

SOME GIRLS

A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY RAQUEL CEPEDA AND HENRY CHALFANT



public art films

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STUDENTS AT THE HARVARD GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
CLASS OF 2018

#SOMEGIRLSDOC

COMPANION CURRICULUM

public art films



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INTRODUCTION

SOME GIRLS is a feature documentary that explores issues of identity within the Latinx-American community by focusing on a group of teenage girls in a Bronx-based suicide prevention program who feel rejected by mainstream America, but are transformed through an exploration of their roots. SOME GIRLS and its companion curriculum seek to illuminate the places that are often hidden or ignored within ourselves, our histories, and in present-day society. As educators, we recognize the deep value and importance of social-emotional learning, and believe it should be at the forefront of classroom instruction. Our curriculum supports students' exploration of the major themes in the film with guidance and materials for teachers and facilitators throughout.

STUDENTS AT THE HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, CLASS OF 2018

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FROM THE FILMMAKERS

We are grateful to the students at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, Class of 2018, for the comprehensive set of curricula they've created to accompany our film, *SOME GIRLS*. The documentary follows a group of troubled Latina teens from a Bronx-based suicide prevention program who are transformed by an exploration of their roots via the use of ancestral DNA testing, followed by a trip to the seat of the Americas. On that journey to modern-day Dominican Republic, the white supremacist narratives about American history they've been taught in school and the media, are challenged, leaving them free to reconstruct their own respective identities. What does it really mean to be American? And, more importantly, what does that look like?

SOME GIRLS also looks at how identity, gender, and mental health intersect. It's especially important, as immigrant and Latinx-American communities in North America are under attack by the current administration, that we challenge the binary narratives that are being propagated in our society.

We are hopeful that *SOME GIRLS* and the accompanying curricula will serve as bridge to engage, inspire dialogue, and given the realities we are living in now, as a tool to heal and move forward, united.

With our deepest gratitude,
Raquel Cepeda and Henry Chalfant



ABOUT THIS CURRICULUM

The curriculum set for *SOME GIRLS* was created to facilitate dialogue around identity, herstory*/history, and healing in middle school, high school, and undergraduate spaces, in tandem with the film. *SOME GIRLS* follows the lives of a group of young girls in a suicide prevention program. Topics in the film such as cutting, suicide, abuse, harassment, body image, and mental health can be triggering for students, or difficult to watch. Discussing the film and activities with a program administrator ahead of time can be a great way to set your group up for success. Think about the mental health and wellness resources available on your campus and think of how you can share that information with students or collaborate with staff while showing and discussing this film.

While we have created two modules in this guide to help you facilitate discussions with your student group on campus, there are additional materials that may be helpful within our middle school and high school curricula. You can certainly adapt those materials to better suit your audience. We encourage you to explore those curricula and get creative in your facilitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Activities in Undergraduate Modules 1 and 2 are well-suited to facilitate discussions with your audience both before and after viewing the film. We suggest completing Module 1 before viewing the film, and completing Module 2 after viewing the film.

***Herstory – A reclamation of history that centers the perspectives of women and girls. Acknowledges both written and oral forms of history.**

UNDERGRADUATE GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS



UNDERGRADUATE MODULE 1 | BEYOND THE MIRROR ACTIVITY (PRE-FILM)

NOTE TO FACILITATORS

In the film, the girls experience internalization of what is said about the different facets of their identities. This activity will prompt participants to think about their own identities by asking “I” questions. While understanding one’s own identity is a process, this activity aims to heighten participants’ awareness of the importance of that process and promote a critical consciousness going into the film.

MATERIALS

- Printed copies of the handout “Beyond the Mirror” (See Appendix A)
- Writing utensils

TIME

Beyond the Mirror activity (30 minutes)

DIRECTIONS

Provide each participant with the “Beyond the Mirror” worksheet and ask them to fill it out. Note the header on the document reads:

1. Keeping in mind that diversity includes (but is not limited) to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical and mental ability, language, education occupation, nation of origin, etc., please answer the following questions and be prepared to share your answers with another person in the room to the extent you feel possible:
 - a. When I look in the mirror each morning I see...
 - b. Who are my people? What do they see in the mirror?
 - c. If I had to describe myself in four words I would say that I am a: (4 descriptors)
 - d. One experience that I have had that helped me to form this description of myself was:
 - e. One thing about being a (answer to the question above) that makes me feel good or proud is:
 - f. One thing that society doesn’t understand about me is:
2. Once everyone has completed their sheet, count off each person by numbers 1-5 (or more depending on group size; aim for groups of 4+) and ask all the 1’s to form a group, 2’s, 3’s, etc.
3. Next, facilitate a large group reflection discussion on this activity before moving into watching **SOME GIRLS**.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did it feel to participate in this activity?
- The questions were written as “I” statements. Looking back at your paper, did you immediately write down what you see/think or did you first think about what others see/think of you?
- Was it difficult to fill out the handout?
- Where did you specifically find yourself getting stuck?
- Have you thought about these questions before?

FINAL COMMENTS

As we watch the film, think about what it might have been like if the girls did this activity. What are some things they might have written or shared? Make note of your observations on the back of your paper.

Activity adapted from:

New York University-Department of Residential Education
Weinstein Diversity & Social Justice Experience- Ryan Sylvester,
Community Development Educator for Weinstein

UNDERGRADUATE MODULE 2 | CONCENTRIC DISCUSSION CIRCLES (POST-FILM)

NOTE TO FACILITATORS

The young girls in the film go through journeys of reflection of identity, her/history, and healing. The themes in the film may resonate with your audience. For some, the opposite may be true. As there is a lot to unpack, and given the multiple identities within any given group, we have created the following tool to guide conversations amongst your diverse audience and facilitate the probing of inequities, our own identities and histories, and how we reflect and heal.

MATERIALS

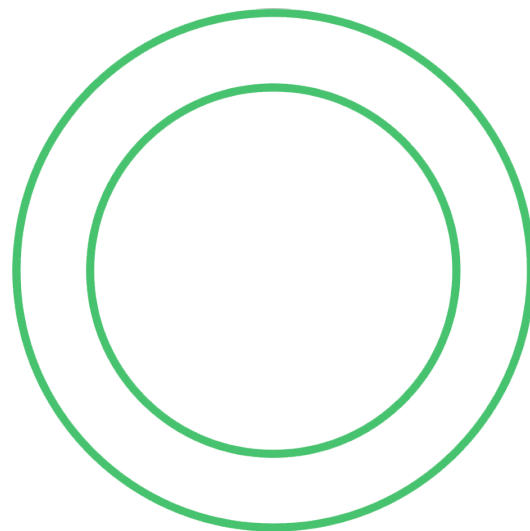
- PowerPoint with questions on each slide
- Microphone
- Timer
- Post-it notes

Note: These will vary depending on your group size, location, and capabilities.

DIRECTIONS

1. Divide the group into two circles. Participants should be facing each other.
2. Explain that the circle will rotate as a new prompt flashes on the screen (see prompts #1-10 below). If you do not have access to technology, you can simply announce each new question to the group and have them rotate.
3. Each person will have 1 minute to respond to the question, then their partner will have 1 minute. A timer should be kept visible so participants can monitor their time.

Note: If a circle does not work for your space, you can instead separate the audience into two lines; have the audience turn and talk; or have participants walk around the room and find a partner as a new question flashes across the screen.



CONCENTRIC CIRCLE PROMPTS

1. Did the girls' journey resonate with you? Which part? Why or why not?
2. In 2015, 26% of Latina youth reported having considered suicide; 15% of Latina youth attempted suicide. What do you make of these statistics? How do you think other racial or ethnic groups compare? *Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention Youth High-Risk Behavior Study 2015*
3. What is stereotype about one of your identities and how does it make you feel?
4. What does it mean to be an American?
5. Who writes history?
6. Tell your partner about a time you learned a different account of the same historic event that you learned about in school as a kid.
7. What do you do to take care of yourself?
8. What is one piece of advice you wish you could tell the younger version of yourself?
9. What is one part of the film you are still processing?
10. What is your purpose in life?

DEBRIEF ACTIVITIES + TIPS

Note: To debrief this activity, you can divide your group into smaller groups or do these activities as one whole group. Pick one or a number of these options to further debrief the film.

1. Ask the group to share key takeaways from the film and the concentric discussion circle. Encourage group members to build off one another's responses.
2. Facilitate a discussion into higher education. Ask if group members have insight into the link between students' experiences with identity and education and their subsequent outcomes. How about for particular ethnic, racial, and socio-economic groups?
3. Consider using Poll Everywhere for audience members to submit one word that they feel after watching the film by texting. Project responses in real time and ask folks to identify trends.
4. Create a guide full of campus and community resources for mental health and self care activities. Maybe this guide already exists. Print and distribute for students to take with them on their way out.
5. Parking lot – Have students “park” any lingering questions with a post-it note before they leave the event. Use these to determine any next steps.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PRINTABLE “BEYOND THE MIRROR” WORKSHEET

MODULE 1: IDENTITY | ACTIVITY: BEYOND THE MIRROR

Keeping in mind that diversity includes (but is not limited) to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical and mental ability, language, education occupation, nation of origin, etc., **please answer the following questions and be prepared to share all or parts of your answers with someone you don't know if you are comfortable.**

“BEYOND THE MIRROR”

1. When I look in the mirror each morning I see...

2. Who are my people? What do we see in the mirror?

3. If I had to describe myself in four words I would say that I am:

_____	_____
_____	_____

4. One experience that I have had that helped me form this description of myself was:

5. One thing about being a _____ that makes me feel good or proud is:

_____	_____
_____	_____

6. One thing that society doesn't get about me is _____