

Ensuring Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Voice in Sex Ed Programs

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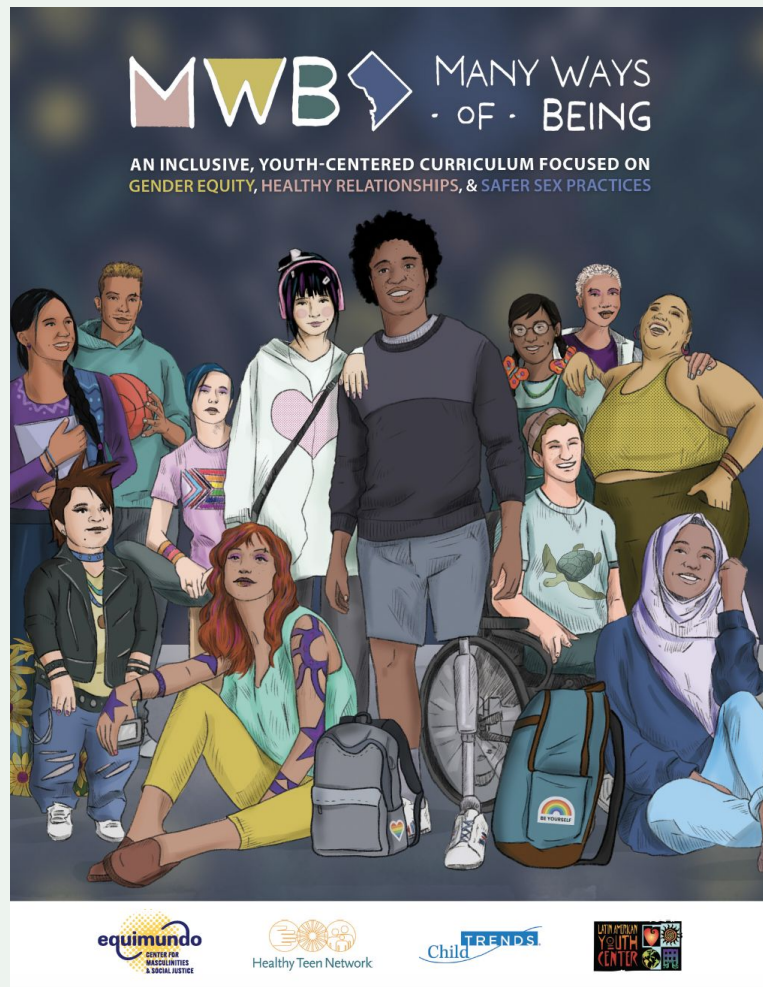


Let's Get Started!



A Short Intro of MWB

- *Many Ways of Being* (MWB) is a curriculum for young people of **all gender identities, ages 15 to 19**, comprised of eight 2-hour sessions or 16 1-hour sessions.
- The program's overall goal is to reduce incidence of **sexually transmitted infection (STIs)** and **unplanned pregnancy** and promote **healthy, consensual, and violence-free relationships** among youth.
- Developed to be implemented in school settings from 2022 – 2025, with a complementary **digital engagement** Instagram component



What comes to mind when you hear...

Meaningful Youth Participation

“A practice by engaging directly with young people, as both participants and leaders, in the development of programs geared toward addressing their sexual and reproductive health needs. It **shares power with young people, recognizing them as experts regarding their own needs and priorities** while also strengthening their leadership/workforce capacities.”

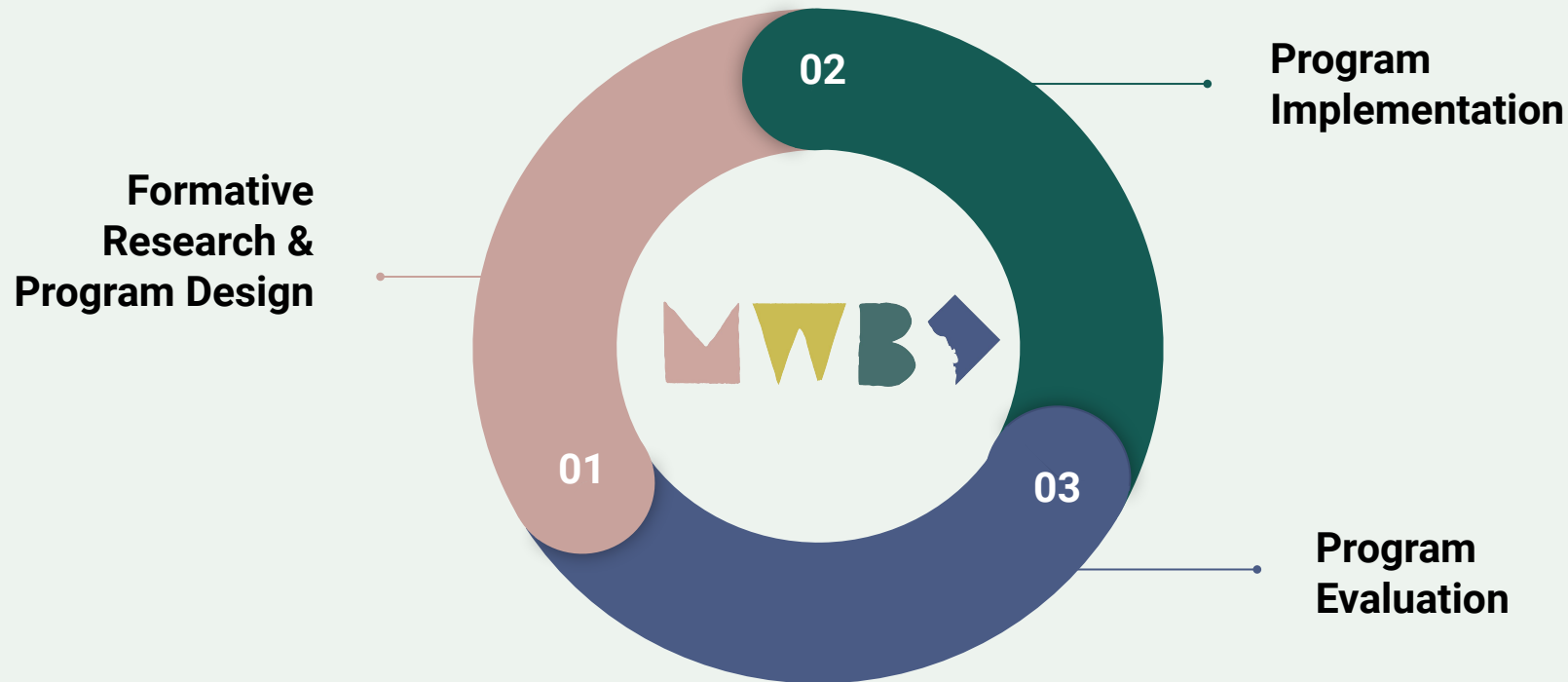
-USAID MOMENTUM Project



Meaningful Youth Participation **in Practice**



Making an intervention that resonates with youth



Formative Research & Program Design



Formative Research: Asking What They Want & Need

- Virtual Listening Sessions using a private Facebook group
- Recruitment through social media posts, texts, and posters at LAYC

We need your help! We're creating a new education program. That's why we want to hear your real, unfiltered thoughts on gender norms, relationships, sex education, and more. Oh, one more thing: Answer a few questions in a Facebook group and you'll get \$50!



LAYC • PROMUNDO • HEALTHY TEEN NETWORK
FEBRUARY 1-3, 2022
VIRTUAL LISTENING SESSION

**SHARE YOUR
THOUGHTS
AND GET
\$50**

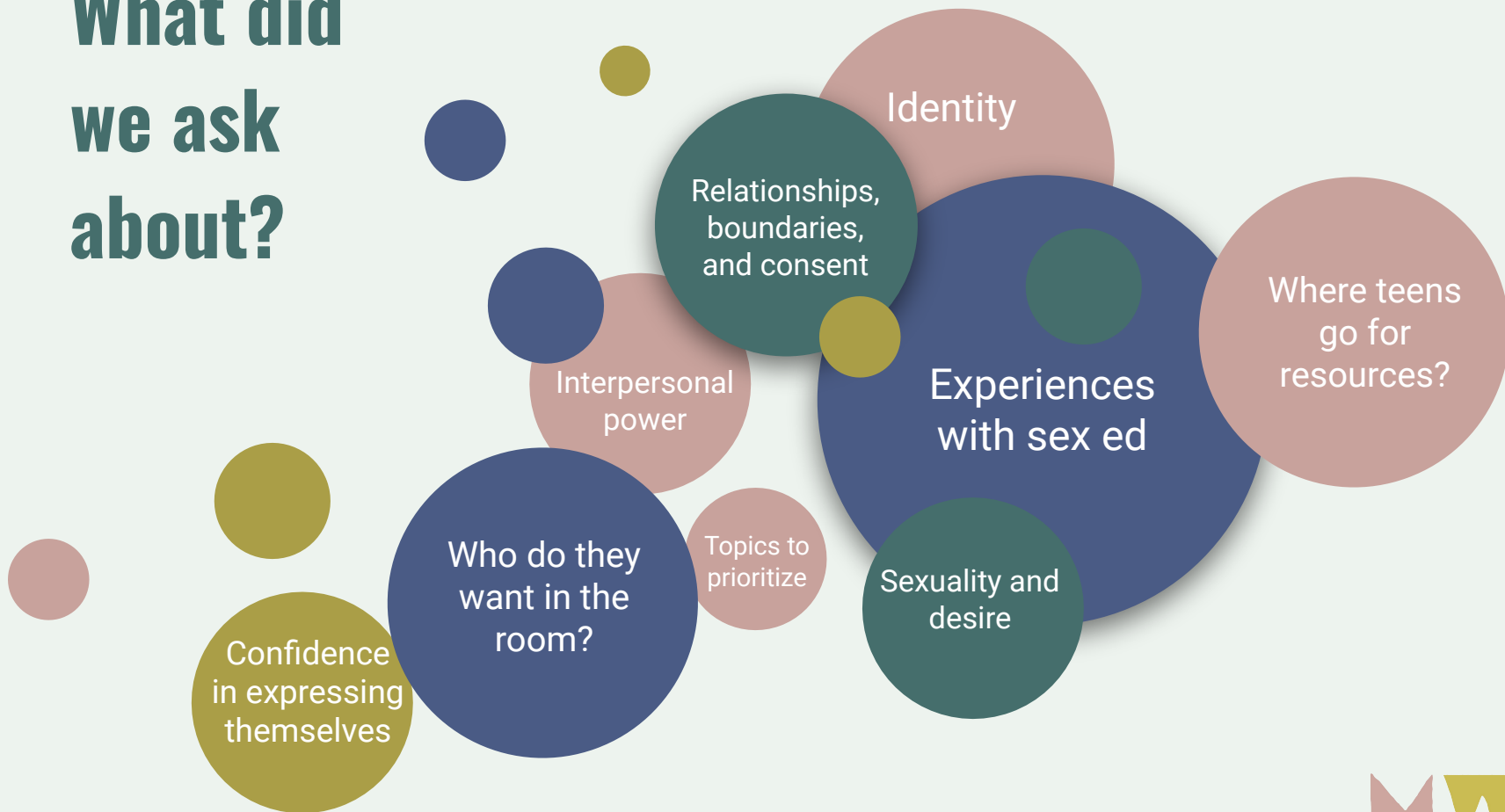


We want to hear your real, unfiltered thoughts on gender norms, relationships, sex education, and more.

Join our virtual listening session in a private Facebook group. You'll post, like, and vote for about 30 minutes every day for three days – and get a \$50 gift card for full participation.

Scan and apply by **JANUARY 26, 2022**
Can't scan? Try bit.ly/LAYCVLS

What did we ask about?



What did we learn?

1

Youth wanted to see their **lived experiences** reflected in the content – intersecting race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities

2

Youth highlighted **media and online interactions** as a core component to their relationships

3

Youth wanted to learn the **"how's"** instead of just the **"what's"**

4

Youth wanted to be able to **access the content in languages** they feel comfortable in



Developed examples, storylines, and characters that reflect diversity and intersectionality

Michelle (she/they): Popular (high social status)

Miguel (he/him): Not popular (low social status)

Situation:

These two characters are talking about whether they want to keep their relationship private or public.

Method: Threats

Directions: Look at these two characters and, based on the identities listed above, discuss who might have more power and who might have less power in their relationship.

SCENARIO 1

MATEO is a 15-year-old male-identifying individual who uses he/his pronouns. He is pansexual, meaning he is attracted to people of all genders. Mateo moved to a new town and is attending a new school. He is excited and nervous about meeting new friends. Mateo loves self-expression through style – everything from colorful sneakers to an occasional high heel to accessories like rings and earrings. At this new school, his peers started calling Mateo gay and making fun of him because of what he wears. Let's talk about this:

- What part(s) of the Gender Unicorn does this story apply to?
- How does Mateo's story relate to the Man Box and/or Woman Box? What expectations does society have of Mateo based on how they perceive Mateo's gender?
- How are society's expectations holding Mateo back in terms of how he expresses himself? Self-expression?
- How might this experience affect Mateo's mental health, relationships, sexual health, and well-being?
- If you were one of Mateo's new peers, how could you support, include, and show respect to Mateo?



Concentrating on what to do with the information in their lives

APPENDIX 12

BOUNDARY SCENARIOS

Your new boyfriend wants to hang out for the third time this week, but you just want some time to relax and spend time with your friends.

• *How can you go about setting a clear boundary? What are some steps, and what would you say? What could you do if they keep pushing?*

You missed several days of school due to a medical condition. When you get back, your teacher asks what happened. You feel this information is personal and do not want to share.

• *How can you go about setting a clear boundary? What are some steps, and what would you say? What could you do if they keep pushing?*

APPENDIX 17

COMMUNICATING ABOUT STIS WITH MY PARTNER

a) You just got on birth control. Your partner says that it's great he doesn't have to use condoms anymore. You disagree. How do you bring it up?

b) You're hooking up with someone and think you might be about to have some kind of sex soon. They don't say anything about having been tested. How do you bring it up?

c) You just found out you have chlamydia (treatable with antibiotics). How do you bring it up with a partner?

Session 7 | Contraceptives and seeking services | Activity 7.3

APPENDIX 24 TIPS AND TRICKS FOR VISITING THE CLINIC

The BEFORE

• Call to make an appointment and get information about what to expect. You can ask:

- What sexual and reproductive health services do you offer?
- How much do they cost? Will my insurance cover the service? If I don't have insurance, will I need to pay?
- What is involved in a visit?
- How long will it take?
- Do I need an appointment?
- Do I need parental permission?
- Is it confidential?
- Can I bring a friend?
- What do I need to bring?
- Can I have a [fill in identity] doctor?
- How do I get there?

• Find out if you have insurance (private insurance through your parents/guardians, Medicaid, TRICARE, or none).

• Make a plan to get to the clinic.

• Think about (and write down) what types of questions you want to ask the healthcare provider and what services you're going to access.

• When you make your appointment, make sure to write down the date and time. Put the information somewhere to help you remember – like in a planner or your phone's calendar. If you need to keep your appointment private, you can put it down as something like "go to the gym," if you remember what it really means.*

The DURING

- Show up early for your first appointment so you have time to do paperwork.*
- Bring a photo ID, your social security number, and any insurance information, if you have them. If you don't have any of these, don't worry!
- Be respectful to staff and know that they should always be respectful to you. Clinic staff should ask about and respect your pronouns, gender identity, and chosen name. Healthcare staff should never put you down, judge you, or force you to do anything that you do not want to do. If any of these things happen to you, you can make a report by speaking with the clinic manager. You can also go to another clinic.*
- Be truthful! The healthcare provider can't help you to the best of their ability if they don't know what you're going through. Their job is to provide you with the care you need for the



Inclusion of a session on media's influence on sexuality, relationships, and sex

SOCIAL MEDIA AND EXPECTATIONS

15
Minutes

- 1 Hang the five flipchart papers with an Instagram handle and two columns ("Positive" and "Negative") around the room.

2  SAY

Now, we are going to switch gears a little bit and talk about social media and its influence on sex, sexuality, relationships, and our sense of self. I'm going to put you into small groups for the next activity. In your small groups, I want you to go around to the different flipchart papers and visit the handle. You're then going to write any messages you see from their posts – positive and negative. After 2 minutes, you will go to the next one and add anything you don't see already on the paper.

FACILITATOR NOTES

If participants don't have a phone or social media, pair them with another participant who does. There is a large risk with this activity that participants will become distracted on their phones. It's best to go around and observe them in their groups and talk with them about what they are seeing.

- 3 Clarify the directions as needed. Group the participants and assign them a starting place. Set a timer for 2 minutes, having participants complete the first paper, and repeat until everyone has seen all five accounts.

APPENDIX 14

ANDRES' STORY

Andres (he/him) is getting more serious with his partner, and they are talking about having sex for the first time. Andres has never had sex before; however, his partner has. Andres is excited to explore things that bring them both pleasure. But he's also nervous and feels a lot of pressure to perform. He feels pressure to know what to do because he's a man. He knows that he will be expected to take control in the situation. He's seen porn and thinks he can get some answers from watching more.

Andres and his partner are hanging out, and they start hooking up. Andres thinks back to what he saw in the videos he watched. He skips out on the foreplay and doesn't put on a condom. He tries to mimic some of the actions he's seen when watching porn, including getting aggressive. In the moment, he can tell he's aroused and experiencing sexual pleasure, but something's missing...

Afterward, Andres asks, "How great was that?!" His partner is visibly reserved and has shut down. They respond, "I really don't know what to say, Andres. That wasn't what I was hoping for."

APPENDIX 15 SAFER SEXTING CHECKLIST

This checklist items were created by Sarah Hyde, youth services coordinator and Team Stronger Than You Think, for [SAFE \(Safe Alternatives to Violent Environments\)](#).

Here are some things to consider about safer sexting. Fill in the blanks if you have more ideas to add to your checklist!

- ☐ • **Check in with yourself:**
 - ☐ Do I want to send/receive sexts? Why?
 - ☐ What is my plan to protect myself and my partner from the risks?
- ☐ • **Check in with your partner:**
 - ☐ Do you want to receive or send sexts? Why?
 - ☐ What is your plan to protect both of us from the risks?
- ☐ • **Share your individual boundaries and make some agreements together:**
 - ☐ What is off limits? Think through your yes's, no's, and maybes.
 - ☐ What app will we use?
 - ☐ Do we delete or keep the photos? Is screenshotting okay?
 - ☐ _____
- ☐ • **Get and give consent!**
 - ☐ Remember that consent is ongoing – anyone can change their mind at any time.
 - ☐ Agree to stop if someone is no longer having fun or feeling safe.
- ☐ • **Turn off message previews.**
 - ☐ iPhone: Settings > Notifications > Messages > Show Previews > Never
 - ☐ Android: Settings > Apps > Messages > Notifications > Uncheck Boxes
- ☐ • **Make sure your devices are password-protected.**
- ☐ • **If you agree to delete images, you must also clear your trash can file.**
- ☐ • **Stick to the boundaries you agreed to.**
- ☐ • **Don't show your face or recognizable body markings.**



Included conversations about racial and other biases in access to SRH services

SCENARIO 3

Jessie (she/they) is a 15-year-old who has known for as long as they can remember that their sex assigned at birth (male) didn't fit their gender identity (girl). After doing some research online about options for transgender youth, she decides to go to the clinic to talk with someone about gender-affirming hormone therapy to start their physical transition to a woman. In the consultation, the provider is condescending and dismissive to Jessie, telling them, ***"This is just a phase, and you'll get over it soon,"*** and, ***"This isn't the way God intended people to be."*** The doctor consistently misgenders Jessie throughout the visit, calling them ***"he."*** Jessie feels invalidated.

ROUND 1

Are any of the patient's rights being violated? If so, which one(s)?

ROUND 2

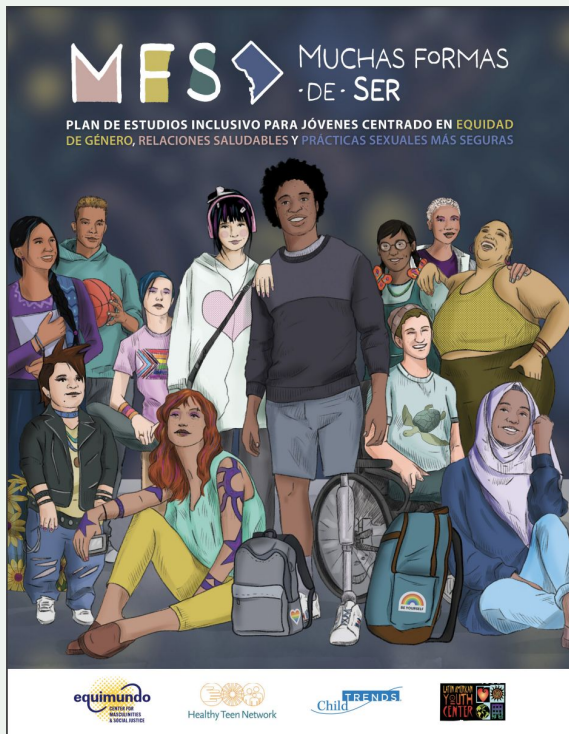
What could Jessie say in this situation to advocate for herself?

ROUND 3

How could the provider have approached this differently?



Translation of all tools into Spanish, and opening the program to all genders synchronously



Program Implementation



Establishing a Cadre of Peer Ambassadors

- Ambassadors are **inspiring youth and key connections** who wanted to be more involved in their community.
- Ambassadors run and assist with **recruitment events, community presentations, class reminders, and graduations.**



What are the benefits of the Peer Ambassadors?

01

The Ambassadors

Leadership skills, confidence, gift cards, and fun!

02

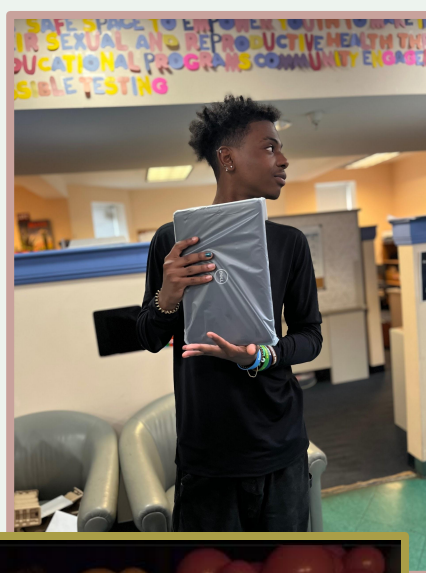
The Community

Changing things they think are important (stereotypes, workforces, attitudes/beliefs in family)

03

The Program

Increased retention rates and recruitment numbers, strengthened partnerships



Program Implementation: Listening to Youth Voices



Accessibility and Representation (disability, language, identity)

- Adapting handouts and facilitations for students with disabilities
- Intersectional examples and storylines



Building Retention Strategies for participation

- Ensuring the session times work with their schedules and school events
- Establishing incentive structures that attract youth (community service vs monetary)
- Trying new facilitation strategies for active and consistent participation



Ensuring Parental and School Support/Mitigating Backlash

- Balancing the need for parental consent (vs assent) and speaking with parents about the program.
- Having the students talk with the teachers and admin about the benefits of the program



Program Evaluation



Cognitive Interviewing

- Engaged 6 youth to test pre/post survey items to make sure the questions were understandable and resonated with you
- This improves the quality and responsiveness of survey results

“Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?”

“Do you think any part of this question would be hard for teens your age to understand or answer?”

How did you decide between the response options (e.g., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)?



Focus Groups

“I think that self-love is also an important topic that can be addressed with teenagers...”

“[I want to learn more] about how to treat others who have suffered traumas, or when they tell you about them, how to help”

“It was something new—a new experience that I wanted to learn about, and I did learn about it thanks to the program”

“It was important to me to learn about which contraceptive methods protect you from what ...”

“[The facilitator] was a great teacher because the energy [they] gave us in the mornings was like ‘oh, this person loves teaching’”



Small Group Activity: Gallery Walk

split into small groups and brainstorm **promising practices** you recommend to increase youth involvement at each stage of your sex ed journey

(think specifics around intervention design & content, implementation (sites identification, recruitment, and delivery), and monitoring & evaluation).

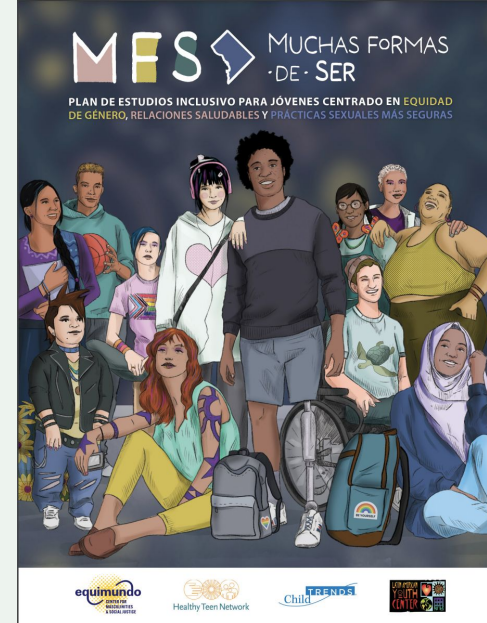
Q&A

Where Can I find MWB?

The curriculum is free and available for download on the Equimundo website.

It is available in English and Spanish:
<https://www.equimundo.org/resources/many-ways-of-being-curriculum/>

SCAN ME



WHAT DID YOU THINK?

Please remember to fill out this session's survey!

1. Go to the Schedule.
2. Find & open this session.
3. Scroll down.
4. Select "Rate this session."
5. Complete & submit!

