



PREVENTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS: THE MY LIFE MY CHOICE CURRICULUM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How was the curriculum created?

Preventing Sexual Exploitation Among Adolescent Girls: The My Life My Choice Curriculum was developed in 2002 in response to the death of a young woman who killed by her exploiter while living in a group home. In developing the curriculum, survivors were interviewed; their perspectives and input shaped the content of the curriculum. The curriculum was piloted at a residential program for adolescent girls in early 2003 and feedback from these sessions was incorporated.

Who is the intended audience for the curriculum?

The curriculum is gender specific - for girls only - who are between the ages of 12 and 18. The group is beneficial for all adolescent girls but especially impactful to girls who are at disproportionately high risk to be victims of commercial sexual exploitation (for example, girls who have a history of childhood sexual abuse or girls who are involved in the child welfare system), as well as girls who have been victims of exploitation.

Where do My Life My Choice Prevention Groups take place?

Groups may be facilitated in congregate care settings, middle and high schools, juvenile justice facilities, child welfare offices, and community based programs.

How long is the curriculum?

The curriculum has 10 sessions. Each session is written to be 75 minutes long.

How would you describe the content of the curriculum?

Each session includes a variety of activities including: icebreakers, discussions, role plays, hands-on activities, as well as more introspective opportunities including journaling. Sessions address issues including: myths and facts about commercial sexual exploitation, how to identify a pimp, recruitment tactics, substance abuse, self-esteem, sexual health, healthy relationships, and local and national resources to support youth at risk of exploitation.

Who can use the curriculum and facilitate My Life My Choice Prevention Groups?

It is required that groups are run by two trained facilitators. It is best practice that one facilitator be a survivor of commercial sexual exploitation, who is comfortable talking about her personal experience, and one facilitator should have advanced clinical training. We recognize that survivors may also have a clinical background, but there should always be two facilitators at every group.

What sets the My Life My Choice Prevention Curriculum apart?

- Developed in 2002, The My Life My Choice Prevention Curriculum was the first comprehensive prevention curriculum in the country.

- While the curriculum can be used as primary prevention, it was designed for secondary and tertiary levels of prevention in order to reach the most vulnerable girls - those who are disproportionately at risk for victimization and youth who are involved with the child welfare system.
- The curriculum is gender specific and gender responsive.
- The curriculum was developed, written, and reviewed by survivors of exploitation.
- Best practice is that the curriculum be co-facilitated by a survivor of exploitation.
- The curriculum provides an in-depth look at participants' vulnerabilities and helps girls shift behaviors if they are already on the path towards exploitation.
- It is an appropriate fit for youth in congregate care settings.
- Currently being evaluated through a National Institute for Justice grant

Can men facilitate My Life My Choice Prevention Groups?

Based on the trauma that the participants in group may have survived, it is best practice for groups to be co-facilitated by women. The groups are meant to provide a safe space for young women to talk about their experiences, not only with possible exploitation but also many other issues that they face on a day to day basis. It is critical that these young women have positive adult men in their lives, however we believe that an increased sense of psychological safety is created if women are facilitating the groups.

Can I run these groups out of my church ministry?

The curriculum is a secular curriculum and is intended to be used in congregate care settings, middle and high schools, child welfare offices, juvenile justice facilities and community-based agencies. While we acknowledge that faith may be part of one's journey to safety and healing it is not permissible to incorporate biblical teachings or other religious practices in the group.

How can I access the curriculum?

In order to receive the curriculum, you must be trained by a Licensed My Life My Choice Trainer. As part of the training you will receive a copy of the curriculum as well as a membership to the My Life My Choice Online Community, a web-based platform for providers using the curriculum across the country. Each agency should send two facilitators to the training. There is an application process and a pre-requisite training (attendance at the My Life My Choice Understanding and Responding to Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, or the equivalent training in your state).

What is the cost?

The two-day training is \$700 per person, with an early registration discount (\$650) if you apply at least one month prior to the training date.

What is required of facilitators once trained?

Once trained, we require facilitators and their Agency Administrator to agree to the terms outlined in the My Life My Choice Certified Facilitator Agreement. Facilitators are asked to facilitate at least one group per year and provide compiled group data on a quarterly basis. As part of training, facilitators are required to take a pre and post-test to ensure that they are ready to facilitate groups and receive certification.

What are the additional benefits of becoming a My Life My Choice Certified Facilitator?

Membership to the online community which provides ongoing support and contact with other facilitators across the country, access to My Life My Choice webinars, data collection reports, and continued support, consultation, and technical assistance from My Life My Choice staff.

What if I have more questions or would like more information?

Please contact My Life My Choice Director of Prevention, Kyle Mushkin, at kmushkin@jri.org.