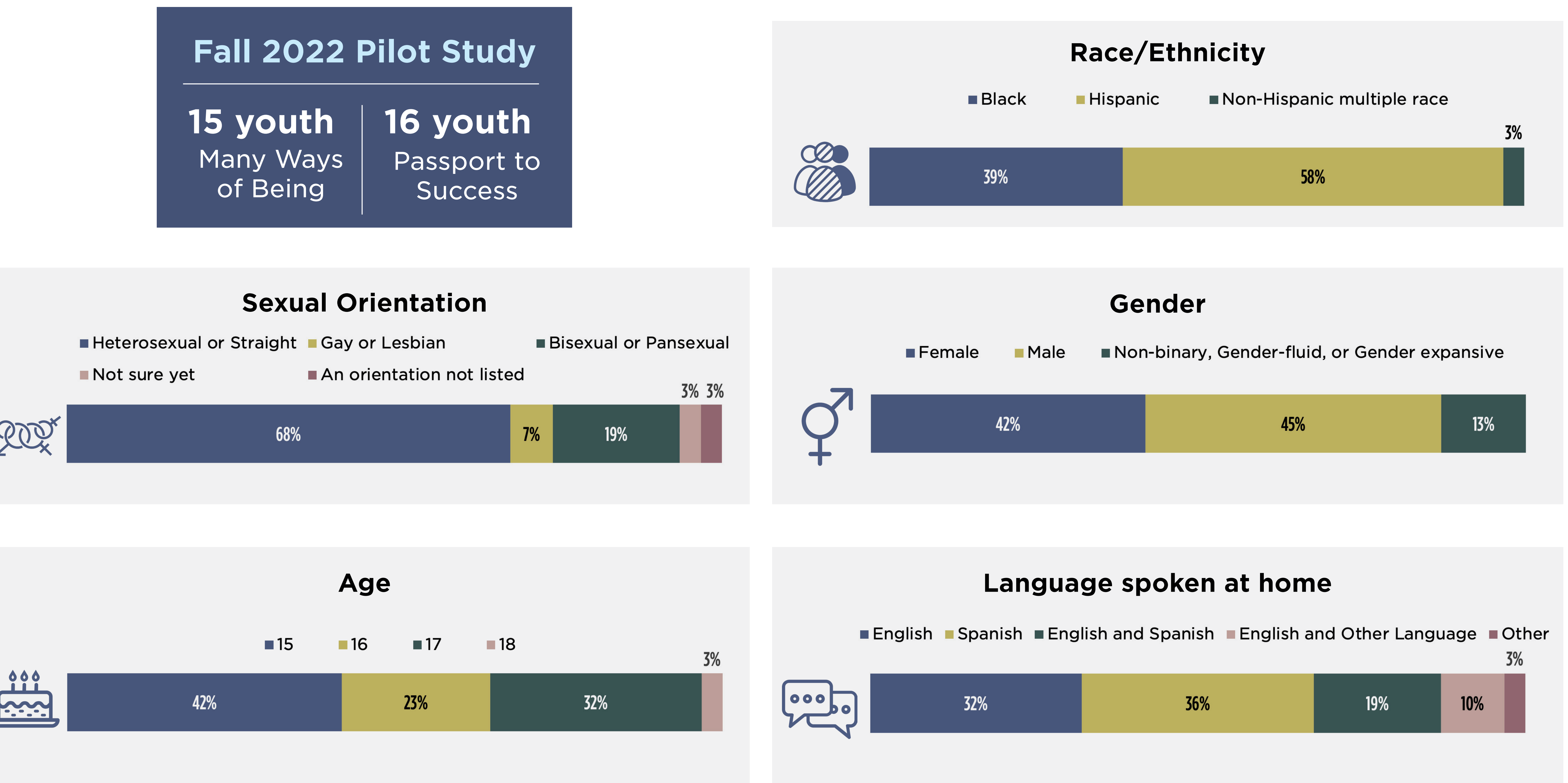
Select outcome measures

Outcome domain	Measure details	Development information
Consistent use of condoms and contraceptives*	Used a condom "all the time" during vaginal or anal sex in the past 3 months	To maintain an asset-based approach, questions ask about consistency of method use, rather than instances of unprotected sex.
	Used any contraceptive "all the time" during vaginal sex in the past 3 months	
Sexual agency	Expressed sexual agency: Communicated what they "liked, disliked, or wanted to try" and asked their partner what they "liked, disliked, or wanted to try" when participating in any sexual activity in the past 3 months.	Developed by the Child Trends team based on conversations with Equimundo and researcher Spring Cooper ¹ . Language was further refined after cognitive interviews and reviewing pilot data.
	Perceived sexual agency: a. If I had a romantic partner, I would feel comfortable asking for what I want sexually b. If I had a romantic partner, I would feel comfortable asking them what they want sexually Answers range from "not at all true" to "extremely true" (0-4)	Item a was adapted from the Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory ² and edited to better fit the age and gender diversity of the MWB evaluation sample. Item b was added to reflect our definition of sexual agency, which includes having empathy for a partner's wants and needs.
Sexual and reproductive empowerment	Self-love subscale (4 items) Example item: I am worthy of love.	Adapted from the Sexual and Reproductive Empowerment Scale ³ . Selected subscales align with the MWB curriculum and goals, and the items were well-understood by youth during cognitive interviews.
	Sexual pleasure (3 items) Example item: My sexual needs or desires are important.	
	Comfort talking with partner (3 items) Example item: If I had a romantic partner, I would feel comfortable voicing disagreements with them.	

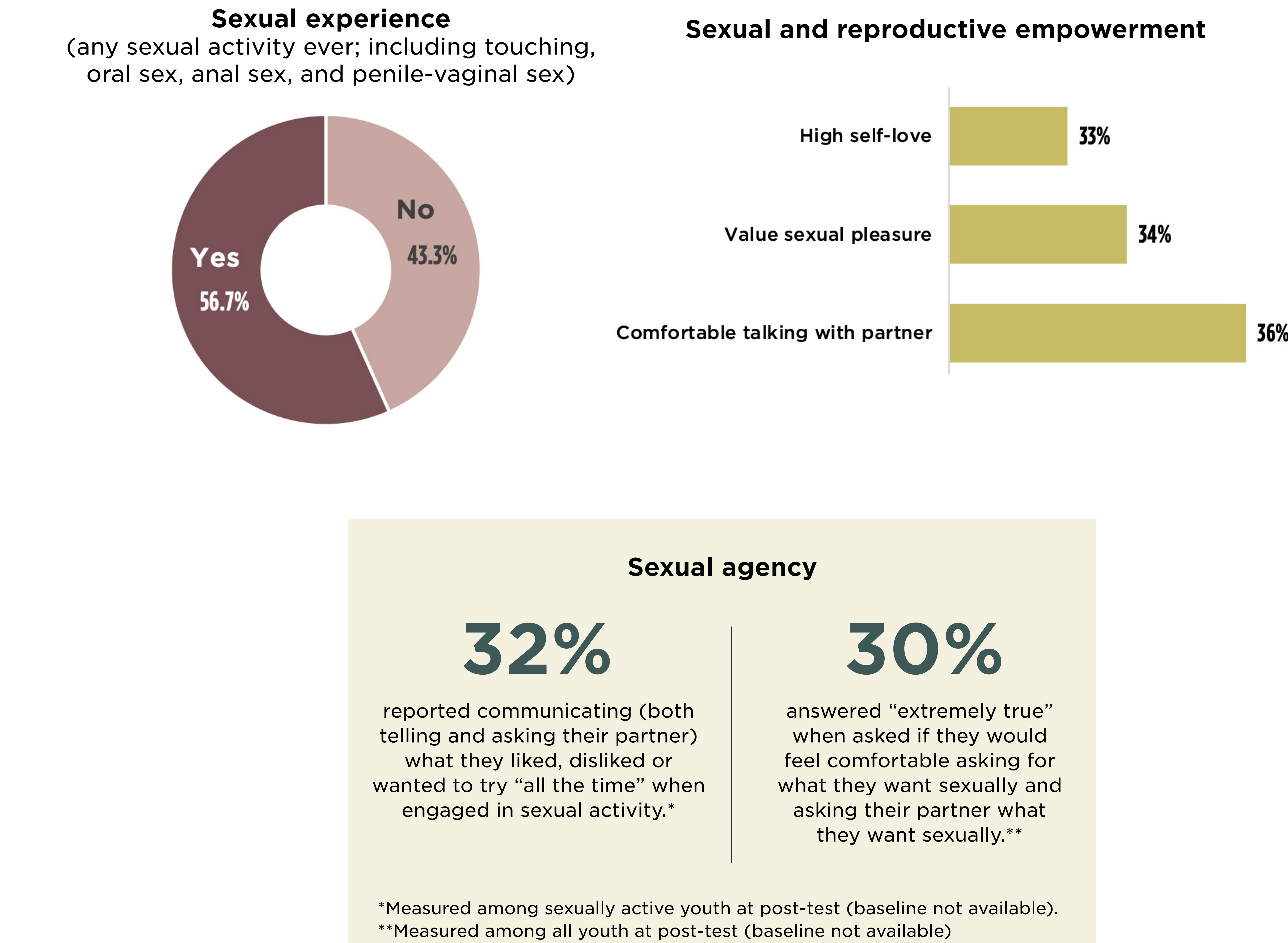
*Primary outcomes
¹Cooper, S., Schöbert, K., Cheruvillil, S., Porter, A., & Palmedo, P. C. (2021). Posts, likes, shares, and DMs: a qualitative exploration of how social media is related to sexual agency in young people. *Journal of Health Communication*, 26(2), 121-126. doi:10.1080/10810730.2021.1890283
²Horne, S., & Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. (2006). The female sexual subjectivity inventory: Development and validation of a multidimensional inventory for late adolescents and emerging adults. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30, 125-138. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2006.00276.x
³Upadhyay U.D., Danza, P. Y., Neilands, T.B., Gipson, J. D., Brindis, C. D., Hindin, M. J., Foster, D. G., & Dworkin, S. L. (2021). Development and validation of the sexual and reproductive empowerment scale for adolescents and young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 68(1), 86-94. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.05.031

PILOTING MANY WAYS OF BEING

Participant Demographics



Select participant characteristics



PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Student Perceptions

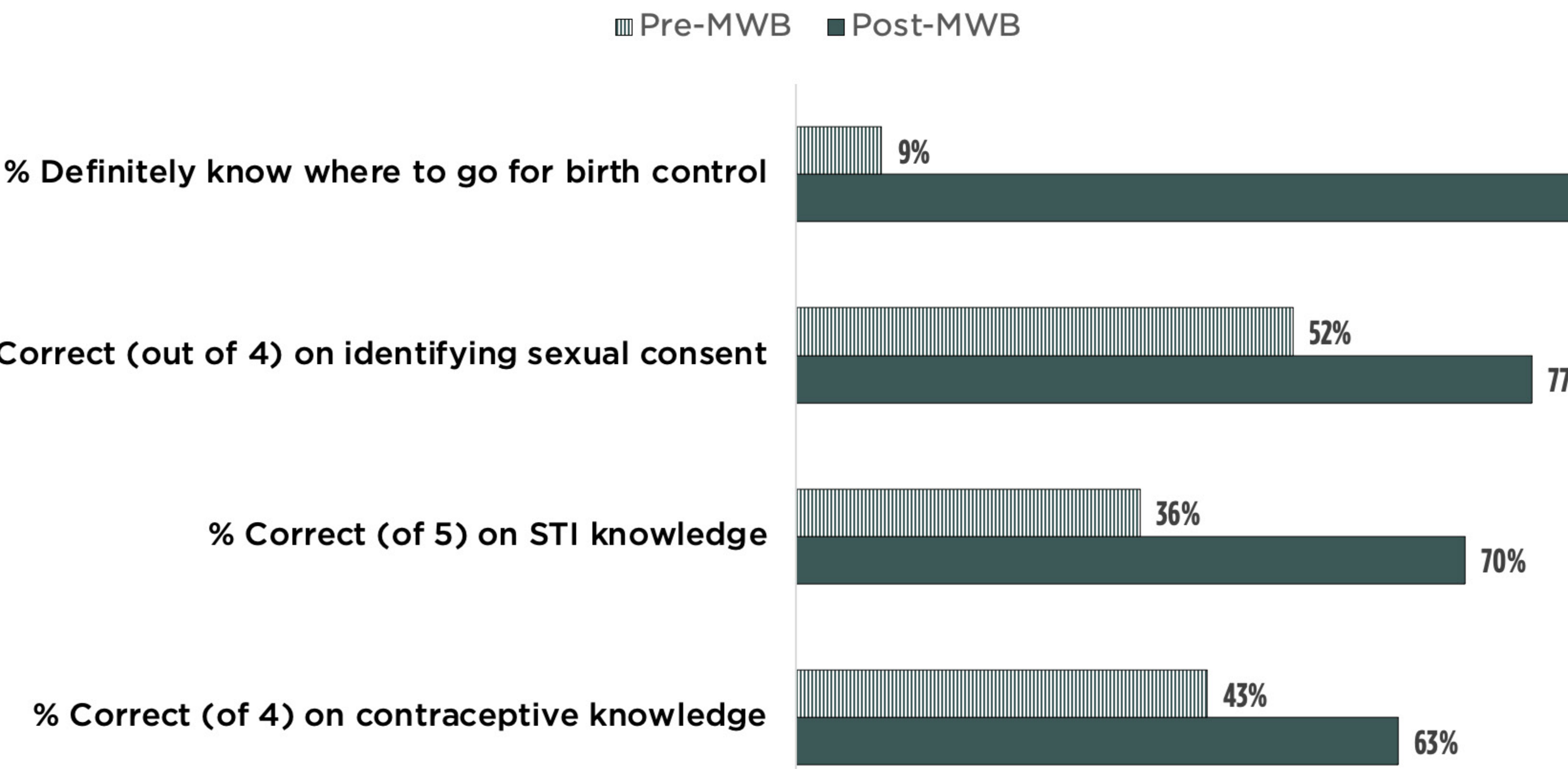


Quotes from focus group interview with pilot youth:

"[I liked] when we acted out the scenarios, even though sometimes I...didn't want to do it because I felt embarrassed. It was always fun because the teachers also participate and they would make it funny."

"[The program taught us to] find, like, places to go to in case we do get pregnant or we have an STI and like different companies that would help us as teens to go find help..."

Increases in SRH knowledge



Note: Also saw increases in the following sexual empowerment measures: sexual pleasure, self-love, and communication with partner

Implementation Strategies For Student Engagement

- Respond to youth preferences and feedback regarding incentives and snacks provided during sessions
- Be interactive and communicative with youth (e.g., greet the youth by name as they arrive to class)
- Encourage youth to bring friends to the welcome session to screen into the program with them
- Offer youth ambassador opportunity to 'graduates' of the program

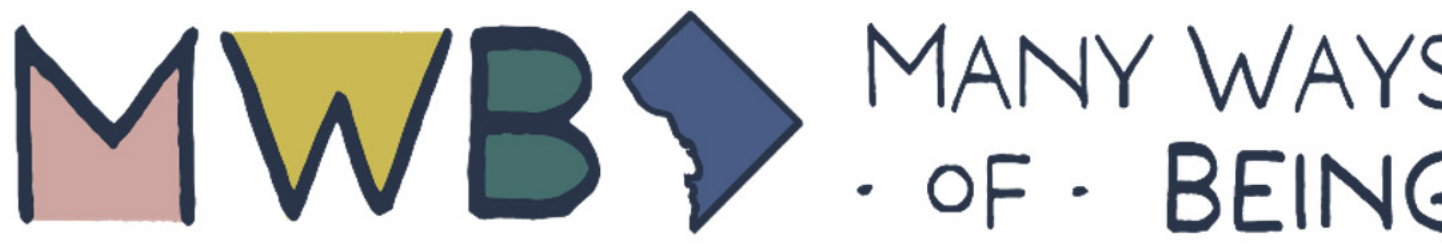
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