GENDER AND VIOLENCE
How Media Shape Our Culture

A media literacy education curriculum to address sexual violence and harassment

njcoalition
against sexual assault

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Acknowledgements

Note About Copyright and Fair Use

Media examples and guidance on relevant media included in this manual are intended for use as part of media literacy education under *The Code of Best Practice for Fair Use in Media Literacy Education.* The media in these sessions is included to assist facilitators and participants in examining social contexts and constructs in the United States and provide examples of current mass media and popular culture, as well as older media examples for historical context. Accurate and proper attribution and citation of materials is strongly encouraged for facilitators compiling relevant media examples not specifically named in this curriculum.

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New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Introduction

This resource is the culmination of years of collaboration and trial-and-error. The first version of this curriculum, *Gender, Race, & Sexuality: How Media Shape Our Culture,* was created by the New Mexico Media Literacy Project for NJCASA. It was designed for preventionists interested in connecting media literacy (the ability to access, analyze, and create media) with issues of gender, race, sexuality, as a sexual violence prevention strategy. The approach was implemented with both youth and adults, but was primarily designed with a youth audience in mind, and was tested with youth focus groups.

Over the next few years, preventionists throughout the state began implementing the strategy and gathering information about creating relevant and effective content. There were a series of informal and semi-formal revisions that helped focus the strategy, streamline evaluation tools, and collect trends. As this process moved forward, preventionists felt as though a more structured resource was needed in order to support sustainability and ongoing community engagement.

The following sections provide background on New Jersey's journey, as well as available and accessible research supporting the selection of critical media literacy as a sexual violence prevention strategy. There is also guidance and recommendations for facilitators interested in using this resource as a way to implement critical media literacy in their community.

Background & Overview

In 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) selected New Jersey as one of the six pilot sites for the Enhancing and Making Programs and Outcomes Work to End Rape (EMPOWER) project to build the capacity of states to do primary prevention work. A diverse team of stakeholders, including NJCASA, helped create a comprehensive primary prevention plan specific to New Jersey. The plan included a Gender Equity[1] goal that looked specifically at promoting protective factors and social norms, while also mitigating risk factors for perpetration of sexual violence.

> *Critical media literacy was selected to assist in achieving the Gender Equity goal in the state prevention plan, specifically to "Create and market social norms in New Jersey that promote gender equity and respect for women and girls by reducing sexual stereotypes and increasing male accountability for prevention of Sexual Violence".*

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[1]   The statewide planning group intentionally used the term "equity" as it includes the "process of being fair" and in turn ensures equality can be achieved.

The intended aim for the curriculum is to support participants in:

- Analyzing and evaluating media messages about gender and gender-based violence
- Identifying how gender stereotypes in media contribute to institutional gender inequality
- Describing how power relations influence the concept of gender
- Exploring the possible linkages between media violence and norms around sexual violence

The public health approach to violence prevention

Gender and Violence: How Media Shape Our Culture was created and implemented as a sexual violence prevention strategy beginning 2010. Both NJCASA and preventionists in New Jersey approach sexual violence prevention work with the public health model for violence prevention, while infusing practice with social justice principles. The public health approach includes four steps: Define the problem; Identify risk and protective factors; Test prevention strategies; and Adopt widespread adoption.[2] This curriculum represents an effort at the third step: our collective contribution to the work of the anti-sexual violence movement by engaging communities in social change. This methodical and intentional process informed the planning stages of the EMPOWER project, as well as ongoing discussions and development of strategy materials.

Critical media literacy as a social change strategy

Young people — particularly teenagers — spend up to eight hours a day interacting with some form of media (e.g. internet, television, video games, print, etc.).[3] The effect this has on an individual person and collective community

> *Critical media literacy is an opportunity for individuals to challenge messages and norms, while also giving them a chance to create their own media messages that reflect their lived experience and hopes for the future.*

is mitigated by a number of influences and conditions; media can shape thoughts about social norms, relationships, and power dynamics. For example, images and

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2   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/ publichealthapproach.html

3   National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, "Impact of Media & Technology on Youth." 2014

depictions of girls and women perpetuate dominant cultural attitudes regarding female sexuality and gender roles. Girls and women are habitually sexualized in the media and these messages are being transmitted to young girls and boys alike.[4]

Critical media literacy is an opportunity for individuals to challenge messages and norms, while also giving them a chance to create their own media messages that reflect their lived experience and hopes for the future. This process has the potential for significant personal transformation among young women, who experience sexism, and other oppressed groups,

> Critical analysis that explores and exposes the structures of oppression is essential because merely coming to voice is something any racist or sexist groups of people can claim. Spaces must be opened up and opportunities created so people in marginalized positions have the opportunity to collectively struggle against oppression, to voice their concerns, and create their own representations.[5]

The core tenets of media literacy are the ability to access, analyze, and evaluate media messages and constructed images. Critical media consumers also create their own media to begin presenting new ideas and norms into the social landscape.

Achieving mutual goals: How does media literacy work to prevent sexual violence?

NJCASA and preventionists in New Jersey appreciated the *active* nature of media literacy; participants in programming are challenged to change not only their attitudes, but also adopt skills to help them navigate a complex world. Media literacy seemed like the perfect fit when looking at the Gender Equity goal and how implementation could be informed by prevention principles, the public health approach, while also addressing risk and protective factors for the perpetration of sexual violence.

Risk factors for perpetration

Recent research has uncovered unique and shared risk factors for the perpetration of sexual violence.[6][7] Risk factors were organized along the socio-ecological model at

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4   American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, "Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls." (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2007), www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html.

5   Douglas Kellner & Jeff Share, "Critical media literacy is not an option." *Learning Inquiry, 1,* no. 1 (2007): 58.

6   Andra Teten Tharp, Sarah DeGue, Linda Anne Valle, Kathryn A. Brookmeyer, Greta M. Massetti, & Jennifer L. Matjasko, "A Systematic Qualitative Review of Risk and Protective Factors for Sexual Violence Perpetration," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 00, no. 0 (2012).

7   Natalie Wilkins, Benita Tsao, Marci Hertz, Rachel Davis, & Joanne Klevens, "Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence," (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute, 2014).

various contexts: individual, relationship, community, and societal.[8] Critical media literacy focuses on individual-level risk factors such as, but not limited to: hostility towards women, traditional gender role adherence, hypermasculinity, acceptance of violence, and denial or displacement of blame for sexual assault[9]. This curriculum also strives to influence relationship-level risk factors associated with peer norms and attitudes. The curriculum and strategy of critical media literacy is highly motivated by the shared societal-level risk factors of media violence, traditional gender roles, and cultural attitudes that support violence and abuse.[10] These risk factors were selected based on the focus and goals of the state prevention plan, specifically the Gender Equity goal. Preventionists in New Jersey felt as though these risk factors reflected the needs and realities of the communities they serve and engage.

Protective and resilience factors

There is limited research around protective factors for perpetration of violence, but there are some promising directions[11]. *Gender and Violence: How Media Shape Our Culture* aims to promote community support and connectedness through

> Gender and Violence: How Media Shape Our Culture *aims to promote community support and connectedness through group activities, dialogue, and partnership-building between sexual violence programs and local community organizations and youth.*

group activities, dialogue, and partnership-building between sexual violence programs and local community organizations and youth. Session Six's emphasis on individual action and participation is the primary venue for this work; participants are encouraged and given space to practice challenging media depictions of gender and gender-based violence.

In addition to this research-based protective factor, preventionists also generated a number of potential individual- and relationship-level protective or resilience factors addressed in the curriculum:

- Promotion of healthy sexuality (when sexuality is discussed)
- Providing alternatives to traditional/hyper masculinity
- Providing alternatives to dominant gender roles

At the time of publication, this strategy is still in the initial stages of program evaluation and consistent implementation among sexual violence programs and preventionists. The current version of this curriculum is the culmination of

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8   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention,* http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html.

9   Tetan Tharp

10   Wilkins et al.

11   Wilkins et al.

years of experimentation, dialogue, research, and focused discussions. NJCASA and preventionists in New Jersey feel it best represents a solid direction for those interested in implementing media literacy as a sexual violence prevention strategy.

Using this manual

Critical media literacy is best facilitated by someone who is comfortable being a little uncomfortable; discussions often veer into challenging territory. Facilitators must feel confident in their ability to "dig deeper" and encourage participants to move beyond social norms. Discussions can become passionate at times. This is all part of changing attitudes and behaviors.

The approach is organized into up to **eight sessions**:

SESSION ONE

INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA LITERACY

Facilitators will set group ground rules, present media literacy concepts, and outline skill fundamentals.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

A. Describe common types of media.

B. Describe ways media shape cultural attitudes.

C. Describe ways media messages affect our thoughts, attitudes, actions, or emotions.

D. Describe how media is created with a target audience in mind.

SESSION TWO

GENDER

Facilitators will do an introductory/overview of the concept of gender (different from biological sex) and facilitate an activity called The Gender Box to generate examples of gender from participants.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

A. Describe the difference between physical/biological sex and gender.

B. Outline ways gender roles are culturally defined.

C. Provide examples of harmful gender roles.

MEDIA CREATING FANTASY: MEDIA CREATING GENDER

Facilitators will dig a little deeper with participants (building off of Session Two) to look at how media shape and support gender and our relationships.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to describe ways media influence our ideas about gender.

MEDIA CREATING FANTASY: ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE IN MEDIA

Facilitators will use media examples (music videos and video games) to further discuss gender, but introduce ways media desensitizes consumers to gendered violence.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

    A. Define the difference between fantasy and reality.

    B. Describe the amount of violence represented in music videos and video games.

    C. Identify the persuasion technique being used in different types of music videos and video games.

    D. Identify gender stereotypes operating in music videos and video games.

MEDIA CREATING FANTASY: ATTITUDES TOWARDS REAL-LIFE VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

Facilitators use real-life stories and experiences to draw a connection between media violence and community violence.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

    A. Identify where media promotes fantasy (or desensitization from the impact of real-world violence).

    B. Identify instances of real-world violence intersecting with media violence.

    C. Describe their individual role in consuming and creating media.

TAKING ACTION! BECOMING PROACTIVE MEDIA CONSUMERS

Facilitators offer examples of proactive media consumers and brainstorm ideas for participants to take action in their own spheres of influence.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

    A. Describe their individual role in consuming and creating media.

    B. Describe behaviors of a proactive media consumer.

    C. Demonstrate at least one way to challenge media portrayals of gender and violence.

RECONSTRUCTION

Facilitators use a variety of activities to walk participants through the process of reconstruction — or creating — new media that challenge social norms.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

    A. Demonstrate skills to analyze and evaluate media messages.

    B. Respond to harmful media messages.

    C. Create positive media messages of persuasion and other media skills in a hands-on project.

    D. Describe elements of effective counter ads.

WRAP-UP

This is an optional session where facilitators can give participants an opportunity to further discuss concepts within the curriculum. Preventionists in New Jersey found participants often wanted some time to collectively process and talk through some of the concepts talked about outside the confines of the structured sessions.

Within each session there are **a number of resources for facilitators:**

- Suggestions on creating a space that is accessible and comfortable for participants.
- Activities to achieve learning objectives, as well as guidance for successful facilitation.
- Modifications for activities based on participant interests and learning needs.
- Process evaluation measures and guidance for collecting information on implementing each session. Please contact NJCASA for additional instruction on data analysis, if needed.

Tips for facilitators

The following are a few tips that have worked for Media Literacy Project and preventionists in New Jersey over the years in leading discussions on media.

Prepared media examples

Media examples are most relevant when collected by participants; however, early sessions may prevent this from happening or limit the amount of time participants have to gather examples. It is recommended facilitators prepare enough media examples for, at least, the first three sessions. These can be part of a PowerPoint presentation, made into large posters, or clipped from magazines and printed on 8" by 11" paper for participants to look at. Preparing these ahead of time can alleviate lulls in discussion and facilitator anxiety.

DVDs and video clips

YouTube and online video clips can be unreliable — particularly in classroom settings where there may be security features and firewall limitations. Examples and activities within the curriculum limit the number of movie or TV clips used, but facilitators in New Jersey found films such as *Miss Representation, Dreamworlds, Killing Us Softly,* and *Beyond Beats & Rhymes* effective as part of this strategy. Facilitators are encouraged to purchase films and prepare clips to show during sessions, rather than rely on YouTube and possibly risk copyright infringement.

Room set-up

The room set-up may be limited. If you have control over the arrangement, a semi-circle formation of desks or chairs is best for discussions. It is most important that everyone is comfortably seated so that they can see the screen or wall where the media examples are being projected. This means that the room should not have bright windows that cannot be shut with light shining onto the projection area. Good speakers are also important because low audio can weaken the impact of the media example and make it difficult for people to engage in the discussion.

Program evaluation tools

This manual includes process evaluation tools and activity-based assessments to gauge learning and the intended goals of the strategy. At time of publication, preventionists in New Jersey are refining outcomes measures and discovering practical and reliable ways to assess impact. Outcome evaluation tools were implemented throughout the development of this strategy and underwent a number of revisions as new research and resources become available. New Jersey is committed to contributing to the national conversation around evaluation and assessment of sexual violence prevention and have included the tools we feel make a thoughtful contribution.

Process evaluation: Facilitator Reflection

These forms are intended to serve as a "check-in" for facilitators regarding the goals for each session. There is also space to document challenges and successes, as well as a question to help plan the next session's activities and discussion.

Activity-based Assessments

Two of the sessions include optional activity-based assessments to help gauge participant behavior change regarding acceptance of violence in media, as opposed to real-life. Feedback on these new tools was not collected by preventionists in New Jersey before the publication of this manual.

Considerations for implementing evaluation

This strategy and the language used in handouts and assessments was created with older adolescents (9th grade aged) and individuals in early adulthood in mind. The language included may not be accessible to a full range of learning styles or developmental levels. Please refrain from altering assessment language or contact NJCASA for more information.

Please contact NJCASA for additional instruction on data analysis, if needed. Head to www.njcasa.org for contact information and other resources.

Introduction to Media Literacy

LENGTH OF TIME:

60 minutes

MEDIA EXAMPLES NEEDED:

Language of Persuasion PowerPoint

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Laptop

Projector

Audio speakers

Screen/blank wall

Introduction to Media Literacy handout

Language of Persuasion handout

Facilitator notes

Media Justice Scavenger Hunt handout (optional)

Thinking About Media & Social Attitudes handout (optional)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

A. Describe common types of media.

B. Describe ways media shape cultural attitudes.

C. Describe ways media messages affect our thoughts, attitudes, actions, or emotions.

D. Describe how media is created with target audience in mind.

Session Agenda

Activity: Community Agreements (5-10 MINUTES)

Drafting agreements during the first session is also important for establishing what the norms for the group will be. This can be done as a more structured activity or a relaxed discussion.

- **Activity** *(optional and depending on age/maturity of group):*
  - **Supplies needed:**
    - Five or six images (more if desired) that represent various elements of the community agreement (e.g. clock image for time management or keeping everyone focused).
      - *Sample/Recommended images:*
        - Clock: taking up time, being respectful of time
        - Megaphone/Microphone: Everyone has a voice
        - Flag or sign: Raising your hand or indicating you would like to speak before speaking
        - First aid kit: Safety and taking care of each other
        - Gold star: Assume the best of everyone, everyone has something to offer
        - Tape for displaying images on wall or screen.
  - **Group format** *(if there is more time/flexibility):*
    - Participants will break into as many groups as there are printed images. Each group will come up with one agreement based on their group image.
    - If there are duplicate agreements you can highlight the importance of that agreement and also ask some more questions to get to a different or alternate agreement.
  - **Discussion format:** Use the discussion questions below to generate agreements and rules for group interactions.
  - Display the images on a wall or space where everyone can see them. These will be visible for all sessions and will be revisited at the beginning of each session.

- **Discussion questions:** (Use these for the activity as well to encourage participants to think critically about the agreements they are creating).

  - What should we do about cell phones?

  - Is it okay if people step out when they need to in order to use the restroom, get water, and take care of themselves?

  - What about differing opinions and how they should be handled?

  - What about encouraging ourselves to step up/step back if we are dominating the conversation or not speaking up enough?

  - What about side conversations and listening to each person as they speak?

It is also important to say at the beginning that you as the facilitator want to hear from everyone in the room and that this conversation is about their thoughts, opinions, and ideas. One media literacy concept is that individuals construct their own meanings from media. We all come to a piece of media with our own background, experiences, ideas, and values and that is okay. What one person may think about a piece of media may vary from the person sitting next to them.

Discussion: What is Media? (10 MINUTES)

- What is media?
  - **Media are everywhere**.
    - From the minute we wake up to the time we go to sleep at night, we are bombarded with messages that inform us, persuade us, and entertain us. Billboards, TV News, cereal boxes, Facebook, movies, music videos, magazines, text messages, junk mail, YouTube, DVDs, and radio are just a few examples of what we are exposed to daily.
    - **Our media environment contains many complex layers which give us both overt and implied messages about gender, race, and sexuality.**
  - **Media can be good and bad**.
    - *It is important for the facilitator to clarify that our message is not that all media are bad, but that it is important we understand how to think critically about the message we receive so we can form our own opinions.*

- Where do we find media?
  - **EVERYWHERE.** Television, radio, print ads, internet ads, billboards, music — all of them are media. *It's important to include the fact that cooking meals, sharing songs, ceremony, dance, poetry, and stories are media as well, but we don't often think of them that way. They are all ways people communicate and share messages with others.*

- **How do media shape our attitudes and beliefs?**
  - How does music impact our mood? What do you think is happening in your body when you listen to calming music? Fast-paced music? Loud? Soft?

  - How do ads impact the way we see other people? *(e.g. Attractiveness, intelligence, patriotism, how much money they make, etc.)*

  - How do you feel after seeing an advertisement for something? What makes you want a product or item?

  - Are we always aware of how media are affecting our mood? What about our attitudes and beliefs? *Explain that media effects are subtle.*

> *Sometimes when viewing media the reptilian part of our brain can override the neocortex. These brain facts are also why TV commercials are often more powerful than print ads.*

This is a discussion about media and the way we are influenced by media. The key points of this discussion are to help participants identify how much media we use and how it influences our way of thinking. One media literacy concept to note is that the human brain processes images differently than words. Images are processed in the "reptilian" part of the brain, where strong emotions and instincts are also located. Written and spoken language is processed in another part of the brain, the neocortex, where reason lies. Sometimes when viewing media the reptilian part of our brain can override the neocortex. These brain facts are also why TV commercials are often more powerful than print ads.

Discussion: Media Creators and the Language of Persuasion (30 MINUTES)

The intent of this exercise is to introduce the tenets of media literacy and the potential for social change. One of those core tenets is the language of persuasion and the intentions of media creators to promote certain social norms and ideas.

- **Supplies needed:**
  - At least two media examples that will be used to highlight a variety of persuasion techniques (*Media examples within the two PowerPoints require relevant media — ads, images, and content — recognizable and relevant to participants*). One example should be "neutral" in terms of gender representation (e.g. an ad without people) and a second with a gendered representation (e.g. fashion ad with scantily-clad women or men in sexualized positions).
  - PowerPoint for either Introductory or Comprehensive outline with additional media examples (optional).
  - Introduction to Media Literacy and/or Language of Persuasion handouts — Introductory or Comprehensive format.

- **Discussion questions:** (Use these to introduce concepts, as well to encourage participants to think critically).
  - Present first media example to the group.
    - Whose message is this?
      - Who created or paid for it?
      - Why?
    - Who do you think is the target audience?
  - Introduce the concepts of text and sub-text
    - **Text**: The "obvious" message(s) within media. This could be the written or printed words or the intent. For example, an advertisement's *text* is to buy the product pictured.
    - **Subtext**: The hidden messages within media. This is more attached to cultural attitudes and persuasion. For example, an advertisement's *subtext* is that buying this product will make you more attractive to others.

What you just did is called media literacy. Media literacy is the process of accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating media. When we're more media literate, we're able to question media messages and think for ourselves, and begin to understand how certain messages promote ideas about culture and gender, for example.

  - How many of you have ever tried to persuade someone to do something?
    - What did you do to persuade someone?

Now we're going to deconstruct more media examples by asking questions, looking at the small pieces that make up an ad, and some of the techniques that media makers use. Media makers use techniques to persuade us, too. They may

try to persuade us to purchase certain products or believe in a certain idea (for example, that recycling is a good thing). Movie makers often use certain music or dialogue to persuade us to be scared, sad, or feel anger toward a certain character. The next couple of media examples demonstrate certain techniques of persuasion.

From here, there are two options for presenting this content:

- Introductory: Present at least two different media examples and connect them to the following 25 persuasion techniques.

  - Ad hominem
  - Analogy
  - Association
  - Bandwagon
  - Beautiful people
  - Bribery
  - Cause vs. correlation
  - Celebrities
  - Experts

  - Explicit claims
  - Fear
  - Flattery
  - Glittering generalities
  - Humor
  - Intensity
  - Name-calling
  - New
  - Nostalgia

  - Plain folks
  - Repetition
  - Rhetorical questions
  - Simple solution
  - Symbols
  - Timing
  - Warm & fuzzy

- Comprehensive: Present two media examples and connect them to the 40 persuasion techniques. See Appendix for handouts.

  - Ad hominem
  - Analogy
  - Association
  - Bandwagon
  - Beautiful people
  - The Big Lie
  - Bribery
  - Card-stacking
  - Cause vs. correlation
  - Celebrities
  - Charisma
  - Denial
  - Diversion
  - Euphemism

  - Extrapolation
  - Experts
  - Explicit claims
  - Fear
  - Flattery
  - Glittering generalities
  - Group dynamics
  - Humor
  - Intensity
  - Majority belief
  - Maybe
  - Name-calling
  - New
  - Nostalgia

  - Plain folks
  - Repetition
  - Rhetorical questions
  - Scapegoating
  - Scientific evidence
  - Simple solution
  - Slippery slope
  - Straw Man
  - Symbols
  - Testimonials
  - Timing
  - Warm & Fuzzy

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MODIFICATIONS
Activity-Based Assessment: Agree/Disagree (15-20 MINUTES)

Activity-based evaluation is a great way to build assessment into the session without causing survey fatigue or disinterest.

- **Supplies needed**:
  - The first section is for folks to fill out or for you to read (depending on how you are facilitating the activity).
  - Four signs: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."
  - A large space for participants to move around.

This activity should be done before the media literacy presentation. Place the signs in four distinct corners or areas of the room. One option for the activity is to have participants respond to questions on the Agree/Disagree handout. They will pass these in, you will shuffle them up, and then redistribute. This way, people will get someone else's responses when they move around the room. Then, have participants move to the corresponding spaces based on the answers to the statements on their handout — not how they actually feel. After reading all of the statements, discuss some of these statements and possible responses with your group. Another option is to have participants respond when you verbally read out the questions. Then they would be answering for themselves.

Media Justice Scavenger Hunt (15 MINUTES)

If this presentation is done for a group that isn't familiar with each other, this can be used as an ice-breaker. If participants are acquainted, this activity can be modified in order to begin a discussion about access to and the impact of media. This activity taps into learners' background knowledge and will help familiarize them with some topics that will be discussed in this training. Furthermore, it provides space to begin conversations about these topics.

- **Supplies needed:**
  - Blank Media Justice Scavenger Hunt handout
  - Space for everyone to move around the room.

Have members in your group sign their name in the corresponding box of the statement if they know the answer. (You want to avoid asking others "Which of these statements can you answer?" and instead, ask a specific question, i.e. "Do you have Internet access at home?") The goal of this game is to get as many different signatures from people in your group—one signature per box. Play off the energy in the group—the facilitator can choose to participate. Give larger groups a little more time to play than a smaller group.

Have participants return to their seats and discuss each statement on the form using the answers on the next page. As an option, ask participants the following questions:

- How many of you got at least 10 different signatures? 12? 15?
- Did anything surprise you about the responses? Explain.
- What conclusions can you draw from the responses to the statements?

It is important to say that some items on this handout may not commonly be viewed as forms of media, but they are ways that people communicate. For example, a traditional meal or dance communicates something and sends a message to others. These things can be viewed as types of media. Please bear in mind that the activity is optional.

Language of Persuasion Skit Activity
(30-50 MINUTES DEPENDING ON GROUP SIZE)

Break into small groups by counting off. An ideal group size is between four to six people. Groups will first come up with an imaginary product (remind them not to spend too much time coming up with a product.) Next, a point person will be the script writer and the group will write a 30-second commercial skit for their new product. When writing the skit each group will incorporate ten or more persuasion techniques they have learned into their skit. Have the groups practice their skit a couple times before they perform. Groups typically need at least twenty minutes to write and practice their skit. Finally, when all the groups are done writing (or time is up) they will each perform their skits for the larger group. After each group performs, discuss what techniques they used and how.

Optional "Homework" Assignment:

If the facilitator chooses, participants can be given assignments of looking for examples of media (including news stories) that relate to the concepts talked about in future sessions. Examples can be used in activities and in the final deconstruction doses.

Session One

THIS IS A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK ABOUT THE SESSION YOU JUST PRESENTED.

Do you feel as though participants are better able to do the following after the session?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure...
Describe common types of media?			
Describe ways media shape attitudes?			
Describe ways media messages affect our thoughts, attitudes, actions, or emotions?			
Describe how media is created with a target audience in mind?			
Describe the visual parts of a piece of media (the text)?			
Describe the hidden message of a piece of media (the subtext)?			

NOTES:

Circle the concepts you feel you successfully and/or effectively presented *(if you selected the Introductory format for reviewing persuasion):*

Ad hominem	Analogy	Association	Bandwagon	Beautiful people
Bribery	Cause vs. correlation	Celebrities	Experts	Explicit claims
Fear	Flattery	Glittering generalities	Humor	Intensity
Name-calling	New	Nostalgia	Plain folks	Repetition
Rhetorical questions	Simple solution	Symbols	Timing	Warm & Fuzzy
Other:				

NOTES:

Circle the concepts you feel you successfully and/or effectively presented *(if you selected the Comprehensive format for reviewing persuasion):*

Ad hominem	Analogy	Association	Bandwagon	Beautiful people
The Big Lie	Bribery	Card-stacking	Cause vs. correlation	Celebrities
Charisma	Denial	Diversion	Euphemism	Extrapolation
Experts	Explicit claims	Fear	Flattery	Glittering generalities
Group dynamics	Humor	Intensity	Majority belief	Maybe
Name-calling	New	Nostalgia	Plain folks	Repetition
Rhetorical questions	Scapegoating	Scientific evidence	Simple solution	Slippery slope
Straw Man	Symbols	Testimonials	Timing	Warm & Fuzzy

NOTES:

What felt successful?

What challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome or redirect these challenges?

What would you do differently the next time you present this content/session?

What would you keep the same the next time you present this content/session?

What would you like to cover in Session Two?

Gender

LENGTH OF TIME:

60 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Laptop

Projector

Audio speakers

Flipchart paper

Markers

Screen/blank wall

Facilitator notes

MEDIA EXAMPLES NEEDED:

Up to five examples of gender from media. The *Thinking About Media & Social Attitudes* handout and optional activity are designed to assist in gathering examples that will be relevant to future sessions. There is also the option of asking participants to bring in examples that depict women and girls in gender conforming and non-confirming ways. The same should be done for men and boys.

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

A. Describe the difference between physical/biological sex and gender.

B. Outline ways gender roles are culturally defined.

C. Provide examples of harmful gender roles.[12]

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12   In order to promote protective factors such as resilience and alternatives to traditional gender roles, facilitators are encouraged to incorporate opportunities for participants to generate positive and affirming portrayals of gender. Although these may be challenging to come by, an emphasis should be placed on the ways media examples make participants *feel,* as opposed to obvious text or subtext. For example, a popular performer may promote feminism or feminist ideals, while also still using sexuality in her music. Facilitators should emphasize the ways this performer is challenging traditional conceptions of the word "feminism" and the potential this performer has for creating positive change.

Session Agenda

Revisiting ground rules is very important for this session. Reminding students about safe space early on will serve the facilitator in being able to stay on topic. The topic of sex and gender can sometimes lead to jokes or comments that are detrimental to the safety of the group. Discussions around race, ethnicity, and sexuality may also come up during this session's discussion. It is important to intentionally create accountability and safety throughout each session.

Review Concepts from Last Session (5 MINUTES)

Sex & Gender (20+ MINUTES)

- These concepts can be challenging for individuals, particularly if this is the first time talking about them. With that stated the differences between sex and gender are essential for moving forward with the other sessions and curriculum goals. Facilitators are encouraged to cover all of these concepts intentionally and respectfully, but should cover the first two at a minimum.

  - *Sex (in terms of biology, not sexual acts):* Biological sex identifies a person as either female, male, or intersex. It is determined by a person's anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones. Biological sex is often simply referred to as "sex."[13]

  - *Gender:* The combination of social and cultural messages we get about what it means to "be" a girl or boy. For example, girls have a vagina , dress a certain way, and are not as aggressive as boys.

    - *Gender Equity/equality:* Efforts and actions that make equality among genders a reality. For example, advancing equal pay among men and women, regardless of race or ethnicity.

  - *Intersex:* Genitals that are not easily identifiable as female or male at birth or until puberty. People with intersex conditions may have genitals that appear to be somewhat female or male or both. They do not, however, have complete female genitals and complete male genitals. Some people have

> *Gender: The combination of social and cultural messages we get about what it means to "be" a girl or boy. For example, girls have a vagina , dress a certain way, and are not as aggressive as boys.*

13   "Female, Male & Intersex at a Glance" Planned Parenthood, accessed December 17, 2014, http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-info/sexual-orientation-gender/female-male-intersex

chromosomes that are different from XX (female) or XY (male). There are other differences that cannot be found without testing chromosomes and hormones or invasive examinations. Sometimes the difference is never noticed.[14] If you ask experts how often a baby is born with noticeably intersex genitalia it would be about 1 in 1500 to 1 in 2000 births. But a lot more people than that are born with the internal or unnoticeable differences mentioned above.[15]

> *Gender Equity/equality: Efforts and actions that make equality among genders a reality. For example, advancing equal pay among men and women, regardless of race or ethnicity.*

- *Transgender:* Trans (sometimes written as trans*) is a broad or umbrella term describing people whose gender identities aren't in sync with the sex they were assigned at birth. Some trans people use their dress, behavior, and mannerisms in order to present the gender that feels right for them. Some get surgery and/or take hormones to change their body. Some trans people reject the choices of either "male" and "female" and experiment with different gender expressions and behaviors.[16]

- NOTE: *Intersex and transgender are NOT the same thing. Intersex is about biology and transgender is about culture and identity.*

■ What is gender? How does it differ from our understanding of a person's sex?

- **Sex is biological.** It refers to the anatomy that babies are born with.

- **Gender is social or cultural.** Gender is about how we feel about ourselves and how we present that self to the world.

This is a teachable moment. Use the term intersex when talking about people who are born with a spectrum of anatomical and chromosomal experiences. In other words, it's about more than genitals — many people who are intersex may not even know until adolescence or after genetic testing. Intersex helps broaden our understanding of what it truly means to "be" a girl or a boy. It is of utmost importance to maintain a level of safety. Students using terms like "ew" or making jokes should be addressed immediately.

■ **Gender is a more complicated concept.** When we think of colors, what color do we associate with boys? *Let participants answer.* What about girls? Are babies born either blue or pink? If a boy is dressed in pink, does that change his genitals? Does color determine a baby's gender? Does sex determine a person's gender? *No.*

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14 "Female, Male & Intersex" Planned Parenthood

15 "How common is intersex?" Intersex Society of North America, accessed December 17, 2014 http://www.isna.org/faq/frequency

16 "Trans Identities" Planned Parenthood, accessed December 17, 2014, http://www.plannedparenthood.org/en/health-info/sexual-orientation-gender/trans-identities

- **Gender is a construct.**
  - What does the word construct mean? *Something that is built.*
  - Our ideas about gender have been built and are influenced by family, community, friends, culture, and especially by media.
- **(How do) Media influence gender?**
  - Revisiting discussion question from Session One: How do ads impact the way we see other people? (Attractiveness, intelligence, patriotism, how much money they make, etc.)
  - Given the fact that media are everywhere, it makes sense that media would influence our ideas about gender.
- What is a stereotype? What is the danger in stereotypes (buying into them, perpetuating them, etc.)? *The facilitator should take the time to pick a stereotype that will relate to the young people and take a few minutes to deconstruct it. For example: All young people are trouble makers. Is this true? Why or why not? Why would this stereotype be harmful to young people?*
  - **Discussion:** *Have some markers and flipchart paper ready. Write the word "Stereotype" on it and then write each word (i.e. Prejudice, Discrimination, Thought, Belief, Action) as the discussion unfolds.*
    - What is a stereotype?
    - What is prejudice?
    - What is discrimination?
  - It's helpful to think of a STEREOTYPE as a THOUGHT. It is something that is planted in our brains. Sometimes there is truth and many times there is not. PREJUDICES are attitudes, so our thoughts begin to shape how we interact with people and make decisions. DISCRIMINATION is an ACTION and is supported by prejudices and stereotypes.
  - How do these concepts relate to our discussion of gender? How do harmful gender stereotypes keep up from connecting with each other? What stereotypes and prejudices are supported in media?

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Activity: Gender Boxes (20+ MINUTES)

Draw two boxes on the board or use chart paper. You can also draw one box and complete it before drawing and completing another.

Part A: "Be a Man" Box

- **Write "Be-A-Man" at the top of one of the boxes.** *Ask if anyone has ever been told or heard someone being told to "Be a man." Ask: "What does it mean to be a man? What are the expectations? What is the reality?"*

    NOTE: *Sometimes students want to point out that the traditional answers aren't what they personally think being a man/lady is about. Validate their statement and point out that we're talking about societal beliefs, not individual ones. The facilitator may need to redirect back to this throughout the activity.*

    - Write the words in the box as people call them out.

        SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *be tough, date and have sex with different women, be the breadwinner (also, identify the type of work that is "men's work" such as construction worker, doctor, lawyer, etc.), make the decisions in the family, play and watch sports.* Sometimes, food and beverages can come up, such as eat steak, drink beer, etc. These types of examples demonstrate the direct impact that advertising has on our ideas of gender.

- **What are names applied to persons outside the box?** (Write these outside the box on the left side of the paper and/or around the box.)

    SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *wimp, fag, queer, pussy, wussy, gay, etc.*

    - *These words are important to say and to write down, but ask participants to answer this question as calmly and respectfully as possible.*

- **What things can other people physically/emotionally do to people outside the box?** (Write these outside the box on the right side of the paper.)

    SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *beat them up, threaten, tease, ignore, isolate, abuse, rape, murder them, etc.*

- **What things can people do to themselves if they are outside the box?** (Write these outside the box on the right side of the paper and/or on the bottom.)

    SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *try to fit in, have lots of sex, substance abuse, cut themselves, isolate themselves, run away, suicide, etc.*
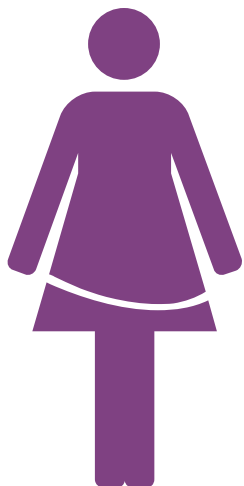
- **Write "Act-Like-A-Lady" at the top of the other box.** *Ask if anyone has ever been told or heard someone being told to "act like a lady." Ask: "What does it mean to act like a lady? What are the expectations? What is the reality?"*

  NOTE: *Sometimes students want to point out that the traditional answers aren't what they personally think being a lady is about. Validate their statement and point out that we're talking about societal beliefs, not individual ones. The facilitator may need to redirect back to this throughout the activity.*

  - Write the words in the box as people call them out.

    SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *be kind and gentle, wear feminine clothes (dresses, skirts, etc.), spend time taking care of kids, smile, make dinner, do the laundry, etc.*

- **How are women supposed to be different from men?**

  SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *more polite, gossiping, weaker, less athletic than men, etc.*

- **What are names applied to persons outside the box?** (Write these outside the box on the left side of the paper and/or around the box.)

  SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *dyke, tomboy, slut, ho, whore, bitch, lesbian.*

  - *Again, these words are important to say and to write down, but ask participants to answer this question as calmly and respectfully as possible.*

- **What things can other people physically/emotionally do to people outside the box?** (Write these outside the box on the right side of the paper.)

  SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *beat them up, threaten, tease, ignore, isolate, abuse, rape, murder them, etc.*

- **What things can people do to themselves if they are outside the box?** (Write these outside the box on the right side of the paper and/or on the bottom.)

  SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *try to fit in, become sexually promiscuous, get pregnant, substance abuse, cut themselves, isolate themselves, run away, suicide, etc.*

Discussion

- How do gender stereotypes lead to violence?
  - Against women?
  - Against men?
  - Against transgender and gender non-conforming people?
- When thinking about media's role in gender stereotypes it is important to consider that media aren't "just a movie" or "just a song." We are heavily influenced by media and we act out the stereotypes that we buy into.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MODIFICATIONS
Gender Identity Project Video (20+ MINUTES)

APPROPRIATE FOR AGES 16–ADULT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXl9w0PbBXY

Transgender Basics is a 20 minute educational film on the concepts of gender and transgender people. Two providers from The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Center's Gender Identity Project (GIP) discuss basic concepts of gender, sexual orientation, identity and gender roles. Three transgender community members share their personal experiences of being trans and genderqueer. The film targets service providers and others working with the LGBT community, but it also provides a fascinating glimpse into gender and identity for the general public.

LGBT (In)Visibility on TV (15+ MINUTES)

APPROPRIATE FOR AGES 16–ADULT

Review GLAAD's most recent *Where We Are on TV* report at http://www.glaad.org/whereweareontv14 to see how television channels and shows are portraying LGBT characters and families. This is a great opportunity to also explore portrayals or race, ethnicity, and ability on television and in movies.

Discussion:

- How are LGBT characters represented in the media? What do they look like? How do they speak? What do they do?

- What specific images and words shape our collective understanding of what it means to be LGBT?

- What impact do LGBTQ representations have on the opportunities and possibilities for people who identify as LGBT?

Stereotype Analysis of the Latin Lover (15+ MINUTES)

APPROPRIATE FOR AGES 16–ADULT

http://www.tolerance.org/exchange/stereotype-analysis-latin-lover

We begin by reading about Charles Ramírez Berg's six media stereotypes of Latinos/Latinas: the bandido, the harlot, the male buffoon, the female clown, the Latin lover and the dark lady.

Next, we watch several Dos Equis "The Most Interesting Man in the World" commercials on youtube.com (e.g., "Dos Equis Sword Fight") and assess how the male protagonist is portrayed, how he interacts with others on screen (especially women) and how this representation matches the Latin lover stereotype.

We replay the videos as often as necessary to observe the subtle nuances that are frequently missed during the first viewing (e.g., the number of women on screen at one time, the number of romantic glances aimed at the protagonist).

After the students have finished watching the selected videos, their task is to reflect on their observations and answer the following questions:

- What do these commercials indicate about the representation of Latinos/Latinas on TV?
- What are your thoughts and feelings about these commercials?
- The Latin lover stereotype is often perceived as positive. Does that make it acceptable?

Students address these questions and explain how these particular Dos Equis commercials reinforce the stereotype of the Latin lover. They describe what occurs in the commercials, how these activities and behaviors are stereotypical and how the stereotypes affect the way Latinos/Latinas are perceived.

Session Two

THIS IS A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK ABOUT THE SESSION YOU JUST PRESENTED.

Do you feel as though participants are better able to do the following after the session?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure…
Describe the difference between physical/biological sex and gender.			
Describe gender roles or gender stereotypes.			
Outline ways gender roles are culturally defined.			
Describe how gender roles can be harmful.			
Describe ways media shape cultural attitudes about gender?			
Describe ways media messages affect our thoughts, attitudes, actions, or emotions about gender?			
Describe how media is created with a target audience in mind?			

NOTES:

What felt successful?

What challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome or redirect these challenges?

What would you do differently the next time you present this content/session?

What would you keep the same the next time you present this content/session?

What would you like to cover in Session Three?

SESSION THREE

Media Creating Gender

LENGTH OF TIME:

60 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Flipchart paper

Markers

Audio speakers

Screen/blank wall

Completed gender boxes (if applicable)

Facilitator notes

MEDIA EXAMPLES NEEDED:

Up to seven examples of gender from media. The *Thinking About Media & Social Attitudes* handout and optional activity are designed to assist in gathering examples that will be relevant to future sessions. There is also the option of asking participants to bring in examples that depict women and girls in gender conforming and non-confirming ways. The same should be done for men and boys.

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

A. Describe ways media influence our ideas about gender.

Session Agenda

Revisiting ground rules is very important for this session. Reminding students about safe space early on will serve the facilitator in being able to stay on topic. The topic of sex and gender can sometimes lead to jokes or comments that are detrimental to the safety of the group. Discussions around race, ethnicity, and sexuality may also come up during this session's discussion. It is important to intentionally create accountability and safety throughout each session.

Review Concepts from Last Session (5 MINUTES)

Media Examples (30+ MINUTES)

Facilitators will use at least six or seven media examples for this session. Examples should illustrate dominant gender norms (e.g. women as submissive, men as powerful, men as physically strong, women as small and thin, etc.). Diversity in gender presentation, appearance, ability, race, and ethnicity are encouraged for increased discussion and for "diving deeper" into the topic of gender and media. Facilitators can also ask participants to bring in media examples to make sure examples are relevant and participants are engaged in session development.

The facilitator should spend about five minutes on each media example. Points to ask with each:

- What is the subtext or "hidden" message of this? What is being said without any words?

- What is the untold story? Whose experience or perspective is not being seen?

- Who is being seen or valued in this image? Who is being de-valued or made invisible?

- How do these images shape our ideas of gender? Going back to the gender discussion from last session, we have pretty rigid ideas of how men and women are supposed to act. Do the media images influence that idea? Are these media images influenced by gender stereotypes? *This takes us to the "which came first — the chicken or the egg?" argument. In all reality, media messages about gender have existed for generations and the ideas and the media influence each other.*

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OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MODIFICATIONS
Guidance for Discussion on Race, Gender, and Media (30+ MINUTES)

Facilitators must feel comfortable discussing current issues related to race and be willing to address conversation topics that might come up in the course of this discussion: power, privilege, race as a construct, the difference between race and ethnicity, as well as historical portrayals of people of color in the U.S.

- What is the message of this? What is being said without any words?
- What is the untold story? Whose experience or perspective is not being seen?
  - People of color are often un/derrepresented on television, advertising, movies, and other forms of media[17].
    - Researchers from The University of Southern California evaluated 500 top-grossing movies released at the U.S. box office between 2007 and 2012 and 20,000 speaking characters, finding patterns in the way different races, ethnicities and genders are depicted.
      - *Only 10.8% of speaking characters are Black, 4.2% are Hispanic, 5% are Asian, and 3.6% are from other (or mixed race) ethnicities. Just over three-quarters of all speaking characters are White (76.3%).*
      - *Hispanic women are the demographic most likely to be shown nude or in sexy attire.*
      - *Black men are the group least likely to be portrayed in a committed relationship.*
    - How do these trends impact the way we see the world and the people in it?
    - Who is being seen or valued in this image? Who is being de-valued or made invisible?
- **How do these images shape our ideas of race?**
- **Do the media images influence our ideas of people when it comes to race and ethnicity?**
- **Are these media images influenced by those ideas?**

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17   Smith, S.L., Choueiti, M, & Pieper, K. (2013). Race/Ethnicity in 500 Popular Films: Is the Key to Diversifying Cinematic Content held in the Hand of the Black Director? Los Angeles: Media Diversity & Social Change Initiative, University of Southern California. Retrieved May 2014 from http://annenberg.usc.edu/sitecore/shell/Applications/~/media/PDFs/RaceEthnicity.ashx

Guidance for Discussion on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Media (30+ MINUTES)

Facilitators must feel comfortable discussing current issues related to gender identity, trans communities, and be willing to address conversation topics that might come up in the course of this discussion: power, privilege, the power of language, and gender bullying/sexuality bullying.

- What is the message of this? What is being said without any words?
  - What assumptions about attraction or love are being made? (*Men have sex with women/Women have sex with men*).

- **What is the untold story? Whose experience or perspective is not being seen?**
  - LGBTQ people are not consistently represented in major broadcast networks and primetime programming:[18]
    - *Following a slight decrease last season, the analysis of characters for the 2012-2013 television schedule found that 4.4% of series regulars will be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender characters. This is up from 2.9% in 2011, 3.9% in 2010, 3% in 2009, 2.6% in 2008 and 1.1% in 2007. LGBT characters on scripted cable television also rose this year with an additional six regular characters from last year's count, making the total 35 for the 2012-2013 season*
  - Who is being seen or valued in this image? Who is being de-valued or made invisible?
    - Sexual orientation and race or ethnicity
    - Sexual orientation and gender identity
  - How do these images shape our ideas of sexual orientation? Love? Relationships? Families?

- **Do the media images influence our ideas of people when it comes to sexual orientation? Love? Relationships? Families?**

- Are these media images influenced by those ideas?

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18   GLAAD. (n.d). Where are we on TV? Retrieved May 2014 from http://www.glaad.org/files/whereweareontv12.pdf

Session Three

THIS IS A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK ABOUT THE SESSION YOU JUST PRESENTED.

Do you feel as though participants are better able to do the following after the session?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure...
Describe ways media influences our ideas about gender.			
Describe ways media shape cultural attitudes about gender?			
Describe ways media messages affect our thoughts, attitudes, actions, or emotions about gender?			
Describe how media is created with a target audience in mind?			
Describe the visual parts of a piece of media (the text)?			
Describe the hidden message of a piece of media (the subtext)?			

NOTES:

What felt successful?

What challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome or redirect these challenges?

What would you do differently the next time you present this content/session?

What would you keep the same the next time you present this content/session?

What would you like to cover in Session Four?

SESSION FOUR

Media Creating Fantasy:
Attitudes Towards Violence in Media

LENGTH OF TIME:

60 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Laptop

Projector

Audio speakers

Screen/blank wall

Three to five music videos

Three video game scenes or snippets (as well as examples of advertisements for video games)

Facilitator notes

Gender box exercise notes from previous session (optional/if available)

MEDIA EXAMPLES NEEDED:

Up to three (each) music videos and video game clips are needed for this session. The *Thinking About Media & Social Attitudes* handout and optional activity are designed to assist in gathering examples that will be relevant to future sessions. There is also the option of asking participants to bring in examples that they consume regularly and are relevant to their lives and their peers' lives.

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

A. Define the difference between fantasy and reality.

B. Describe the amount of violence represented in music videos and video games.

C. Identify the persuasion technique being used in different types of music videos and video games.

D. Identify gender stereotypes operating in music videos and video games.

Session Agenda

Revisiting ground rules is very important for this session. Reminding students about safe space early on will serve the facilitator in being able to stay on topic. The topic of sex and gender can sometimes lead to jokes or comments that are detrimental to the safety of the group. Discussions around race, ethnicity, and sexuality may also come up during this session's discussion. It is important to intentionally create accountability and safety throughout each session.

Review Concepts from Last Session (5 MINUTES)

Music Videos (30+ MINUTES)

Select music videos from genres and bands relevant to the group. The facilitator can refer to Session One's People Search activity for ideas on bands and music trends among the group. Another way to generate media examples for this session — and all sessions — is to request participants come prepared with suggestions for discussion. These can be collected at the beginning or end of each session so that the facilitator can prepare ahead of time (e.g. Session Five's examples and suggestions will be collected at the end of Session Four).

- **Who makes music videos?** *Record labels and independent bands*
  - Why? *To sell more music. Videos are basically four-minute commercials.*
  - What else are they selling? *Image, lifestyle, products, sex, glamour, parties, popularity, and the telling of a story, etc.*
  - Is the story always real? *No.*
  - Do all videos sell this image? *No.*
  - When we see these images, what kinds of feelings come up?

- **Can videos make us more violent?** *The effects of media are very subtle — we don't always notice the effect or the feelings — we just know they exist. Media messages and other things we see in life can desensitize us to violence, which is often how violence keeps happening — we don't think it's a big deal, we excuse behavior, and we look the other way when we see violence happening.*

- **Discussion Questions:** (ask with each video)
  - Who is the target audience of this message?
  - What story is being told? What do we see and hear?
  - Is the whole story being told or are there some things that are left unsaid?
  - Looking back at our Persuasion Techniques, which ones are being used in this video?
  - What forms of violence are seen in this video?
  - Is this story an accurate reflection of real life?

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- How are men portrayed in this media example? How are women portrayed? Do these portrayals challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes?
- Can these stereotypes/roles support gender inequality? Can they influence the way people behave?

Video Games (15+ MINUTES)

Select video games relevant to the group. The facilitator can refer to Session One's People Search activity for ideas on trends among the group. Another way to generate media examples for this session — and all sessions — is to request participants come prepared with suggestions for discussion. These can be collected at the beginning or end of each session so that the facilitator can prepare ahead of time (e.g. Session Five's examples and suggestions will be collected at the end of Session Four).

- Who plays video games?
- How are women treated in the gaming world? *Women are often sexually harassed when they play online or in gaming communities. Why is it easier to harass women in the online fantasy world? Because of anonymity.*
- Are video games violent? *Yes, many of them are.*
  - What kind of violence do we see in video games?
- **Are video games a way for us to live out fantasies vicariously that we don't necessarily live out in real life?**
  - **Why do we play violent video games?**
- **Discussion Questions:** (ask with each example)
  - Who is the target audience of this message?
  - What story is being told? What do we see and hear?
  - Is the whole story being told or are there some things that are left unsaid?
  - Looking back at our Persuasion Techniques, which ones are being used in this video?
  - What forms of violence are seen in this video?
  - Is this story an accurate reflection of real life?
  - How are men portrayed in this media example? How are women portrayed? Do these portrayals challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes?
  - Can these stereotypes/roles support gender inequality? Can they influence the way people behave?

Closing Discussion (15+ MINUTES)

What does fantasy mean? What is reality? What is the difference between the two? (5 minutes) *It's important to note that people have different realities, but when it comes to music videos and video games, the fantasy is being shown from only one perspective. Everyone brings their own experiences, opinions, and interpretations to every piece of media. It is the facilitator's role to talk about the context of the culture that the image exists in and was created by.*

During the next session, we will discuss the way in which media can affect the way we think about violence.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MODIFICATIONS
Activity-Based Assessment: Attitudes Toward Violence in Media
(5+MINUTES)

This activity can be woven into discussion during this session. There is a complementary activity in Session Five that connects these two sessions. The assessments make the most sense and helps make connections when used together. You will need the ASSESSMENT in the appendix for tracking responses and notes.

Session Four

THIS IS A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK ABOUT THE SESSION YOU JUST PRESENTED.

Do you feel as though participants are better able to do the following after the session?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure...
Define the difference between fantasy and reality.			
Describe the amount of violence represented in music videos and video games.			
Identify the persuasion technique being used in music videos and video games.			
Identify gender stereotypes operating in different types of music videos and video games.			
Describe how media is created with a target audience in mind?			
Describe the visual parts of a piece of media (the text)?			
Describe the hidden message of a piece of media (the subtext)?			

NOTES:

What felt successful?

What challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome or redirect these challenges?

What would you do differently the next time you present this content/session?

What would you keep the same the next time you present this content/session?

What would you like to cover in Session Five?

Media Creating Fantasy:
Attitudes Towards Real-Life Violence in the Media

LENGTH OF TIME:

60 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Laptop

Projector

Audio speakers

Screen/blank wall

Three to five examples from local or national news that mirror or reflect violence in media

Facilitator notes

Video game clips and music videos from Session Four

Dreamworlds 3 (optional/if available)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

A. Identify where media promotes fantasy (or desensitization from the impact of real-world violence).

B. Identify instances of real-world violence intersecting with media violence.

C. Describe their individual role in consuming and creating media.

Session Agenda

Revisiting ground rules is very important for this session. Reminding students about safe space early on will serve the facilitator in being able to stay on topic. The topic of sex and gender can sometimes lead to jokes or comments that are detrimental to the safety of the group. Discussions around race, ethnicity, and sexuality may also come up during this session's discussion. It is important to intentionally create accountability and safety throughout each session.

Review Concepts from Last Session (5 MINUTES)

Discussion: How do Media Influence our Actions and Decisions?
(10 MINUTES)

- When are media more than just words and pictures? How powerful are words and images?
  - How many of us have a favorite song that makes us smile?
  - Examples?
- What about a song or movie you can't stand? How does it make you feel?

This discussion opens up the fact that yes, media does influence us emotionally. Sometimes, participants make the argument "it's just a movie" or "it's just a song" and that music and movies are "no big deal." It's important to remind participants about the influence that media have on our thinking.

- Do media make us go out and commit acts of violence? *Not necessarily but it influences the way in which we think about violence. When we think of violence as no big deal, then we are part of the problem.*
  - **Silence allows violence to continue happening.**
  - How? *Silence gives room for perpetrators of violence to continue their behavior because other people are looking the other way.*
- **While media may not make us violent, it can desensitize us** (make us less likely to feel shock or distress because of our overexposure to violence). Media effects are subtle.

What is an Intersection? (30+ MINUTES)

- Something that crosses, like two streets.
- In this case, it means that there are different ideas going on, and they cross with each other.
  - How do images, words, and violence intersect?
- *Fantasy & Reality: Intersections*
  - **Option A:** Revisit music videos and video games from the previous session (briefly) and begin making connections to real-life violence and abuse.
  - **Option B:** *Dreamworlds 3* — Clips from *Dreamworlds 3* talk about music videos being a form of promotion to sell records. Music videos, like many other forms of advertisements use the female body to draw attention. Oftentimes women are treated very disrespectfully in music videos and pop culture. To illustrate this point the narrator shows strikingly similar images of the way women are portrayed in the media to the way women were treated at the Puerto Rican Day Parade in NYC and at Mardi Gras in Seattle, WA.
  - **Discussion Questions:**
    - Does the way the media portray women and the way the media portray men, influence the way we treat each other?
    - Does the way the media portray violence, influence the way we think about violence in real life.
- If media can influence us to purchase items and believe in different things, why can't it also influence the way we think about violence? Again, we may think that it is just a song or just a movie, but revisit the idea that media are meant to sell products, ideas, and lifestyles.
  - We must remember that media effects are subtle. Media don't necessarily make us more violent; but it can influence the way we think about violence.

Looking at Real-World Violence in the Media (15+ MINUTES)

Prepare participants for the potentially upsetting content of any graphic depictions of violence. Any videos or accounts of violence should be thoroughly vetted by your supervisor and any adults present during the session.

- **Discussion questions:** (after each example)
  - Compared to violence in music videos and video game examples we looked at last time, how do we feel about these real-life examples? Do you think there is any connection between being exposed to media violence and real-life depictions of violence?
- When we are desensitized, how do we contribute to the cycle of violence? *By looking the other way or dismissing violence, we contribute to the culture of silence that allows violence to happen. Note: This is a lead-in to the next dose, which covers being a proactive media consumer.*

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MODIFICATIONS
Activity-Based Assessment: Attitudes Toward Violence in Media
(5+MINUTES)

This activity can be woven into discussion during this session. There is a complementary activity in Session Five that connects these two sessions. The assessments make the most sense and helps make connections when used together. You will need the materials in the appendix for tracking responses and notes.

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Session Five

THIS IS A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK ABOUT THE SESSION YOU JUST PRESENTED.

Do you feel as though participants are better able to do the following after the session?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure...
Identify where media promotes fantasy (or desensitization from the impact of real-world violence).			
Identify instances of real-world violence intersecting with media violence.			
Describe their individual role in consuming and creating media.			
Describe the responsibility we have to critically question media as we consume it.			
Describe ways to be an active consumer of media.			

NOTES:

What felt successful?

What challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome or redirect these challenges?

What would you do differently the next time you present this content/session?

What would you keep the same the next time you present this content/session?

What would you like to cover in Session Six?

Taking Action!
Becoming proactive media consumers

LENGTH OF TIME:

60 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Laptop

Projector

Audio speakers

Screen/blank wall

Facilitator notes

"What would you do?" video clips (optional)

MEDIA EXAMPLES NEEDED:

News and events are referenced within this session. Facilitators are encouraged to find relevant local, state, and national news stories to increase participant connection and engagement.

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

A. Describe their individual role in consuming and creating media.

B. Describe behaviors of a proactive media consumer.[19]

C. Demonstrate at least one way to challenge media portrayals of gender and violence.

19   Note to facilitator: Some facilitators may choose to use the term "media bystander" while others may be comfortable with terms such as "proactive media consumer" or "media activist." Regardless of the term used, the intent is to be proactive and use media platforms to challenge when we see something that reinforces stereotypes. This session is not meant to cover bystander intervention or engagement in its entirety. More training on what to do is needed for complete training on this subject. This session is meant to start the conversation and connect how we can be proactive media consumers as opposed to passive consumers.

Session Agenda

Revisiting ground rules is very important for this session. Reminding students about safe space early on will serve the facilitator in being able to stay on topic. The topic of sex and gender can sometimes lead to jokes or comments that are detrimental to the safety of the group. Discussions around race, ethnicity, and sexuality may also come up during this session's discussion. It is important to intentionally create accountability and safety throughout each session.

Review Concepts from Last Session (5 MINUTES)

Discussion (10 MINUTES)

Open with stating participants may have had discussions about violence and what it means to be an active bystander in the past. However, as cycles of violence continue in our world it is important to continue these discussions and connect them to what we see in our media, including our own social media.

- What kinds of violence do we see in real life? *Participants should list different types of violence, including (but not limited to) bullying, unwelcome or threatening sexual comments, physical violence, grabbing at someone's body parts or sexual violence.*

- **Are verbal comments or inappropriately touching somebody's body a form of violence?** *Yes*

- What types of violence do we see in the media? *The same types of violence.*

- Have you ever seen gossip lead to violence?

    - What are the connections between talking negatively about someone and violence? Is gossip harmless? Have you ever witnessed this on your social media sites, such as Facebook, Snapchat or Twitter? *There are times in which we may be witnesses to violence — maybe our friends are bullying someone or sexually harassing someone.*

    > *Are our responses void of gender stereotypes, harmful messages or victim blaming?*

- How do we react when we see violence? *Many different ways. There is no correct way to react — there is fear, anger, indifference, numbness. Our own experiences contribute to the way in which we react. Sometimes, we have biological responses such as fight, flight, or freeze. Any way in which we react is okay, even if it's freezing up. Session Six is about taking action. As proactive media consumers we can take action by responding to media - especially the social media we create and view. As proactive media consumers, it may be helpful to ask ourselves the following:*

- **Are our responses void of gender stereotypes, harmful messages or victim blaming?**
- **Are we using our voices or the power of the written word for the betterment of society?**

- **What do you think it means to be a proactive media consumer?** *Someone who takes action to challenge damaging media messages.*

- Do proactive media consumers have responsibility to take action when we see these negative gender norm portrayals?

Are we using our voices or the power of the written word for the betterment of society?

The following examples portray the positive impact proactive media consumers have on promoting the message of gender equity and non-violence.

Examples of Proactive Media Consumers (20+ MINUTES)

These examples are offered as ways to introduce the concept of media activism; facilitators are encouraged to find more relevant, timely, or local examples for in-depth discussion and engagement. Facilitators may also have to look online for new articles and coverage of the events described below.

Discussion:

How would this work in a real life situation? *Sometimes, participants feel that taking action doesn't work because situations escalate; they feel that they don't have the language to be a non-violent bystander, or they are afraid for their own safety. These examples can be used as "springboards" to generate ideas about in-person and online action.*

- Julia Bluhm and her impact on *Seventeen* magazine. Julia Bluhm, a 14-year-old, started a campaign with a petition on Change.org that called for *Seventeen* magazine to print one unaltered photo spread each month. "The petition — and a demonstration at the corporate offices of Hearst, which owns *Seventeen* — led to more than 80,000 signatures from around the world."

- Schuyler Emde, an 18-year-old, started a blog and a Twitter account to address bullying, by offering encouraging words and interacting with victims. He also started an anti-bullying club at his high school.

- #NotBuyingIt — The Representation Project
  A campaign that uses the social media platform Twitter to call attention to sexism and gender inequality in the media.
  http://therepresentationproject.org/take-action/not-buying-it/

Discussion (10 MINUTES)

What are ways that people can become proactive media consumers? How can they push back against violence and gender stereotypes? How do media literacy skills play a role in this behavior? *Media literacy knowledge combined with willingness and confidence to use skills may increase the chance that someone will intervene.*

- **How have you been a proactive media consumer in the past?**
- **How can you become a more proactive media consumer?**
- How can you intervene in potentially harmful situations you witness? How are you an engaged bystander? *Give examples- language in the hallways, posts on social media demeaning someone, racists remarks, bullying, etc.*
- **How can you work to stop attitudes that excuse or support violence?**
  - Ways to be a proactive media consumer[20]
    - Be a critical and active viewer of media messages and images.
    - Question what you see (or what you don't see) in the media.
    - Consciously choose the media you engage with.
    - Gather news from independent sources.
    - Contact media industry executives and inform them of your opinions and dissatisfactions with their products.
    - Add media issues and your opinion on them to everyday conversations.
    - Use the editorial/opinion section of the newspaper to voice your opinions and raise awareness.
    - Get involved at your local cable and/or radio station.
    - Start a youth video production program and get the project aired on local cable access.
    - Organize a media education week.
    - Advocate for and/or teach media literacy in your community or school.
    - Contact local government officials about legislation focusing on media issues and reform.

Activity: Practicing Proactive Skills (10+ MINUTES)

Have participants create a simple positive message that they would like to spread to as many of their peers as possible. Brainstorm creative ways to use all the media at their disposal to accomplish this.

Ask participants to name one change they will make in their lives based on this and other doses they completed.

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20   Adapted from Media Education Foundation. (n.d.). "20 Ways to be a Media Activist." Retrieved January 26, 2015 from http://www.mediaed.org/Handouts/20-Ways.pdf

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MODIFICATIONS
Bystander Intervention (20+ MINUTES)

- What is a bystander? *A bystander is someone who is a witness. For example, research shows that most men feel uncomfortable with violence against women and sexual violence, but they remain silent about it because they believe their peers are in favor of it. A positive active bystander or engaged bystander should be someone who sees something for what it is and speaks out against inequality or harmful behaviors.*

- What is bystander intervention? *Bystander intervention means someone who witnesses violence or behavior that encourages violence and intervenes in order to change a potentially harmful situation.*

Examples of bystander intervention and media

Sexual Assault

The Steubenville Rape Case: In 2012, a 16 year old girl was sexually assaulted while unconscious by two Steubenville High School football players. Comments on the matter were shared via social media.

- The police searched through thousands of pieces of digital evidence of the rape, including tweets, facebook posts, texts, pictures, video and e-mails. Many were created while the crime was occurring. Why didn't any of the bystanders intervene? Name some ways that the bystanders could have intervened.

- Again, connecting this to media, how do media play a role in how others are treated? Can you name some media examples that celebrate or glamorize binge drinking behaviors? How about media examples of men targeting intoxicated women because they are perceived as easy to manipulate into sex?

Bullying

- In 2012 a video was leaked of a school bus monitor, Karen Klein age 68, being bullied by some male middle school students on a bus. The video was originally uploaded on Facebook. Later, a YouTube user reposted the video onto YouTube. Within a few days, it had been watched by millions of viewers.

Letter Project (15 MINUTES)

This option relies on students being given the time and opportunity to bring in ads that depict rigid/harmful gender norms. If they do not, pass an assortment out in the classroom for students to choose. With the help of the facilitator/educator, students/individuals will write a letter to the corporation that created the ad, telling them why they think the ad is harmful and give suggestions for creating more positive ads promoting gender equity and preventing sexual violence.

"What Would You Do?" (10+ MINUTES)

This activity uses segment's from an episode of ABC's "What Would You Do?" looking at teen dating abuse. Facilitators may need to purchase or request videos, and are encouraged to use and adapt media examples to the audience. Any and all substitutions should be consistent with the goals of the session.

- In this show, we see a guy being verbally abusive to his girlfriend. What did you think about what happened?

- What could be the reason that the show picked this topic? *Media can be used to highlight concerns.*

- What kinds of questions did they ask? How was it narrated?

- This was a constructed scenario with security guards — what about real life situations? Why do you think they had to have security guards?

- When the man at the end got in the abuser's face, was that making the situation worse or better? Often we learn that men are supposed to confront abusive men with violence, but then the bystander just walked away. Is the victim safe?

- The bystander also said that private matters should be kept private — how does that contribute to violence? When we say that intimate partner violence should be kept behind closed doors, we're adding to the problem.

- **Discuss:**
  How would this work in a real life situation? *Sometimes, participants feel that bystander intervention doesn't work because situations escalate; they feel that they don't have the language to be a non-violent bystander, or they are afraid for their own safety. These are real and valid feelings and should be discussed. In addition to this, people don't always feel comfortable calling the police. There may be outstanding warrants, issues of immigration, or even negative past experiences. It's important to validate the fact that even the police don't always feel like a safe option. Brainstorm about other NON-VIOLENT ways in which someone can find help.*

Street Harassment (10 MINUTES)

Young women are speaking out against the violence they face on their walk home. They are using media to raise awareness about an issue and "talk back." Facilitators can point to the work of HollaBack! and other organizations or national campaigns that seek to address street harassment or young women, men, and people who are gender non-conforming.

- Who has the right to be safe? *Everyone.*

- Should a person be free to walk through the halls, or the neighborhood, without being harassed? *Yes.*

Session Six

THIS IS A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK ABOUT THE SESSION YOU JUST PRESENTED.

Do you feel as though participants are better able to do the following after the session?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure...
Describe their individual role in consuming and creating media.			
Describe behaviors of a proactive media consumer.			
Demonstrate at least one way to challenge media portrayals of gender and violence			

NOTES:

What felt successful?

What challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome or redirect these challenges?

What would you do differently the next time you present this content/session?

What would you keep the same the next time you present this content/session?

What would you like to cover in Session Seven?

SESSION SEVEN

Reconstruction

LENGTH OF TIME:

60 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Laptop, projector

Screen/blank wall

Magazines to cut from

Selected ads pulled from magazines

Art supplies: scrap paper, scissors, glue sticks, markers

Intro to Media Literacy handouts for participants

Tips for Creating Media handout *(optional)*

Facilitator notes

Optional/If available: Flip cameras, Photoshop, iMovie, media-creation software

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

A. Demonstrate skills to analyze and evaluate media messages.

B. Respond to harmful media messages.

C. Create positive media messages of persuasion and other media skills in a hands-on project.

D. Describe elements of effective counter ads.

Session Agenda

Revisiting ground rules is very important for this session. Reminding students about safe space early on will serve the facilitator in being able to stay on topic. The topic of sex and gender can sometimes lead to jokes or comments that are detrimental to the safety of the group. Discussions around race, ethnicity, and sexuality may also come up during this session's discussion. It is important to intentionally create accountability and safety throughout each session.

Review Concepts from Last Session (5 MINUTES)

Activity: Building Media Activism Skills (30+ MINUTES)

Open with stating participants are going to get a chance to practice the skills they've been learning and talking about over the past few sessions. It is important for participants to realize that they have the power to access the same persuasive techniques that advertising and entertainment industries use to create

> It is important for participants to realize that they have the power to access the same persuasive techniques that advertising and entertainment industries use to create positive messages that challenge unhealthy behavior, harmful gender stereotypes and promote respect for others.

positive messages that challenge unhealthy behavior, harmful gender stereotypes and promote respect for others. Facilitators can choose from the Talk Back or Creating Counter-Ads activities below depending upon time constraints and participant interests. Please note that some of them can be structured as contests or as additional doses if students participate in displaying or distributing this work outside the space.

Option A: Creating counter-ads

You can respond to and challenge deceptive or harmful media messages by creating counter-ads. These are parodies of advertisements, delivering more truthful or constructive messages using the same persuasion techniques as real ads. By creating counter-ads, you can apply media literacy skills to communicate positive messages in a fun and engaging exercise.

The simplest way to create a counter-ad is to alter a real ad (magazine or newspaper ads work best) by changing the text or adding graphic elements; just write or draw over the original ad, or paste new materials onto it. A counter-ad can also be created by drawing a new image, or by copying the design and layout of a real ad. Collage techniques work well, too. Counter ads can be created using programs like Photoshop, but today we will be using basic art techniques to talk back to an ad of your choice.

If it is difficult to access print ads, an alternative can be to have students create a positive message that can be made into a poster and displayed around the school building. Educators can pick a theme that supports the reconstruction dose concepts, gender equity and/or sexual violence prevention concepts such as consent. (Note: If available, participants can use Photoshop or other programs or technology.)

Discussion:

- Give a brief introduction to counter-ads and/or show examples http://medialiteracyproject.org/counter-ads (10 minutes)
- Direct participants to Tips for Creating Media handout and review strategies (5+ minutes)

Option B: "Talk Back"

This activity empowers students to "talk back" to the media messages regarding gender norms in print ads/magazine covers. Some suggestions for how the educator can present the ads/magazine covers for the project: enlarge the ad/covers and mount them on foam board, project the ad onto a wall, print out 8" x 11" copies from ads found online, etc.

- Students break up into groups and are assigned a print ad or magazine cover. They are given post-it notes, markers and scissors depending on the method you choose to present the ad/magazine cover.
- Groups will respond or "talk back" to any gender-based messages on the ad/cover creatively. They can change the message, draw on it, bring attention to it, write a question about it, etc. "Talk back" responses should be directed towards pointing out messages in the ad/magazine cover that are harmful or reinforce negative gender stereotypes and /or send a message that sexual violence is acceptable.
- When the projects are complete, one person from each group will report to the rest of the class what they discovered on the ad/cover and how they responded to it.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MODIFICATIONS

Poster Activity (30+MINUTES)

This option below can be customized to have students create a positive message that can be made into a poster and displayed around the school building. Educators can pick a theme that supports reconstruction concepts, gender equity and/or sexual violence prevention concepts such as consent.

Letter Project (20+ MINUTES)

This option can be done individually or in groups and relies on students being given the time and opportunity to bring in ads that depict rigid/harmful gender norms. If they do not, pass an assortment out in the classroom for students to choose. With the help of the facilitator, students/individuals will write a letter to the corporation that created the ad, telling them why they think the ad is harmful and give suggestions for creating more positive ads promoting gender equity and preventing sexual violence. Facilitators can encourage participants to share letters with the larger group and send letters in to media entities to practice media activism.

Session Seven

THIS IS A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK ABOUT THE SESSION YOU JUST PRESENTED.

Do you feel as though participants are better able to do the following after the session?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure...
Demonstrate skills to analyze and evaluate media messages?			
Respond to harmful media messages?			
Create positive media messages of persuasion?			
Describe elements of effective counter ads?			

NOTES:

What felt successful?

What challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome or redirect these challenges?

What would you do differently the next time you present this content/session?
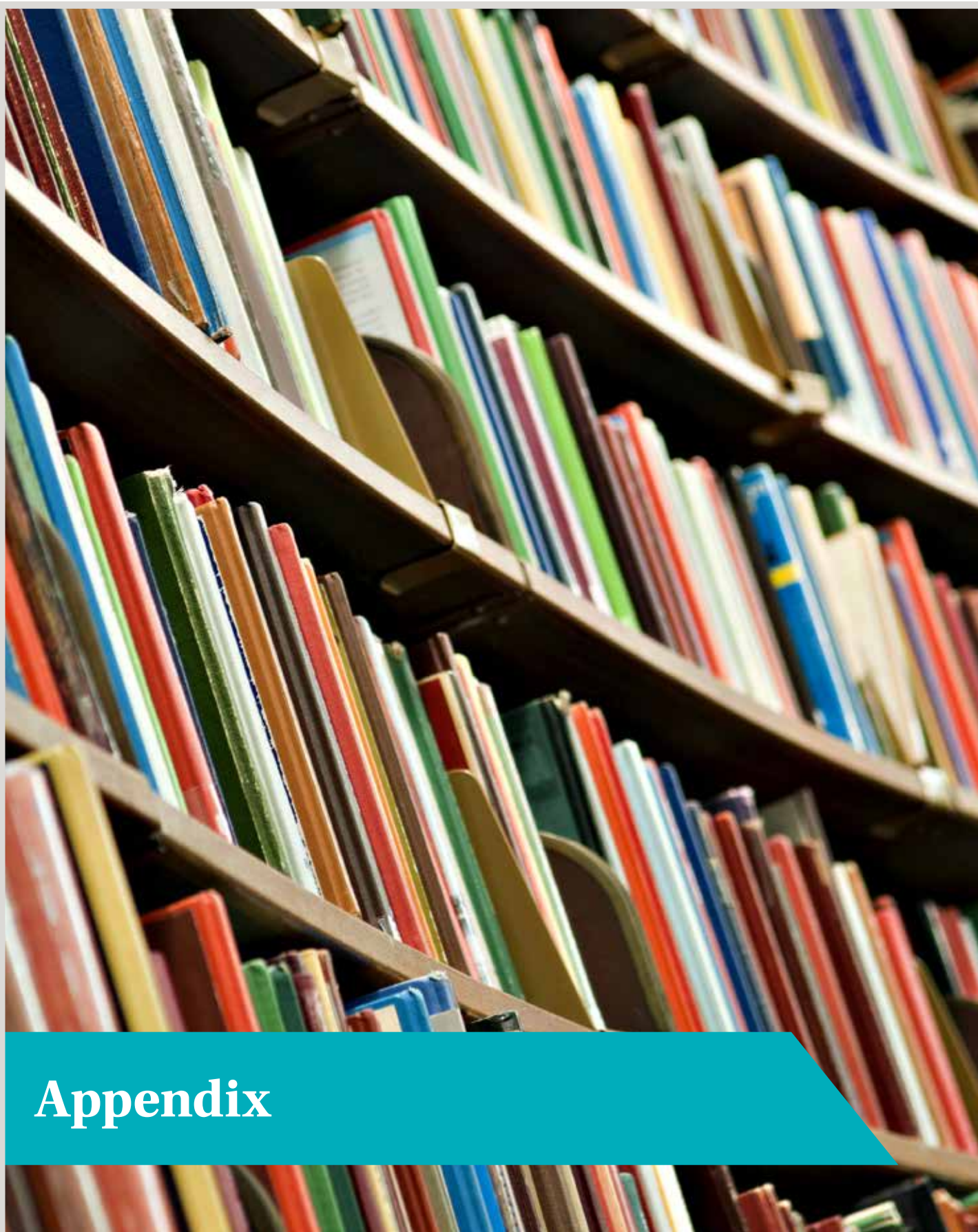
What would you keep the same the next time you present this content/session?

Is another session needed to wrap-up discussion?

What topics should be revisited?

Appendix

INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA LITERACY

MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT

Introduction to Media Literacy

Media literacy is a set of skills that anyone can learn. Just as *literacy* is the ability to read and write, *media literacy* refers to the ability to access, analyze, and create media messages of all kinds.

These are essential skills in today's world. Today, many people get most of their information through complex combinations of text, images, and sounds. We need to be able to navigate this complex media environment, to make sense of the media messages that bombard us every day, and to express ourselves using a variety of media tools and technologies.

Media literate youth and adults are better able to decipher the complex messages we receive from social media, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, packaging, marketing materials, video games, music, websites, and other forms of media. Being media literate means we can understand how these media messages are constructed, and discover how they create *meaning*, usually in ways hidden beneath the surface. We can also create our own media, becoming active participants in our media culture.

Media literacy skills can help all of us—children, youth, and adults to:
- Understand how media messages create meaning
- Identify who created a particular media message
- Recognize what the media maker wants us to believe, think, feel, or do
- Name the "techniques of persuasion" used (See MLP's Language of Persuasion handout)
- Recognize bias, spin, misinformation, and lies
- Discover the part of the story that's not being told
- Evaluate media messages based on our own experiences, beliefs, and values
- Create and distribute our own media messages
- Become advocates for change in our media system

Media literacy education is a valuable tool both in and outside of the classroom. MLP's media literacy education develops critical media consumers and engaged media justice advocates. Our goal is two-fold: 1) an increase in critical thinking skills that are applied to media analysis specifically, and more broadly, applied to the culture at large and 2) active participation in our media culture. Active participation can take the form of media creation, holding media systems accountable for representations of our communities, or working for just media policies.

Media literacy in the classroom

 We understand that teaching media literacy begins with aligning the curriculum with educational standards. Educational standards in many states—in language arts, social studies, health, and other subjects—include the skills of accessing, analyzing, and evaluating information found in media. These are media literacy skills, though some standards may not use that term. Teachers know that students like to examine and talk about their own media, and they've found that media literacy is an engaging way to explore a wide range of topics and issues.

Media literacy in the community

Researchers and practitioners recognize that media literacy education is an important tool in addressing social issues. Media literacy has been used as a prevention tool for alcohol and tobacco use, sexual assault, bullying, and diabetes. Also, media literacy sheds light on the roles media play in obesity and eating disorders, bullying and violence, gender identity and sexuality, racism, and other forms of discrimination and oppression. For these reasons media literacy is often used in life skills classes. Media literacy skills empower people and communities usually shut out of the media system to tell their own stories, share their perspectives, and work for justice.

Media literacy in public life

Media literacy helps us understand how media create cultures, and how the media monopoly—the handful of giant corporations that control most of our media—affects our politics and our society. Media literacy encourages and empowers youth and adults to change our media system, and to create new, more just, and more accessible media networks.

Media Literacy Concepts

The study and practice of media literacy is based on a number of fundamental concepts about media messages, our media system, and the role of media literacy in bringing about change. Understanding these concepts is an essential first step in media literacy education.

We've organized Media Literacy Concepts into three levels: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. Basic concepts focus on how media affect us. Intermediate concepts examine more closely how we create meaning from media messages. Advanced concepts examine the interaction of media and society, and the role of media literacy in bringing about change.

Basic concepts

1. Media messages can be deconstructed. Each piece of media was constructed—it was put together by someone whether it is a selfie on social media or a documentary film. In any case, we can figure out who created the message, and why. We can identify the techniques of persuasion being used and recognize how media makers are trying to influence us.

2. Media use the language of persuasion. All media messages try to persuade us to believe or do something. News, documentary films, and nonfiction books all claim to be telling the truth. Advertising tries to get us to buy products. Novels and TV dramas go to great lengths to appear realistic. To do this, they use specific techniques (such as flattery, repetition, fear, and humor) called the language of persuasion.

3. Media messages contain texts and subtexts. The text is the actual words, pictures, colors, and/or sounds in a media message. The subtext is the hidden and underlying meaning of the message.

4. Media construct our culture. Our society, culture, and perception of reality are shaped by the information and images we receive via the media. A few generations ago, our culture's storytellers were family, friends, and others in our community. For many people today, the most powerful storytellers are online, on television, in movies, and other forms of media.

5. Media messages affect our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. We don't like to admit it, but all of us are affected by advertising, news, movies, pop music, video games, or other forms of media. That's why media are such a powerful cultural force, and why the media industry is such big business.

6. Media construct fantasy worlds. Fantasy can be pleasurable and entertaining, and it can also be harmful. Movies, TV shows, and music videos sometimes inspire people to do things that are unwise, anti-social, or even dangerous. At other times, media can inspire our imagination and help us to envision the world as we want it to be. Advertising constructs a fantasy world where complex problems can be solved with a simple purchase. Media literacy helps people to recognize fantasy and constructively integrate it with reality.

7. No one tells the whole story. Every media maker has a point of view. Every good story highlights some information and leaves out the rest. Often, the effect of a media message comes not only from what is said, but from what part of the story is not told.

8. Media messages reflect the values and viewpoints of media makers. Everyone has a point of view. Our values and viewpoints influence our choice of words, sounds, and images we use to communicate through media. This is true for all media makers, from a preschooler's crayon drawing to a media conglomerate's TV news broadcast.

9. Individuals construct their own meanings from media. Although media makers attempt to convey specific messages, people receive and interpret them differently, based on their own prior knowledge and experience, their values, and their beliefs. This means that people can create different subtexts from the same piece of media.

10. Media literate youth and adults are active consumers of media. Some forms of media seek to create passive, impulsive consumers. Media literacy helps people consume media with a critical eye, ask questions, and evaluate sources, intended purposes, persuasion techniques, and deeper meanings.

11. We all create media. Maybe you don't have the skills and resources to make a blockbuster movie or host your own radio show. However, just about anyone can snap a photo, write a letter, or sing a song. New technology has allowed millions of people to make media, including artistic images that are shared online, social media, websites, videos, music, and blogs which can be created sometimes cheaply. Creating your own media messages is an important part of media literacy. It is critical to tell the stories of our communities especially when we are not accurately represented in news, sitcoms, and other programs.

Intermediate concepts

12. The human brain processes images differently than words. Our minds react differently to images versus words. Studies find that our brain decodes images quickly, while words are decoded in an organized sequence, taking more time to process. Images and graphics are the quicker way to communicate. Images attract our attention and can more deeply affect our emotions and attitudes. Words make us pause, re-read, and process information in an orderly fashion. For example, it is much easier to understand what a circle is if you see one rather than read a definition of one.
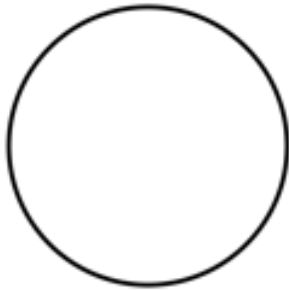
vs. A circle is a curved line with every point equal distance from the center.

13. Media are most powerful when they operate on an emotional level. Most fiction engages our hearts as well as our minds. Advertisements take this further, and seek to transfer feelings from an emotionally-charged symbol or imagery (family, sex, the flag) to a product. Sometimes news programs utilize emotional stories to increase ratings.

14. Media messages can be manipulated to enhance emotional impact. Movies and TV shows use a variety of filmic techniques (like camera angles, framing, reaction shots, quick cuts, special effects, lighting tricks, music, and sound effects) to reinforce the messages in the script. Quality graphic design can do the same for print images or websites.

15. Media effects are subtle and complex. Few people believe everything they see and hear in the media. Few people rush out to the store immediately after seeing an ad. Direct messages can tell us to buy something in order to be happy or tell us that we are not attractive if we don't look a certain way. Some media effects are indirect and can change us over time. Playing a violent video game won't automatically turn you into a murderer. The effects of media are more subtle than this. However, there is a cumulative affect when we see certain messages repeated again and again. For example, some media outlets use the term "illegal immigrant." Using this term repeatedly can create more negative feelings toward immigrants and even create violence towards immigrant communities. Another example is that we are taught there is a gender binary, meaning there are only two genders and there are various attributes that are assigned to each gender such as pink for girls and blue for boys. When we see these messages over time it can change our behavior and even cause people to fear others or harm others that don't fit into society's view of how to present one's gender. We must consider both direct and indirect effects to understand media's true influence.

16. Media convey ideological and value messages. Ideology and values are usually conveyed in the subtext. For example, news reports often reinforce sexism when they primarily use men as expert sources of information, regardless of the topic. Also, advertisements besides selling particular products, almost always promote the values of a consumer society.

Advanced concepts

17. Our media system reflects the power dynamics in our society. People and institutions with money, privilege, influence, and power can more easily create media messages and distribute them to large numbers of people. People without this access are often shut out of the media system. A clear example is the fact that women comprise over 51 percent of the U.S. population but hold less than 7 percent of all TV and radio station licenses and people of color make up over 36 percent of the U.S. population but hold just over 7 percent of radio licenses and 3 percent of TV licenses. ([Free Press](#))

18. Most media are controlled by commercial interests. In the United States, the marketplace largely determines what we see on television, what we hear on the radio, what we read on news sites, or in magazines. As we use media, we should always be alert to the self-interest of corporate media makers. Are they concerned about your health? Do they care if you're smart or well-informed? Are they interested in creating active participants in our society and culture, or are they invested in programming passive consumers of their products, services, and ideas?

19. Media monopolies reduce opportunities to participate in decision making. When a few huge media corporations control access to information, they have the power to make some information widely available and privilege those perspectives that serve their interests, while marginalizing or even censoring other information and perspectives. This censorship affects our ability to make informed decisions about our own lives, and reduces opportunities to participate in making decisions about our government and society.

20. Changing the media system is a justice issue. Our media system produces lots of negative, demeaning imagery, values, and ideas. It renders many people invisible or misrepresented. It provides too little funding and too few outlets for people without money, privilege, influence, and power to tell their stories. If we really want equality and justice, then we want to change the media system.

21. We can change our media system. More and more people are realizing how important it is to have a media system that is open to more people and more perspectives, that elevates human values over commercial values, and that serves human needs in the 21st century. All over the world, people are taking action to reform our media system and create new alternatives.

22. Media literate youth and adults are media activists. As we learn how to access media tools, analyze media messages, and as we create our own media, we recognize the limitations and problems of our current media system. It is incredibly difficult not to speak out and take action once we're media literate. Media literacy is a great foundation to build a media system that builds bridges between communities and takes down walls. If you want to know more about how to take action, then visit medialiteracyproject.org.

Text & Subtext

Text

We often use the word text to mean written words. In media literacy, text has a very different meaning. The text of any piece of media is all that you see and/or hear. It can include written or spoken words, pictures, graphics, moving images, sounds, and the arrangement or sequence of all of these elements. For most of us, the text of a piece of media is always the same.

Subtext

The subtext is your interpretation of a piece of media, or the interpretation that the media maker wants us to arrive at, whether or not we actually do. It is sometimes called the latent text. The subtext is not actually heard or seen. It is the meaning we create from the text in our own minds. While media makers (especially advertisers) often create texts that suggest certain subtexts, each person creates their own subtext (interpretation) based on their previous experiences, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and values. Thus, the subtext of a piece of media will vary depending on the individual seeing/hearing it.

Example: *Evian Purity*

The *text* of this media message includes:

- An image of a naked black woman lying in a pile of snow making a snow angel
- Snow-covered mountains and sky are shown in the background
- The color scheme is blue and white. The model and red font stand out against the background
- The largest font reads "Return to Purity"
- We see a water bottle with the Evian label in the bottom right corner
- Very small text toward the bottom reads "Detox with water from the French Alps that's been naturally filtered for over 15 years"
- The website www.eviandetox.com appears beside the water bottle
- The only two items in red are the brand word "evian" and the label on the bottle

Some *subtexts* include:

- Drinking Evian is like rolling through the snowy French Alps
- Evian is the purest water there is
- You can detoxify your body by drinking this bottled water
- Drinking Evian will make you pure
- This black, female model needed to become pure by drinking Evian
- When you drink Evian you can't feel the elements
- Evian, snow, and all things white are pure
- Black women are part of natural landscapes
- Black women are consumable like the water
- Black women need to be detoxified
- Naked women can be used to sell anything
- There is nothing pure about using plastic bottles all the time
- The Alps may not look like this someday if people continue to use large amounts of wasteful products without recycling

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Deconstructing Media Messages

All media messages are made or constructed by people. One of the most important media literacy skills is deconstruction—closely examining and taking apart media messages to understand how they work. Deconstructing a media message can help us understand who created the message, and who is intended to receive it. It can expose the point of view of media makers, their values, and their biases. It can also uncover hidden meanings, intended or unintended. There is no one correct way to deconstruct a media message—each of us interprets media differently, based on our own knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and values. Just be prepared to explain your interpretation.

Key concepts for deconstructing media

- **Source.** All media messages are created. The creator could be an individual writer, photographer, or blogger. In the case of a Hollywood movie, the scriptwriter, director, producer, and movie studio all play a role in creating the message. Ads are usually put together by ad agencies, but the creator is really the client —the company or organization that is paying for the ad. The key point is: Whose message is this? Who has control and final say over the content?

- **Audience.** Media messages are intended to reach a target audience. Some, like primetime TV shows, are designed to reach a broad demographic that includes millions of people. Other messages, like a letter or social media message, may be intended only for one person. Most media messages are designed to reach specific groups of people—defined by age, gender, race, class, interests, and other factors.

- **Text.** We often use the word text to mean written words. In media literacy, text has a very different meaning. The text of any piece of media is all that you see and/or hear. It can include written or spoken words, pictures, graphics, moving images, sounds, and the arrangement or sequence of all of these elements. For most of us, the text of a piece of media is always the same.

- **Subtext.** The subtext is your interpretation of a piece of media, or the interpretation that the media maker wants us to arrive at, whether or not we actually do. Subtext is the meaning we create from the text in our own minds. While media makers (especially advertisers) often create texts that suggest certain subtexts, each person creates their own subtext (interpretation) based on their previous experiences, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and values.

- **Language of persuasion.** Media messages use a number of techniques to try to persuade us to believe or do something. If we can spot the techniques being used, we're less likely to be persuaded, and more likely to think for ourselves. See Media Literacy Project's Language of Persuasion handout for a list of persuasion techniques and definitions.

- **Point of view.** No one tells the whole story. Everyone tells part of the story from their point of view. Deconstructing a media message can expose the values and biases of the media maker, and uncover powerful ideological messages.

Deconstruction questions

You can use the following questions to quickly deconstruct any media message. Use the basic deconstruction questions with beginners, younger learners, or when you only have a short amount of time. Use the intermediate or advanced deconstruction questions with other groups or when you have more time.

Basic deconstruction questions

1. Whose message is this? Who created or paid for it? Why?

2. Who is the target audience? What are the clues (words, images, sounds, etc.)?

3. What techniques from the language of persuasion are used? (See Media Literacy Project's Language of Persuasion handout)

4. What part of the story is not being told?

Intermediate deconstruction questions

1. Whose message is this? Who created or paid for it? Why?

2. When was the message made? How was it shared?

3. Who is the target audience? What is their age, race, class, profession, interests, etc.? What words, images, or sounds suggest this?

4. What is the text of the message? (What we actually see and/or hear including written or spoken words, photos, drawings, logos, design, music, sounds, etc.)

5. What is the subtext of the message? (What do you think is the hidden or unstated meaning? What does this piece of media tell us about the product, policy, or idea that is being discussed?)

6. What techniques of persuasion are used? (See Media Literacy Project's Language of Persuasion handout)

7. What part of the story is not being told?

1. Whose message is this? Who created or paid for it? Why?

2. Can I trust the source to tell me the truth about this topic? Why or why not?

3. When was the message made? How was it shared?

4. Who is the target audience? What is their age, race, class, profession, interests, etc.? What words, images or sounds suggest this?

5. What is the text of the message? (What we actually see and/or hear: written or spoken words, photos, drawings, logos, design, music, sounds, etc.)

6. What is the subtext of the message? (Subtext is the hidden or unstated meaning) What does this piece of media tell us about the product, policy, or idea that is being discussed?

7. What techniques of persuasion are used? (See Media Literacy Project's Language of Persuasion handout)

8. What kind of lifestyle is presented?

9. What values are expressed?

10. What is my interpretation and what do I learn about myself based on my reaction to this media message?

11. Who is denied power or agency? Who is granted power or agency?

12. What part of the story is not being told?

13. How and where could you get more information about the untold stories? What could you do with the information you obtain from further research on this media example?

Creating Counter Ads

You can talk back to deceptive or harmful media messages by creating counter ads. These are parodies of advertisements, delivering more truthful or constructive messages using the same persuasion techniques as real ads. By creating counter ads, you can apply media literacy skills to communicate positive messages, in a fun and engaging exercise.

The simplest way to create a counter ad is to alter a real ad (magazine or color-printed ad you find online) by changing the text or adding graphic elements. You can write or draw over the original ad or paste new materials onto it. Collage techniques work well, too. A second counter ad method is done by drawing a new image, copying the design and layout of a real ad. A third counter ad method for print ads is to use a digital ad or scan the image into a program such as Photoshop and alter the image with your own messages. Finally, you can also write scripts for radio or TV counter ads, and read and perform them with others or take it a step further and record your counter ad.

Created by 2013 Counter Ad Contest winner Marshal Stich
12th grader, Arrowhead Union High School in Hartland, WI

Original Ad

Counter Ad Tips

- **Analyze.** Look at several real ads and try to figure out why they're effective. The best counter ads use the same techniques to deliver a different message.

- **Power.** Your message has to break through the clutter of all the real ads that people see or hear. Think about what makes an ad memorable to you. What techniques does it use to grab your attention? Use them.

- **Persuade.** Use the same persuasion techniques found in real ads, such as humor, repetition, or flattery, to deliver your alternative message.

- **Pictures.** For most people, visual images are incredibly powerful. People often forget what they read or hear, but remember what they see. The best counter ads, like the best ads, tell their stories through pictures.

- **Rebellion.** Advertising targeted at young people often appeals to a sense of youthful rebellion. Effective counter ads expose misleading and manipulative advertising methods and turn their rebellious spirit toward the corporate sponsors who use them.

- **"KISS" – Keep It Short & Simple.** Use only one idea for your main message. Focus everything on getting this one message across.

- **Plan.** Try to think of everything including words, images, and design before you begin production. Make a few sketches or rough drafts before you start crafting the final product (or play around in Photoshop or a similar program and save different versions).

- **Practice.** If you're going to perform a radio or TV script (and especially if you're making an audio recording or video) your cast and crew will need to rehearse. Then, rehearse it again.

- **Teamwork.** Working in a team can lighten your workload and spark creativity. Discuss ideas as a group. Make sure all members share responsibility for the work.

- **Revise.** When you think you're finished, show your counter ad to uninvolved people for feedback. Do they understand it? Do they think it's funny? Use their responses to revise your work for maximum impact.

- **Distribute.** Your ideas are meant to be seen! Make copies of your counter ads and post them around your school. Get them published in your school newspaper. Create memes with them and post them on social media. Show your video to other youth and adults. Your counter ad can stimulate needed discussion and debate around media issues. You can also submit your counter ad in MLP's counter ad contest.

- **Have fun!** Making a counter ad is a fun way to learn about media, to be creative, and to express your views.

Counter ad created by a student in 2012

Original ad

About Media Literacy Project

Media Literacy Project was founded in 1993. Through education, programs, and grassroots campaigns, our mission is to transform people into critical media consumers and engaged media justice advocates who deconstruct media, inform media policy, and create media that reflect their lived experience. Our vision is a socially just world where media truly connect and sustain our communities.

As a nationally recognized leader in media literacy resources, trainings, and education, MLP delivers engaging and informative multimedia presentations at conferences, workshops, and classrooms across the country and internationally. Our media literacy curricula and action guides are used in countless classrooms and communities and our training programs have empowered thousands of people to be advocates and activists for media justice.

Our organizing campaigns, such as Siembra la palabra digna, fight for responsible speech in our media, and our work for digital inclusion centers communities of color, poor communities, rural communities, and immigrant communities in the creation of local and national media policy.

Please consider donating to Media Literacy Project so that we can continue providing tools and resources that allow communities to access, analyze, and create media!

LANGUAGE OF PERSUASION

MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT

The Language of Persuasion

Many media messages that we interact with every day are trying to persuade audiences to think, feel, believe, and/or do something. The media messages most reliant on persuasion are found in advertising, public relations, and advocacy. Commercial advertising tries to persuade us to buy a product or service. Public relations (PR) sells us a positive image of a corporation, government, or organization. Politicians and advocacy groups (groups that support a particular belief, point of view, policy, or action) try to persuade us to vote for or support them, using ads, speeches, websites, social media, and other means. These media messages and messengers use a variety of techniques to grab our attention, to establish credibility and trust, to stimulate desire for the product or policy, and to motivate us to act (buy, vote, give money, etc.)

Most of us have persuaded someone to do something, too—asked a child to clean their room, begged a parent to let us stay out late, or convinced a foundation to financially support a program in our non-profit organization. There is nothing inherently bad or wrong about persuasion. Sometimes we may not know that this art of persuasion is made up of identified techniques, or even realize we are using these tried and tested tools. Once we can understand and recognize these techniques we can better deconstruct them. Just as importantly, we can also become more adept at using these tools in our own lives and in our own media creations, too.

These techniques are called the "language of persuasion" and learning to identify and utilize these techniques is an important media literacy skill. Media Literacy Project defines persuasion as getting people to do something in their best interest, and manipulation as getting someone to do something that goes against their best interest. We understand that persuasion techniques are used to persuade as well as to manipulate. With media examples everywhere and this resource you can decide whether a message is simply persuading or manipulating. Once you know how media messages try to persuade you to believe or do something, you'll be better able to make your own decisions, and better able to make your own media.

Note to educators:

We've divided our list of persuasion techniques into three levels: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. Basic techniques are easily identified in many media examples, and they are a good starting point for all learners. Identifying many intermediate techniques may require more critical distance, and they should usually be investigated after learners have mastered the basics. More abstraction and judgment may be required to identify the advanced techniques, and some learners may find them difficult to understand. However, even media literacy beginners may be able to spot some of the intermediate or advanced techniques, so feel free to examine any of the persuasion techniques with your group.

Advertising is the easiest starting point to begin teaching these techniques. Most ads are relatively simple in structure, easily available, and their techniques can be very obvious at times. Media literacy beginners are encouraged to learn the language of persuasion by examining ads. Keep in mind that many media messages, such as television commercials, use several techniques simultaneously. Others selectively employ one or two.

Political rhetoric, whether used by politicians, government officials, lobbyists, or activists, is more difficult to analyze, not only because it involves more emotional issues, but also because it is more likely to be seen in bits and fragments, often filtered or edited by others. Depending on the level of your learners, you may want to introduce basic concepts using ads before getting into news, blogs, and campaign speeches.

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Basic Persuasion Techniques

1. Association. This persuasion technique tries to link a product, service, or idea with something already liked or desired by the target audience, such as fun, pleasure, beauty, security, intimacy, success, wealth, etc. The media message doesn't make explicit claims that you'll get these things, rather the association is implied. Association can be a very powerful technique. A good ad can create a strong emotional response and then associate that feeling with a brand (happiness = Coke, patriotic pride = America). This process is known as emotional transfer. Several of the persuasion techniques below, like Beautiful people, Warm & fuzzy, Symbols, and Nostalgia, are specific types of Association.

2. Bandwagon. Many ads show lots of people using the product, implying that "everyone is doing it" (or at least all the cool, beautiful, successful, or rich people are doing it). No one likes to be left out or left behind, and these ads urge us to jump on the bandwagon. Ads might say, "All moms trust this vacuum cleaner," or "Everyone is using the latest iPhone." News reports might say, "People can't stop talking about the most recent social media network."

3. Beautiful people. This technique uses models and actors who are considered attractive according to media industry standards in order to draw our attention. Sometimes the beautiful people are also celebrities. This technique is extremely common in ads, which may imply that we'll look like the models if we use the product. We also see this technique employed in newscasts where journalists are expected to look like models. This technique is so common that politicians and public officials are often criticized for not fitting this "beauty" look, especially if they are women.

4. Bribery. This technique tries to persuade us to buy a product by promising to give us something else, like a discount, a rebate, a coupon, or a free gift. Sales, special offers, contests, and sweepstakes are all forms of bribery. Unfortunately, we don't really get something for free—part of the sales price covers the cost of the bribe. Sometimes politicians make promises during election season to get votes, which is another form of bribery.

5. Celebrities. Celebrities are used to grab our attention so that we will associate the product or idea with the attributes of that particular celebrity. By appearing in an ad, celebrities implicitly endorse a product and sometimes the endorsement is explicit when they directly state they use the product. In this way, their participation is also a Testimonial. Many people know that companies pay celebrities a lot of money to appear in their ads yet this type of testimonial is effective.

6. Everyday people. This technique is often a type of Testimonial. The use of Everyday people works because we may believe or identity with an "ordinary" person more than a highly-paid celebrity. This technique is often used to sell everything from basic consumer products like laundry detergent or frozen dinners to a political candidate and their values. Most of the Everyday people in ads are actually paid actors who have been carefully selected because they look like one's idea of "ordinary" working class or middle class people.

7. Experts. We rely on experts to advise us about things that we don't know ourselves. Scientists, doctors, professors, writers, and other professionals often appear in ads and advocacy messages, lending their credibility to the product, service, or idea being sold. They might also be interviewed in a news story, or quoted by a politician in a speech. Sometimes, Everyday people can also be Experts, as when a mother endorses a brand of baby powder or a construction worker endorses a treatment for sore muscles. In this way, Experts can also be a type of Testimonial.

8. Explicit claims. Something is "explicit" if it is directly, fully, and/or clearly expressed or demonstrated. For example, some ads state the price of a product, the main ingredients, where it was made, or the number of items in the package. Explicit claims are also specific, measurable promises about quality, effectiveness, or reliability, like "Works in only five minutes!," or, "When I was Senator I reduced spending by 10%." Explicit claims can be proven true or false through close examination or testing, and if they're false, the advertiser may get in trouble.

9. Fear. Fear is the opposite of the Association technique. It uses something disliked or feared by the intended audience (like bad breath, failure, isolation, loss of security, or safety) to promote a "solution." Ads use fear to sell us products that claim to prevent or fix the problem. Politicians and advocacy groups use our fears to get elected or to gain support for a cause.

10. Flattery. Persuaders love to flatter us. Politicians and advertisers sometimes speak directly to us: "You know a good deal when you see one." "You expect quality." "You work hard for a living." "You deserve it." Sometimes ads flatter us by showing people doing unintelligent things, so that we'll feel smarter or superior. Flattery works because we like to be praised and we tend to believe people we like. (We're sure that someone as brilliant as you will easily understand this technique!)

11. Humor. Humor grabs our attention and is a powerful persuasion technique. When we laugh, we feel good and we often remember this feeling. Advertisers make us laugh and then show us their product or logo because they're trying to connect that good feeling to their product. They hope that when we see their product in a store, we'll subtly re-experience that good feeling and select their product over another brand..

12. Intensity. The language of ads and other media are full of intensifiers—words, images, or music that make something seem more powerful or intense. Examples include superlatives (greatest, best, most, fastest, lowest prices), comparatives (more, better than, improved, increased, fewer calories), exaggeration (amazing, incredible, forever), and many other ways to hype the product. Music that accompanies news programs and commercials is often used to increase intensity.

13. Maybe. Unproven, exaggerated, or outrageous claims are commonly preceded by words such as may, might, can, could, some, many, often, virtually, as many as, or up to. ("This product could change your life." "If you vote for me you might pay less taxes.") Watch for these words if an offer seems too good to be true.

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault

14. New. We love new things and new ideas, because we tend to believe they're better than old things and old ideas. That's because the dominant culture in the United States (and many other countries) places great faith and value in being young, in technology, and in progress. New products and new ideas are not a guarantee of something better, and like any product or idea, they can lead to new and more difficult problems.

15. Repetition. Media makers use repetition in two ways. Within a message, words, sounds, or images may be repeated to reinforce the main point. Advertisers, news broadcasters, filmmakers, poets, and others use this technique often. The other use of repetition is repeating the message itself. A banner ad on your favorite website, a political slogan, a commercial, a billboard, or a logo may be displayed or repeated again and again, sometimes over a long period of time.

16. Rhetorical questions. These are questions designed to get us to agree with the speaker. They are set up so that the "correct" answer is obvious. Examples include questions such as, "Do you want to get out of debt?" "Do you want quick relief from headache pain?" and "Should we leave our nation vulnerable to terrorist attacks?" Rhetorical questions are used to build trust and alignment before the person tries to get us to buy a product or idea.

17. Scientific evidence. Scientific evidence often accompanies the Expert technique. It uses data and scientific imagery (charts, graphs, statistics, lab coats, etc.) to prove something. It often works because many people trust science and scientists. It is important to look closely at the "evidence," because it can be misleading. Questions to ask about the evidence may include: Who conducted the study? How many people were surveyed? Who participated in the survey? Is the person in a lab coat an actor?

18. Testimonials. Media messages often show people testifying about the value or quality of a product, or endorsing an idea. They can be Experts, Celebrities, or Everyday people. We often believe the person giving the testimony because they are sharing their personal opinion. One example could be a music or Internet celebrity who really wants us to know which skincare products she likes. She has used them and wants to share her experience. Another example is a community member telling us why he is voting for someone. This person is someone from our town (supposedly) instead of the politician running for office herself. This technique works best when it seems like the person testifying is doing so because they genuinely like the product or agree with the idea.

19. Timing. Sometimes a media message is persuasive simply based on when it is delivered. This can be as simple as placing ads for flowers and candy just before Valentine's Day, creating a news segment based on a recent trend in diet or fashion, or delivering a political speech right after a major news event. Sophisticated ad campaigns commonly roll out carefully-timed messages to grab our attention and generate a response.

20. Warm & fuzzy. This technique uses sentimental images (especially of happy people, beautiful landscapes, children, and animals) to stimulate feelings of happiness or comfort. Warm & fuzzy messages may also include the use of soothing music, pleasant voices, and suggestive words like "cozy" or "comforting." The Warm & fuzzy technique is a form of Association.

Intermediate Persuasion Techniques

21. Analogy. Analogy compares one situation with another. A good analogy, where the situations are reasonably similar, can aid decision-making. People fighting for Internet access might compare broadband to electricity. This comparison states that the Internet is a basic utility, like electricity or water, and is necessary in a 21st Century world that relies on this technology for education, health information, staying connected with loved ones, entertainment, and other purposes.

22. The Big Lie. According to Adolf Hitler, one of the 20th century's most dangerous propagandists, people are more suspicious of a small lie than a big one. The Big Lie is more than exaggeration or hype; it is telling a complete falsehood with such confidence that people believe it. We can recognize Big Lies in news reports, on social media, and other places by either possessing prior knowledge that it is not true or upon conducting a bit of research and asking questions about the message. Examples of Big Lies include: "Poor people are not as smart or hard working as people with money" or "Insert Major Soda Company Name cares about your health and the environment."

23. Charisma. Sometimes, media messengers can be effective simply by appearing firm, bold, strong, and confident. This is particularly true in political and advocacy messages. People often follow charismatic leaders even when they disagree with their positions on issues that affect them.

24. Euphemism. Euphemism tries to pacify audiences in order to make an unpleasant reality more palatable. Vague or abstract terms are used instead of clearer, more graphic words. Thus, we hear about corporate "downsizing" instead of "layoffs," or "intensive interrogation techniques" instead of "torture."

25. Glittering generalities. Glittering generalities are words such as civilization, democracy, freedom, patriotism, motherhood, fatherhood, science, health, beauty, and love. A truck ad, a politician, or a news commentator may repeat the word "freedom" for example without explaining what they mean by using that term. Media messages use these words in the hope that we will approve and accept the statements made without examining the evidence or asking what they really mean.

26. Group dynamics. We are greatly influenced by what other people think and do. Group dynamics is a system of behaviors and psychological processes occurring within a social group or between social groups. We can get carried away by the forceful atmosphere of live audiences, rallies, or other gatherings. For example, fans in a football stadium might decide to rush the field, users of Mac products often wait in line for hours or days to buy their latest gadget, or hundreds of thousands of people might give a standing ovation when they are moved by a speech at a political rally.

27. Majority belief. This technique is similar to the Bandwagon technique. It works on the assumption that if most people believe something, it must be true. That's why polls and survey results in news reports and articles are so often used to back up an argument. It is important to remember that responses vary widely depending on *how* one asks the question and who is asked the question. Politicians use the same technique when they say, "The American people want..." How do they know what all Americans want?

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28. Name-calling. This technique links a person or idea to a negative symbol (liar, creep, gossip, criminal, illegal, etc.). Name-calling is used to make us reject the person or the idea based on our reaction to the negative name ("My opponent is a liar."), instead of looking at the available evidence. A subtler version of this technique is to use adjectives with negative connotations (extreme, passive, lazy, pushy, conservative, liberal, etc.) Ask yourself: If the name-calling was removed, does the idea still have merit?

29. Nostalgia. Upon the use of certain images, sounds, or smells, Nostalgia can be very powerful as it triggers emotions and positive memories. Many media makers invoke Nostalgia and refer to a time when life and quality were supposedly better ("like Mom used to make"). Politicians sometimes promise to bring back the "good old days" or restore "tradition" and "values." But whose traditions are being restored? Who did they benefit, and who did they harm? This technique works because sometimes people tend to forget the bad parts of the past, and remember the good.

30. Sex object. This technique uses objectification to sell a product. Objectification happens when a person is reduced to and made to seem like an object, often with their face removed from the image, rather than a whole human being with an identity. One common example of this technique is when a woman's body is made to resemble or mimic a bottle of beer or some type of food, sending the message that her body is desirable and consumable for the audience. We often see men's bodies objectified in ads for cologne or protein shakes, reducing them to muscular body parts.

31. Simple solution. Life and people are complicated. Problems often have many causes, and are not easy to solve. Media messages sometimes offer Simple solutions to all sorts of problems. Politicians claim one policy change (lower taxes, a new law, spending cuts, or a government program) will solve big social problems. Advertisers may suggest that a deodorant, a car, or a brand of beer will make you smart, rich, or successful.

32. Slippery slope. This technique warns against a negative outcome. It argues against an idea by claiming it's just the first step down a "slippery slope" toward something the target audience opposes. The Slippery slope technique is commonly used in political debate, because it's easy to claim that a small step will lead to a result most people won't like, even though small steps can lead in many directions. An example is, "If we let young people use the Internet they will not know how to think for themselves and then the next thing we know we'll have to use robots in the work place. Robots in the work place are bad."

33. Symbols. Symbols are words or images that bring to mind some larger concept, usually one associated with strong emotions, such as home, family, nation, religion, gender, or lifestyle. Media makers use the power and intensity of symbols to make their case. (US flag = America, Swastika = fascism) Symbols can have different meanings for different people. For example, Hummer SUVs are status symbols for some people, while to others they are symbols of environmental irresponsibility.

Advanced Persuasion Techniques

34. Ad hominem. Latin for "against the man," the Ad hominem technique responds to an argument by attacking the opponent instead of addressing the argument itself. It's also called "attacking the messenger." It works on the belief that if there's something wrong or objectionable about the messenger, the message must also be wrong. "She was a known partier so her allegations must be false."

35. Card stacking. Card stacking goes beyond just telling part of a story and deliberately provides a false context and leaves out key information to give a misleading impression. This technique "stacks the deck," selecting only favorable evidence to lead the audience to the desired conclusion. News commentators do this often so that we side with their argument, and advertisers do this when they present all the great things about the product without revealing that it may not be effective, could cause health problems, or is really expensive. Censorship is a form of card stacking.

36. Cause vs. Correlation. Media messages can trick us by intentionally confusing correlation (two things being connected or related in some way) with cause (one thing causes another thing to happen). For example: "Babies drink milk. Babies cry. Therefore, drinking milk makes babies cry."

37. Denial. This technique is used to escape responsibility for something that is unpopular or controversial. It can be either direct or indirect. "I did not have sexual relations with that woman." "I did not inhale." "I am not a crook."

38. Diversion. This technique diverts our attention from a problem or issue by raising a separate issue or sharing only positive information. Diversion is often used to hide the part of the story not being told. For example, rather than focusing on a recent oil spill, an oil company may share a commercial showing us that they are investing in renewable energy and helping the environment.

39. Extrapolation. Media messages and messengers sometimes draw huge conclusions on the basis of a few small facts. Extrapolation works by ignoring complexity. An example could be a news story on someone in a hospital in your town that has been reported to be carrying a deadly virus, and the new story states that now everyone in your state is at risk.

40. Scapegoating. Scapegoating blames a problem on one person or one group. Some people, for example, claim that undocumented immigrants are the main cause of unemployment in the United States, even though unemployment is a complex problem with many causes and our economy and local communities rely on the work of those who are undocumented. Scapegoating is a particularly dangerous form of the Simple solution technique.

41. Straw man. This technique builds up an illogical or deliberately damaged idea and presents it as something that one's opponent supports or represents. Knocking down the "straw man" is easier than confronting the opponent directly. Infomercials often use Straw man. One example would be an infomercial that opens by telling us that blankets don't work and we need footed pajamas instead. An example of Straw man in a political debate is when a candidate says, "My opponent regularly releases dangerous criminals and sends them back to the streets. No one wants to vote for someone that puts families in danger."

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Thinking About Media & Social Attitudes

Put a mark in the column that most lines up with <u>your</u> <u>opinions</u>, <u>thoughts</u>, or <u>views</u>.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I trust most of what I see on TV.				
I get information from people I know, rather than from the media.				
People — in general — are influenced by advertisements or other media that tell them how to act or behave.				
My peers are influenced by advertisements or other media that tell them how to act or behave.				
I am influenced by advertisements or other media that tell me how to act or behave.				
I don't realize how much I want something until I see it advertised.				
It bothers me when a man does something that I consider feminine.				
It is okay with me if boys play with dolls.				
Women are just as smart as men.				
It is alright for a woman to ask a man out on a date.				
Men are better leaders than women.				
If both husband and wife have jobs, the husband should do a share of the housework such as washing dishes, doing the laundry, and caring for any children.				
Families should offer more encouragement to sons, rather than to daughters, to find a career.				
It is a bit embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually filled by a woman.				
Stereotypes about gender influence the way people behave.				
Traditional gender roles can encourage men and boys to be aggressive.				
Gender roles and stereotypes can support inequality.				
Women should be protected by men.				
I am bothered by how men are portrayed in the media.				
I am bothered by how women are portrayed in the media.				
I am bothered by violence against women as portrayed in the media.				

Media Justice Scavenger Hunt

Have Internet access at home	Know that abusive partners will often use a woman's immigrant or citizenship status to keep her from leaving	Have a family member who does not know how to email	Can explain what media literacy means	Can sing a song or retell a story taught to you by your grandparents
Use social media at least twice a day	Can name the number of hours the average kid watches TV in one week	Can name three stereotypes about your community or neighborhood you see on TV	Can name at least three magazines that are popular with teen girls and young women	Know the meaning of, and how to dance, at least one dance unique to a faith or culture
Know how to prepare and serve a meal unique to a faith or culture	Have a Twitter name	Have taken a photo or video of your family	Have a computer where you live	Know females are more likely than males to be shown in minimal clothing in Hollywood movies
Get the newspaper delivered to where you live	Participate in religious, faith, or spiritual ceremonies	Had comprehensive sex education taught in your school	Know the ratio of males to females in Hollywood films	Have an iPod or MP3 player
Can name the doll that has an unrealistic shape including tiny waist, long legs and large breasts	Pay attention to what is going on in the news/ current events	Read a book this month	Can name a story from childhood	Knows what the singular form of "media" is

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Media literacy means having the skills and abilities to analyze, interpret, and create media using different tools and modes.

The average kid watches 35 hours of TV in one week.[21]
Children born after 2005 have a different relationship with media than previous generations, including watching (on average) a full 35 hours of television a week. That number represents a 2.2 hour increase since 2009 survey results and a 12% increase over nine years.

The ratio of males to females in Hollywood films is 2.51 males for every one woman on screen.[22]
A study looking at 500 top-grossing films from 2012, 2010, 2009, 2008, and 2007 found that out of 4,475 speaking characters on screen, only 28.4% are female.

Barbie is the name of the doll that has an unrealistic shape including tiny waist, long legs and large breasts.

"Medium" is the singular form of "media."

21   Time. (2013, November). *FYI, Parents: Your Kids Watch A Full-Time Job's Worth of TV Each Week* [article]. Retrieved January 28, 2015 from http://entertainment.time.com/2013/11/20/fyi-parents-your-kids-watch-a-full-time-jobs-worth-of-tv-each-week/

22   Stacy L. Smith, Marc Choueiti, Elizabeth Scofield, & Katherine Pieper. (2013). *Gender Inequality in 500 Popular Films: Examining On-Screen Portrayals and Behind-the-Scenes Employment Patterns in Motion Pictures Released between 2007-2012.* Retrieved January 28, 2015 from
      http://annenberg.usc.edu/pages/~/media/MDSCI/Gender_Inequality_in_500_Popular_Films_-_Smith_2013.ashx

Session Four Activity-Based Assessment:
Attitudes Toward Violence in Media

Learning objective: Participants will be able to define the difference between fantasy and reality.

Learning activity: Participants will discuss real-life examples of violence in the media.

Scoring tool directions

Use one of the tables below to track a certain desired reactions, terms, and attitudes while discussing a media depiction of violence.

Discussion Questions: (ask with each example)

- What is the subtext or hidden message in this game?
- Who is this message empowering? Who is having power taken away?
- What is the untold story?
- Looking back at our Persuasion Techniques, which ones are being used in this video?
  - What about in the advertisements for this game?

You can either use the Yes/No tracking table or the one below to count the number of participants that expressed the desired responses.

Did a majority (75%) of participants respond in the following ways during deconstruction and discussion?

	Yes	No
Accurately define fantasy (e.g. using words or phrases such as "not real life," "made up," "created by someone else" etc.)?		
Describe the impact of violence in reality (e.g. using words or phrases such as "makes people feel bad about themselves," "disconnects people," "damages trust" etc.)?		
Connect media depictions of violence with earlier conversations around creators of media?		
Use words or phrases that identify with the oppressed or disempowered group (e.g. empathic responses, "It would make me...," "It might make people feel...")?		

How many participants responded in the following ways during deconstruction and discussion?

	Yes	No
Accurately defined fantasy (e.g. using words or phrases such as "not real life," "made up," "created by someone else" etc.)?		
Described the impact of violence in reality (e.g. using words or phrases such as "makes people feel bad about themselves," "disconnects people," "damages trust" etc.)?		
Connected media depictions of violence with earlier conversations around creators of media?		
Used words or phrases that identify with the oppressed or disempowered group (e.g. empathic responses, "It would make me…," "It might make people feel…")?		

Session Five Activity-Based Assessment:
Attitudes Toward Real-Life Violence in Media

Learning objective: Participants will be able to identify instances of real-world violence overlapping with media violence.

Learning activity: Participants will deconstruct music videos and/or video games.

Scoring tool directions

Use one of the tables below to track a certain desired reactions, terms, and attitudes while discussing a media depiction of violence. .

Discussion Questions: (ask with each example)

- How are these images/videos different from the ones we looked at last time?

- What do you think makes the two types of media different? *News coverage and videos captured of real-life violence "versus" often share similar aspects or actions. But how do each make us feel?*

- How/Do the images and videos we looked at last time make us feel about these real-life examples? Do you think there is any connection between being exposed to media violence and real-life depictions of violence?

You can either use the Yes/No tracking table or the one below to count the number of participants that expressed the desired responses.

Did a majority (75%) of participants respond in the following ways during deconstruction and discussion?

	Yes	No
Identify similarities in media depictions of violence and real-life examples.		
Offer examples of how media depictions of violence could influence attitudes about real-life violence (e.g. using words or phrases such as "desensitize," "make it not a big deal," "you don't see it as that bad because of movies," etc.)?		
Connect concepts and discussion points from previous session with this session.		

How many participants responded in the following ways during deconstruction and discussion?

	Yes	No
Identify similarities in media depictions of violence and real-life examples.		
Offer examples of how media depictions of violence could influence attitudes about real-life violence (e.g. using words or phrases such as "desensitize," "make it not a big deal," "you don't see it as that bad because of movies," etc.)?		
Connect concepts and discussion points from previous session with this session.		

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Creating Counter-Ads

Plan. Try to think of everything — words, images, design — before you begin production. Make a few sketches or rough drafts before you start crafting the final product.

Analyze. Look at several real ads and try to figure out why they're effective. The best counter-ads use the same techniques to deliver a different message.

Power. Your message has to break through the clutter of all the real ads that people see or hear. Think about what makes an ad memorable to you. What techniques does it use to grab your attention? Use them.

Persuade. Use the same persuasion techniques found in real ads — like humor, repetition, or flattery — to deliver your alternative message.

Pictures. Visual images are incredibly powerful. People often forget what they read or hear, but remember what they see. The best counter-ads, like the best ads, tell their stories through pictures.

Rebellion. Advertising targeted at young people often appeals to a sense of youthful rebellion. Effective counter-ads expose misleading and manipulative advertising methods and turn their rebellious spirit toward the corporate sponsors who use them.

"KISS." Keep It Short & Simple. Use only one idea for your main message. Focus everything on getting this message across.

Practice. If you're going to perform a radio or TV script (and especially if you're making an audio recording or video) your cast and crew will need to rehearse. Then, rehearse it again.

Teamwork. Working in a team can lighten your workload and spark creativity. Brainstorm ideas as a group. Make sure all members share responsibility for the work.

Revise. When you think you're finished, show your counter-ad to uninvolved people for feedback. Do they understand it? Do they think it's funny? Use their responses to revise your work for maximum impact.

Distribute. Your ideas are meant to be seen! Make copies of your counter-ads and post them around your school. Get them published in your school newspaper. Show your videotape to other kids and adults. Your counter-ad can stimulate needed discussion and debate around media and health issues.

Have fun! Making a counter-ad is a fun way to learn about media and health, to be creative, and to express your views. Enjoy it!

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**The New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) is an organization
that joins people together in action for the common cause of ending
sexual violence and supporting all those whose lives have been affected by it**