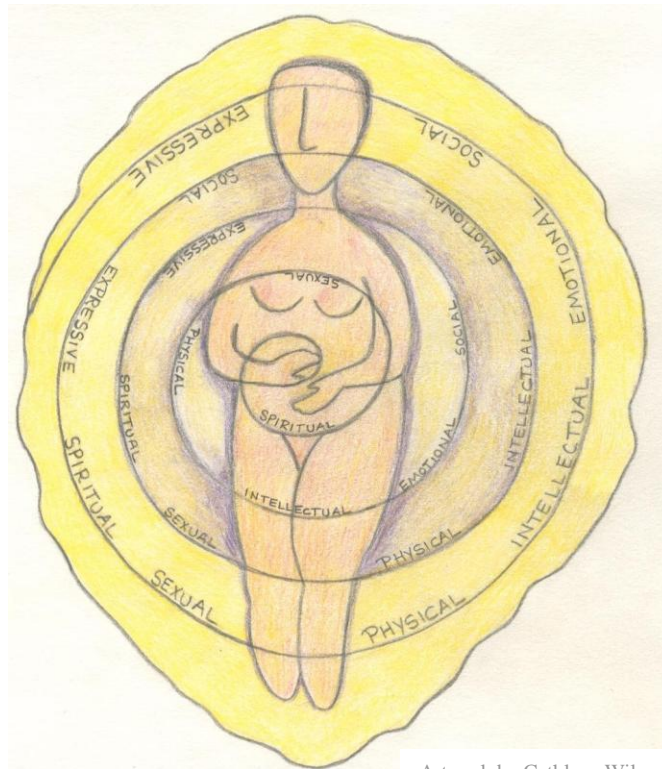


*WholeSomeBodies:
Broadening the
Conversation About
Sexuality and
Sexual Violence Prevention*



Artwork by Cathleen Wilson

*WholeSomeBodies:
Broadening the Conversation
About Sexuality and
Sexual Violence Prevention*

*Created by
the WholeSomeBodies Workgroup
of the
Vermont Sexual Violence
Prevention Task Force
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WholeSomeBodies *Training and Consultation Available*

The WholeSomeBodies Workgroup members are hopeful that the *WholeSomeBodies* approach to **sexual violence prevention** travels far and wide.

The Workgroup has developed a companion *Training of Trainers* that can accompany this manual. The training is designed so that participants learn the basic philosophy of the WholeSomeBodies approach, experience each exercise, and learn how to facilitate a WholeSomeBodies workshop.

If you are interested in inviting WholeSomeBodies Workgroup trainers to your area for a *Training of Trainers* or if you would like consultation around the manual contents, please contact us:

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WholeSomeBodies Feedback

In our efforts to honor the evolving nature of this work, we invite and encourage your feedback about your experiences working with the approach and exercises put forward in this manual. Please use these questions as a guide for providing comments and suggestions.

Please send to: Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, PO Box 405, Montpelier, VT 05601; Attention WholeSomeBodies Workgroup

Please feel free to answer these questions from your *personal perspective* (including personal relationships, parenting, etc.) as well as from your *professional perspective* (as sexual violence advocates/prevention educators, health promotions staff, etc.)

1. Please describe how using this manual has influenced your personal or professional approach to *sexuality* and *sexual violence prevention*.

2. Have you had an opportunity to adapt or use the exercises/approach with your specific audiences (i.e. parents, youth, educators, etc.)?

Please describe your audience and any adaptations that you have made.

3. Please share any thoughts you have about ways to adapt the manual for use with culturally diverse groups (i.e. LGBTQQI communities, communities of color, people with disabilities, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, urban/rural populations, others).

4. Please include ideas of music/songs, poetry, activities etc. that might/would speak to culturally diverse or historically under-heard groups.

5. If you have used the WholeSomeBodies exercises in your work and are willing to share any evaluations or observations about how your audiences responded (specifically, if it changed behaviors or raised levels of awareness). Please describe and/or attach to this survey.

6. Please check this box if it's okay for us to use your comments anonymously in preparing for future workshops and in revising and creating materials.

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We would like to acknowledge all of the educators and sexual violence prevention advocates who have been a part of the Vermont WholeSomeBodies Workgroup over the years. It has taken great deal of commitment and adventuresome spirit to keep this work alive and moving forward. In particular, we would like to recognize *Arlene Averill* for her risk taking, vision and determination and *Lu Ann Van Zeeland* for her skill in focusing us and for *hot crossed buns*.

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WholeSomeBodies

All humans, it seems, have a yearning for wholeness – a wholeness that includes our sense of sexuality as a joyous, meaningful and fulfilling experience. Imagine the shape of an hourglass, the contents - our sense of sexuality. In childhood, many of us are able to fill the top of the hourglass to full measure: experience the wonders of all our senses and bathe in the intimacy of our relationships with nature, with others and with ourselves. As we emerge into adolescence, cultural silence and messages of secrecy and danger surrounding sexuality restrict our experiences and language to create the small middle of the hourglass. Our primary educator becomes the media and our feelings become fear-driven. Many of us, and our children, find ourselves in this stuck place, in the middle of the hourglass where there is no room for wholeness, fluidity or joy.



Outside, it is ten below zero. Inside, a fire is crackling in the stone fireplace. We, sexual violence advocates - many of whom provide sexual violence prevention education to youth and adults in Vermont, get up from the chairs to which we have been affixed for this two-day training on *Teens and Sexual Violence*. We have been asked to explore a beautifully arranged display in the middle of the room. Atop a green velvet cloth is an unusual collection of items: a gathering of heart shaped rocks, ceramic bowls of dirt, flax seed, orange lentils, purple beans and sand; chocolate covered peanuts and dried apricots; books with black and white photographs of people in nature, dancing, climbing trees; lavender, vanilla, and eucalyptus oils; a flawlessly round rock that fits perfectly in any hand, a brass bell, a bouquet of dried flowers, lit candles, and a *balancing stick* found on a magical hiking journey. Together with native flute, we hear whispers of ‘yum’ and ‘oooo’ and the spontaneous sharing of stories.

When invited to speak about this experience, we talk about our grandfathers and family- propagated heirloom beans, of childhood rock collections, of our inspiring, insightful sons and daughters, of smells and tastes that evoke memories of our pasts or of our childhoods. We share a sense of *slowing down*, of being *sensual*, of *connecting*.

The group looks at the words *intimacy*, *erotic*, *sensuality*, and *sexuality*. We talk about how these words describe our relationships with the world around us: with babies and children, with our partners, with nature and with ourselves. Then, when we look at a handout with the root origins and current definitions outlined, we discover that these words were once wholly connected in their full definitions and have been separated over time. *Intimacy* now implies a sexual relationship, *erotic* relates to pornography, *sensuality* is about being sexy, and the meaning of *sexuality* has been reduced to the *act of having sex*. We list together the

messages that we got as children about sexuality. They are, for the most part, steeped in negativity and emanate messages of *silence* and *secrets*.

The connection has been made and as prevention educators we know: *sexuality education* has been put into a disconnected and scary box confined to the biology of reproduction, abstinence education, birth control, rape avoidance, and sexually transmitted infections. We - and our children - have had our sexuality appropriated by a culture that only allows us to be sexual *in the extreme* (like the media would have us be) and does not support us in integrating our sexuality into our wholeness. We find that we have not been encouraged to nurture our sexuality as we have other parts of our 'humanness' - like our intellect or physical health. Very few of us have been able to fully hold onto the joy that we instinctively felt as children around our sense of sexuality and connection to the world. We mourn together the loss of this sense of joy. We understand this cultural circumscription of our sexuality as part of sexual violence, and its reclamation as a crucial part of sexual violence prevention. Each of us considers how we will bring this learning into schools, incorporate these ideas into our work and raise our children in a different way.



Since 2001, Vermont's Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force's workgroup on WholeSomeBodies (formerly known as the Joyful Sexuality workgroup) has focused its work on the concept of *WholeSomeBodies as sexual violence prevention*. The mission of the workgroup: *to shift the cultural norm toward joyful and healthy sexuality by creating opportunities for individuals and communities to explore, reclaim, and discover a deeper and more expansive understanding of how sexuality informs our humanity*. To this end, the group is committed to promoting joyful and healthy sexuality as a step toward ending sexual violence by bringing these types of trainings and experiences to educators, parents, and youth in our state and nationally.

The WholeSomeBodies Workgroup began its work with the goal of deconstructing the negative violent understandings of sexuality and exploring ways to reconstruct a joyful, healthier way of both teaching about sexuality and preventing sexual violence. Similar to the experience described above, the members of this group explored *WholeSomeBodies* through intentionally experiencing their senses. They began to regain a broad organic definition of *sexuality* by listening to music and poetry, writing, cooking, eating, finger painting, and talking. Recognizing that the sense of *joy* and *self* and *connectedness* that was most often held by children was at the core of joyful human sexuality, the group identified that *prevention might most effectively focus on helping children retain that sense and helping adults reclaim it*.

In September of 2003, the group collaborated with the Women’s Rape Crisis Center in Chittenden County to organize a flag-making booth at Marketfest in Burlington. Children were invited to answer this question by writing their answer on a cloth flag: “What are you doing when your body feels the happiest?” The answers were clearly indicative of how children are naturally tuned in to their sense of WholeSomeBodies: *petting my dog, singing, running, dancing, jumping on the bed, sharing a toy, etc.* The children painted their flags with runny rainbow colors and took them home.

After adding some language and structure to their experiences, the WholeSomeBodies Workgroup has created further opportunities for individuals and communities to take part in this learning. The group has brought this thinking to other professionals who do national and statewide sexual violence prevention work including Advocates of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence as well as campus educators across the country. This manual is meant to provide an orientation to the *WholeSomeBodies* vision of sexual violence prevention by summarizing the history of the process and passing along concrete activities that led the group to their insights.

The tasks at hand for sexual violence prevention advocates are challenging and exciting: to support a shift toward incorporating joyful and healthy sexuality into sexual violence prevention work; to support a shift toward cultural understandings that allow children and youth to experience and express their sexuality - rather than feel forced to consider it in a narrow and scary box; and to support adults in exploring, discovering and reclaiming personal understandings of *intimacy, sensuality, eroticism, and sexuality.*



The advocates at the *Teens and Sexual Violence* training are asked to make rainbow flags and answer the same question: “What are you doing when your body feels the happiest?” We are wondering what kinds of answers we will get from adults. Our answers are amazingly similar to those of the children.

When we, as adults, feel free to invite wonder back into our lives and, in turn, teach our children the fullness of human sexuality, the feeling that our sense of sexuality is *stuck in an hourglass* will disappear. Connection and sensual delight will move more freely within us and throughout our lives. If we can do this, we will become a culture of whole, sexually healthy adults and our children will follow our lead. Here is where we find the joy of sexual violence prevention.

WholeSomeBodies as Sexual Violence Prevention

WholeSomeBodies is Primary Prevention

WholeSomeBodies marks the beginning of a new perspective in the sexual violence prevention movement. The mission of WholeSomeBodies is to shift the cultural norm toward joyful and healthy sexuality by creating opportunities for individuals and communities to explore, reclaim, and discover a deeper and more expansive understanding of how sexuality informs our humanity. Toward this mission, we will promote a sense of joyful and healthy sexuality as a critical step toward ending sexual violence.

WholeSomeBodies is a primary prevention strategy that is flexible enough that it can be adapted for any audience or need of a group. Primary prevention involves efforts to reduce the incidence of a problem among a population before it occurs. In terms of domestic and sexual violence, primary prevention strategies introduce new values, thinking processes, and relationship skills to a particular population that are incompatible with violence and promote healthy, non-violent relationships. In general, prevention programs are intended to clarify inappropriate attitudes and behaviors and provide positive alternatives¹. The WholeSomeBodies approach embraces these components while fostering positive, holistic messages intended to influence broad change throughout the lifespan.

The architects of WholeSomeBodies in Vermont offer this vision: *We envision a culture where adults will feel free to invite wonder back into their lives and teach their children the fullness of human sexuality; where connectedness and sensual delight move freely within individuals and throughout their lives; where adults and children are whole and sexually healthy.*

“But when we begin to live from within outward, in touch with the power of erotic within ourselves, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us, then we begin to be responsible for ourselves in the deepest sense.”

-Riane Eisler,
Sacred Pleasure (1995)
quoting Audre Lorde (1984)

¹ David Wolfe & Peter Jaffe “Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault” January 2003. VAWnet. Full text available at

http://www.vawnet.org/DomesticViolence/Research/VAWnetDocs/AR_Prevention.pdf

WholeSomeBodies: Broadening the Conversation About Sexuality and Sexual Violence Prevention

The WholeSomeBodies approach to sexual violence prevention work is a natural extension of the work that we have been doing for years. For as long as we have been fighting sexual violence with definitions, disheartening statistics, and rape deterrence, we have intuitively strived for ways to bring in the positive; to balance the scales so that people come away with a sense of empowerment as well as important information. WholeSomeBodies accepts as true that people will be less likely to use sex or sexuality as a weapon against others in a world that respects one's sexuality as part of one's humanity.

WholeSomeBodies is a philosophy, an approach, a dream, and an attitude. WholeSomeBodies reclaims one's sense of sexuality from a culture that separates our sexual selves from the rest of our wholeness (intellectual, spiritual, social, physical, expressive, and sexual). Like most primary prevention efforts, the WholeSomeBodies philosophy encourages a shift in societal norms. Children, teens, and adults learn to appreciate their own 'sexuality' in all of its wholeness, and as connected to their wholeness as a person.

Primary prevention programs seek to create a *sea change* in the existing culture. They take a long time. One of the benefits of the WholeSomeBodies approach is a more immediate reaping of benefits. The positive changes begin first with the prevention staff. In the short time that we've been doing WholeSomeBodies work in Vermont, we have begun to see changes among sexual violence prevention educators. We have felt a sense of rejuvenation in sexual violence prevention work and a renewed sense of purpose and positive direction. Greater changes will follow and prevention programs are taking their first steps to include WholeSomeBodies thinking into their work with children, teens, adults, and survivors of sexual violence. These results will take longer to manifest, but the seeds of change are there. As one sexual violence advocate put it, "It seems to be bubbling up all over the state". This is the beginning of the *sea change* in Vermont.

"Show me a child who knows nothing about sexuality, and you've just introduced me to my next victim."

-quote from a sexual abuse perpetrator

Within our own Vermont group, incorporating a WholeSomeBodies approach has taken on different forms for each of us working in separate, but related, fields. We have worked to help children and teens resist the negative influences of their environment (sexist media, violence, peer pressure, etc.) and have supported positive internal growth and respectful relationships with their peers.

We have shifted our focus of child sexual abuse prevention and education for children and their parents to encourage using correct language for all body parts, talking regularly and naturally about sexuality, and building foundations that will allow children to feel comfortable and confident in their bodies. Such healthy communication can break the dangerous practices of silence and secrecy so necessary to sexual assault. Children can ask for help. Perpetrators will

choose to stay clear of children who CAN and DO talk openly about healthy sexuality to the adults in their lives.

The tasks at hand for sexual violence prevention advocates are challenging and exciting: to support a shift toward incorporating joyful and healthy sexuality into sexual violence prevention work; to support a shift toward cultural understandings that allow children and youth to experience and express their sexuality - rather than feel forced to consider it in a narrow and scary box; and to support adults in exploring, discovering and reclaiming personal understandings of *intimacy, sensuality, eroticism, and sexuality*. We are delighted to offer the world WholeSomeBodies.

WholeSomeBodies Workgroup of the Vermont Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force

Mission

To shift the cultural norm toward joyful and healthy sexuality by creating opportunities for individuals and communities to explore, reclaim, and discover a deeper and more expansive understanding of how sexuality informs our humanity. Toward this mission, we will promote a sense of joyful and healthy sexuality as a critical step toward ending sexual violence.

Vision

We envision a culture where adults will feel free to invite wonder back into their lives and teach their children the fullness of human sexuality; where connectedness and sensual delight move freely within individuals and throughout their lives; where adults and children are whole and sexually healthy.

Realizations and Evaluations

I felt extremely present, in the moment, playful – excited about the subject matter and rediscovering the easy ways to be in touch with my sensual self. - Participant at a survivor’s conference.

I appreciate this thoughtful approach to sexual violence prevention and will use it in my work and with my own kids. These exercises really helped me to understand some abstract stuff on a gut level, which makes it so much more relevant than ‘book knowledge’. - Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocate

As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, using the WholeSomeBodies approach has been a very important step in my healing. It has helped me to reconnect to a part of myself that was lost or never discovered during my childhood. It has reminded me that sex and sensual pleasure can be healthy and positive parts of my life. - WholeSomeBodies Workgroup Member

I think every part of this workshop was inspiring. Feeling the textures, listening to the music, interacting with one another, all of it very appealing to touch, smell, listen and enjoy, thanks. - Participant at a survivor's conference.

I really enjoyed all of the exercises. At first, I was kind of skeptical of the workshop, but, it really made me think about sexuality in a much broader sense and how important it is that our society broadens its view of sexuality. The song really put me back in my childhood and how free it felt when I was younger. The statistics about violence against women were very disturbing. - University Of Vermont Student, Women's Health Class

My daughter - and all that it means to be her parent and teacher, is what brought me to become passionate about the idea of WholeSomeBodies. For me, it is clear that children are born with a certain knowing about their connection with their own bodies, with nature, and with others. As children grow in our culture, they are taught to question this knowing instead of trust and explore it. It is my wish to be part of the work to bring joy back into how we raise and educate children, youth, and adults about sexuality, connection, and safety. - WholeSomeBodies Workgroup Member

Thanks, I think you all made everyone feel so safe and secure that it made sharing our stories a little easier. - Participant at a survivor's conference.

The feelings of hope and fellowship and feeling right with myself, a survivor, courage with others. Thank you. - Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocate

Wonderfully warm and empowering really broadened my perspective and definitions of sex and sensuality. - Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocate

I came to the workshop in a not very good mood...but, within the first exercise, I was no longer pre-occupied with my negative feelings and was captivated and inspired by the activities and the people around me. I felt very comfortable and knew that if I didn't have anything to share, there wasn't any pressure on me to do so. - University Of Vermont Student, Women's Health Class

Affirms us and our work. This directly applies in a positive uplifting way to what we do and how we work with clients and as educators. - Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocate

The flag making was pretty cool-and the letter to myself was very inspiring. I can say things to myself-write them down, and then have the chance to read it again, take it in, listen to myself. - University Of Vermont Student, Women's Health Class

Starting A WholeSomeBodies Group

When the WholeSomeBodies Workgroup began its journey, we spent much of our time in an organic process of discovery. We met monthly either at a colleague's house or in a park under a shelter. We gave ourselves permission (and got the blessing from our workplaces) to take our time and work *out of the box*. We had to think creatively about what 'accomplishment' and 'progress' meant and tried hard to challenge our need to have things *written down on paper* in order to consider them meaningful.

We always met at a time when we could incorporate food into our meeting. We each brought food to share and often brought food that had meaning for us. At one particular meeting on a cold March morning, our host was baking hot crossed buns as we arrived. The smell was inspiring and sent us off on a great morning of sensual experiences - smelling and tasting and remembering.

Some other activities that we integrated into our experiences included: finger-painting, reading poetry and free writing, listening to music and songs, sharing family pictures, playing in the sand, cooking and eating, and finding things in nature to share. Each activity was brought to the group by one of us because it had particular meaning and to inspire conversation and further discovery.

As the group matured, we uncovered new tangible common understandings about how a *WholeSomeBodies* focus relates to sexual violence prevention. We started to bring note pads and flip charts back into our meetings to document and brainstorm ways to share our work with others. Our meetings are now a balance of joyful experiences (we still meet in the park and bring lunch and activities to share), continued exploration, and training. The work of the WholeSomeBodies Workgroup continues to evolve and feed us in exceptional ways.

After adding some language and structure to their experiences, the WholeSomeBodies work group, formerly known as the Joyful Sexuality work group, has created further opportunities for individuals and communities to take part in this learning. The following is a list of workshops the group has facilitated:

- CALCASA - National Conference held in Minneapolis, MN, 2004
- Finding Our Voices - Conference for survivors - VT, 2004

- UVM Women's Health Nursing classes - VT, 2004
- VT Network Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, Train the Trainer Workshop - VT, 2004
- Sexual Violence Summit - VT, 2005
- New England Child Sexual Abuse Conference - VT, 2005
- PCAR - National Conference held in Pittsburg, PA, 2005
- Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence - CO, 2006
- Washington County Community Training for Parents - VT, 2006
- "Dismantling Rape Culture" Conference - VT, 2007
- Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault - WY, 2007
- Celebrating Sexuality Conference - Conference for people with Developmental Disabilities, 2007
- Jane Doe, Inc - Marlborough, MA, 2007
- Working with Youth Conference - VT, 2007
- UVM Gender Studies class presentation - VT, 2007
- Youth Advocacy Task Force presentation - VT, 2008, 2009

In addition, WholeSomeBodies facilitators have used many of the activities in their own prevention work in a variety of venues from street fairs to support groups for women.

This manual is meant to provide an orientation of the WholeSomeBodies vision of sexual violence prevention by summarizing the history of the process and passing along concrete activities that led the group to their insights. We are committed to bringing a joyful approach to sexual violence prevention.

WholeSomeBodies Training

Exercises and Activities

Introduction

As part of our mission to further develop and pass along our understanding of the *WholeSomeBodies* approach to sexual violence prevention, we have created several training activities that can be adapted for use with a variety of audiences. These activities emerged through our learning process as activities that both brought us insight and challenged our understandings of traditional ways of looking at sexual violence prevention.

The Audience


It is our hope that the following *WholeSomeBodies activities* are presented in formats which include participants from a variety backgrounds. They can be adapted for use with youth, parents, teachers, and professionals, and some with younger children. We encourage teaching other prevention educators and trainers how to use the activities in their work to prevent sexual violence. Each activity outline suggests appropriate numbers as well as age ranges of participants.

Survivors as Participants

We have presented our WholeSomeBodies workshops for groups that have included sexual violence survivors as well as groups that were entirely made up of survivors. We intentionally acknowledge at some point during each workshop the presence of survivors in the room. We have made notes in some of the activity descriptions about how to approach this with participants. For instance, in the *Sensual Feast* exercise, we suggest that trainers say something like this in their introduction:

*We acknowledge that there are probably survivors present in the room and hope that you **all** feel free to take care of yourselves...participate only if you want to, take a walk if you want to, etc. We have made efforts to contain the smells (essential oils in bottles) so that you can choose to smell if you want to, and not if you don't.*

While processing the *Hourglass Exercise*, we make a point to recognize that survivors of child abuse may not relate to some of the experiences written in the

top of the hourglass. This discussion has often created space for survivors to identify what kinds of childhood or life connections helped them survive their abuse or bring about their healing. Watch for the blue spiral  in the exercises listed later to remind you to keep survivors' needs in mind during the exercise.

Culture and Diversity

The members of the WholeSomeBodies Workgroup recognize that the majority of our group is middle class white women who live and work in a state that is rural and 98% white. The activities that follow became meaningful for us personally as we worked through our process of discovery about how to best reframe sexual violence prevention work. These activities and exercises worked for us, spoke to us, resonated with our individual histories and our cultures. Some activities speak more powerfully to some of us, and other activities more powerfully to others of us. The WholeSomeBodies activities that are outlined in this guide could be considered templates for others to use as they are participating in their own discoveries about WholeSomeBodies. The possibilities of finding these avenues of discovery are endless and will be different for each individual and community. For instance, *When I Was A Boy* by Dar Williams is a song that articulated some powerful images for many of us. It also describes a fairly rural experience that will not resonate for everyone. We encourage groups to find their own activities through their own discovery processes that speak to them and their communities. We hope that groups bring together music, poetry, art and activities that have cultural meaning and power and help to *make personal* the vision of this work. We also hope that you'll share those discoveries with us, so that we can include them in the future.

Gender

Our experiences presenting in mixed gender groups have been thought provoking. We have heard from some prevention educators that 'men and boys don't communicate this way or feel comfortable in groups talking about feelings'. Although it is important to design activities and experiences in ways that are meaningful to your audience, we also encourage you to challenge assumptions about what men are capable (or incapable) of responding to. It is our experience that men can do this kind of emotional stretching when given the opportunity, and men have played an important role on Vermont's WholeSomeBodies Workgroup. It is also important to acknowledge that some participants in your audiences may be challenging gender roles on a larger scale and may want to move beyond traditional conversations about gender entirely.

Using a sample agenda

In our experience, there is a particular chronology of activities that effectively creates an atmosphere of discovery around *WholeSomeBodies* for participants in a workshop. We usually begin with either the *Sensual Feast* or the *When I Was A Boy* exercise (adapted with material for your audience). The activities then build off of each other (*Etymology* then *Childhood Messages*) and culminate with the processing of the *Hourglass Exercise*. We have the illustration of an empty hourglass up on a flip chart at the beginning of the workshop and fill it in using participants' language throughout the processing of all the activities (see *Hourglass* exercise). The *Flag Making* activity can stand alone easily as a festival booth, support group, or ending of a day-long workshop.

Sample Agenda for Workshop

Intros of facilitators
Introduction of Workshop
Sensual Feast
When I Was a Boy (or other music or art)
Etymology
Childhood Messages
Hourglass Exercise
Flag Making/processing (if time allows)
Ending



Joyful Exercises

Artwork by Cathleen Wilson

Workshop Introduction

Introducing a WholeSomeBodies Workshop can be complex. The trick is keeping it simple and finding the balance between giving important information without overwhelming or confusing participants. Much of the learning for participants will take place internally and will come to them as they move through the exercises. It can feel presumptuous and unnecessary to explain ahead of time what they might learn.

We have found that including the following elements are essential to building a complete workshop introduction.

History of the WholeSomeBodies approach/Personal involvement

The history of the WholeSomeBodies Workgroup, which is included in the opening article of this manual, explains the origins of this work. It has been helpful for us to describe our group's starting point as well as its evolution. A workshop introduction can also include personal stories of how facilitators came to this work and have evolved within it.

Mission of the WholeSomeBodies approach/connection to sexual violence prevention

We have found it helpful to read the group's mission aloud (p. 8). The last sentence of the mission statement (*...toward this mission, we will promote a sense of joyful and healthy sexuality as a critical step toward ending sexual violence*) contains a nice segue to talking about how *WholeSomeBodies* relates to sexual violence prevention. Here is some helpful language from the manual's opening article:

Recognizing that the sense of *joy* and *self* and *connectedness* that is most often held by children is at the core of joyful human sexuality, *prevention might most effectively focus on helping children retain that sense and helping adults reclaim it.*

It is also important to know that the relationship to sexual violence prevention will be reinforced during the workshop and will become clearer and optimally part of the intrinsic learning for participants.

Survivors are present

It is crucial to talk about the presence of survivors of sexual violence in every workshop introduction.

Stats about SV (national and local)

Talking about national and local statistics about sexual violence is a way to make real that there are survivors present in almost every group and probably present in the workshop (See handout).


- An Estimated 683,000 women are forcibly raped each year in the United states, which equates to 1.3 women being raped every minute (*Rape in America: A Report to the Nation. National Victim Center, Kilpatrick, D.G., Edmunds, C.N., and Seymour, A., 1992*)
- Approximately 1 in 4 adult women and 1 in 7 adult men reported experiencing some kind of sexual abuse as a child. (*Vermont Residents' Awareness of and Attitudes Toward Sexual Abuse of Children, Tabachnick, J; Henry, F; and Denny, E., Stop It Now, Haydenville, MA, January 2000*)
- Experts estimate that **one out of every seven adult women in Vermont** has been the victim of forcible rape sometime in her lifetime – that's more than 32,000 women Vermonters. (*Rape in Vermont: a Report to the State, Kilpatrick and Ruggiero, 2003*)

Participation is voluntary/take care of self/confidentiality

Finally, and most importantly, remind the group that statistics show us that there are most likely survivors in the room. Let the group know that the exercises have been presented at conferences where survivors were participants and their feedback has been incorporated into the exercise designs. Explain that the exercises were developed with survivors in mind and that we made efforts to contain smells, talk ahead of time when exercises might be triggering for participants, etc.

Participants may be moved to talk about personal experiences. Make sure to request that information that is shared in the room stay in the room in order to respect people's stories and confidentiality.

Make a point to tell participants that **participation in any exercises including sharing is completely voluntary**. Encourage participants to take breaks and take care of themselves as they need to.

Watch for the blue spiral  in the following exercises for places to be extra alert to the needs of survivors.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN VERMONT...

- Experts estimate that **one out of every seven adult women in Vermont** has been the victim of forcible rape sometime in her lifetime – that’s more than 32,000 women Vermonters. (*Rape in Vermont: a Report to the State, Kilpatrick and Ruggiero, 2003*)
- In 2004, member programs of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence served 1208 victims/survivors of sexual violence throughout the state; 932 were women, 185 were children and youth, and 91 were men. (*VNADSV 2004 Annual Report*)
- In the year 2004, there were 185 forcible rapes reported to law enforcement in the State of Vermont. This was an increase of more than 50% over 2003, and a 20% increase compared to the previous five years. (*2004 VT Crime Report*)
- Based on *Vermont police reports* in 2004, on average more than 3 sex crimes are reported every day.
- The average age of victims of incidents of rape that were reported to Vermont police is 21; almost half of these victims were under the age of 18. The victim and the assailant were known to each other in 99% of reported rapes, and in 25% of these crimes the victim and perpetrator were either family members or intimate partners. Firearms were used as a weapon in 9% of aggravated assaults. (*2004 VT Crime Report*)

...AND IN THE NATION

- 1 of 6 U.S. women and 1 of 33 U.S. men has experienced an attempted or completed rape as a child and/or adult. (*National Violence Against Women Survey, Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998*)
- Four-fifths of all rapes, three-quarters of all physical assaults, and one half of all stalking perpetrated against women are not reported to the police. (*Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence, Tjaden and Thoennes, NIJ/CDC July 2000*)
- For women who report having been raped at some time during their lives, 22% were under the age of 12 at the time of their first rape; 32% were between 12 and 17; 29% were between 18 and 24; and 17% were 25 or older. (*Rape in America, 1992*)
- Women with developmental disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate that is 50% higher than the rest of the population - 68% to 83% will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. (*Working with victims of crime with disabilities, OVC Bulletin, Tyiska, C., 1998*)
- Alcohol is the most common drug used to facilitate sexual assault. Alcohol use by the victim, perpetrator or both is linked to 75% of rapes of college students. Regardless of a victim’s choice to use alcohol or other drugs, there is no excuse for sexual assault – the victim/survivor is never to blame. (*The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 1999*)

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, April 2005

Sexual Violence Stats Handout

© Sensual Feast

Objective/purpose:

To allow participants the opportunity to experience a sensual 'feast', engage all five senses (taste, smell, hear, feel, see), participate in dialogue about their personal experiences, and discover or rediscover sensual experiences as connected to wholeness, health, WholeSomeBodies and sexual violence prevention.

Audience:

Age range: Youth through adults

Professions: Parents, students, teachers, advocates, prevention educators, survivors, non-professionals, campus educators, coaches, people working with young people

Numbers of participants: Works best in groups of 25 or less. We have done it with 60 plus participants with two large sensual feast display areas.

For a small group: This exercise can be adapted for use with a small established group (support group or otherwise). To adapt, ask group members to bring sensual items for the feast. They can personally share about their items during the processing time.

Number of presenters: Two or more

Time needed:

Prep time:

Gathering materials: Can take a long time. We usually break down the materials list so that individual presenters are responsible for bringing certain things.

Setting up feast: Allow yourselves at least 30 minutes to set up the feast (more is better). You don't want to be rushed, allow yourselves time to rearrange and move things, listen to music while you set up, taste, look, and smell as you go!

Activity time: 30-35 minutes

Welcome to the feast: 5 or less minutes

Sensual Feast Experience: 10-15 minutes depending on group

Dialogue/Processing: 15 minutes (less or more depending on group)

Space needed:

A relaxed, comfortable space, aesthetically pleasing, if possible (however, we have done this activity in a hotel ballroom). You will need room for a large table or area on the floor to arrange the materials. One *sensual feast set up* works for up to 25 participants. If your numbers are much larger, you will probably need to set up two areas. Chairs should be arranged in a circle or semi-circle with display in the middle, if possible, or close enough to chairs that you can see it while sitting.

Materials needed: Bring enough to cover your space, have at least two of each material if you are using a large space or more than one space. Make sure that the materials you choose are cross cultural or culturally relevant or significant to your audience.

- Table or sturdy boxes flipped over for display (or floor space)
- Beautifully colored fabric large enough to cover table or boxes or floor space (velvet, silk, etc.)
- Many small bowls and vessels (ceramic, glass, etc.) to hold materials
- Vase (s) for flowers
- CD player with music playing. (We have used native flute, music about nature, & music that we have discovered as having meaning to the work)
- Bees wax cut into small squares for participants to hold, mold, and keep
- Sand, Dirt
- Dried beans and seeds: lentils, dried beans (we use beautiful purple beans), flax seed, etc.
- Fresh flowers in vases
- Fresh fruit
- Bowls of water
- Good chocolate chunks with small spoon for self-serving
- Honey with coffee stirrers for tasting
- Lit candles (preferably unscented)
- Bells, drums, percussion instruments
- Toys (slinky, silly putty, play dough, rubber lizards, etc.)
- Things to do: Cat's Cradle, rubber balls to bounce, jump ropes (if there is room), etc.
- Bottles of essential oils for people to smell if they wish
(Note: we make it a point to say to participants that we are conscious that there might be folks in the group who are sensitive to these kinds of smells. Opening bottles and smelling oils...is voluntary).

- Personal family photos of children, families, life happening, nature, etc.
- Photos of people in the world (We have used the *Family of Women*, *Family of Children*, *Family of Man* black and white photo books...opened up on the table. We have also displayed books of art by women artists of color such as Frida Kahlo and Faith Ringgold.)
- Lots of things from nature: rocks, sticks, leaves, nests, feathers, shells, etc.
- Children's artwork

Description:

Welcome to the feast (5 or less minutes):

We often start a workshop off with this activity. We provide little to no introduction (unless we have to intro presenters and welcome participants). Our words for introducing this activity often sound like:

'We would like to invite you all to take some time and experience the 'sensual feast' that we have arranged in the middle of the room. We invite you try out all of your senses: there are things to see, hear, taste, smell, and feel. We acknowledge that there are probably survivors present in the room and hope that you **all** feel free to take care of yourselves...participate only if you want to, take a walk if you want to, etc. We have made efforts to contain the smells (essential oils in bottles) so that you can choose to smell if you want to, and not if you don't. After the experience, we will ask volunteers to share some of your thoughts and feelings about the experience with the group.'

Sensual Feast Experience: 10-15 minutes depending on group

Allow participants to explore the feast, put music low on the CD player, make sure candles are lit. When it feels as though everyone has finished, ask that folks move back to their seats.

Dialogue/Processing: 15 minutes (less or more depending on group)

Option One: Small Group Dialogue then Large Group Sharing (this is a good option if you have a large or tentative group)

Ask for participants to break up into small groups and share about their experience exploring the sensual feast. They can do this for 5-10 minutes depending on the size of the groups. You can use the sample questions listed in Option Two to help get participants started.

Once the groups are finished, ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts with the whole group. Again, you can use the sample questions listed below.

Option Two: Large Group Dialogue

(this is a good option to use with smaller groups or groups where participants know each other well)

After the sensual feast ends and participants are seated, begin a large group dialogue by asking these kinds of questions to the group:

*Would anyone feel comfortable sharing...
... what this experience was like for you?
...how you felt during this experience?
...what this experience brought up for you?
...what memories or thoughts you had while experiencing
different parts of the feast?*

Leading the dialogue:

The dialogue, from our experience, usually starts by people sharing about how the items in the feast (dirt, a rock, purple beans, for instance) sparked a memory or story for them. Shared stories are often about their childhood or relationships with nature. Participants often talk about feeling freed up to ‘experience sensuality’ in a way that they have not been able to for a long time. They sometimes describe a sense of ‘slowing down’ or make statements like: ‘I haven’t been that close to both grapes and dirt at the same time...since I was a kid’.

To wrap up the dialogue and conversation:

Presenters can help the group summarize the conversations, draw conclusions and recognize inferences about how sensuality is connected to connectedness and joy.

For instance, asking questions like:

- What does it tell us that this experience brought some of us back to childhood memories?
- What does this tell us that some of us felt ‘freed up’ to feel sensual in a way that we haven’t in a while?
- What does it tell us about who we have become, how we have changed, what we might be missing or disconnected from?

Using this activity in conjunction with the *Hourglass Exercise*:

This activity works best if it comes before the *Hourglass Exercise*. The *Hourglass Exercise* is designed to bring together learning and summarize a number of the WholeSomeBodies activities. With the Hourglass exercise,

during the group dialogue section of the *Sensual Feast*, one presenter should facilitate the dialogue while the other writes words in the hourglass (see Hourglass Exercise p. 40).

If you are not using this activity in conjunction with the Hourglass

Exercise: Presenters should wrap up the *Sensual Feast* by connecting the group's experience and dialogue to *sexual violence prevention*. The wrap-up should be designed to help participants recognize the difference between how we feel when we are *freed up to be sensual and experience sensuality in a broad context* versus *being constricted and shut down around connecting to our world and sensual experience*.

“If we allow children to remain connected and help youth and adults to reconnect, reclaim, or discover the sense sensuality and connection to the world around them, then we are supporting sexual health and joy. We are working to expand the definition of sexuality to include all of our senses. We are working to remove human sexuality from the narrow confines of ‘sex’. The promotion of this kind of learning is inherently sexual violence prevention”

- Ⓢ Some experiences in the sensual feast may be triggering for survivors. Be sure to clarify that these experiences are optional.

Exploring
“When I Was a Boy”
Song by Dar Williams

Objective/Purpose:

To invite participants to listen and respond to a song or piece of artwork that challenges our perceptions about gender by evoking our own personal stories.

Audience:

Ages: Adults and teens

Professions: Parent, teachers, advocates, prevention educators, survivors, non-professionals, campus educators, coaches, people working with young people.

Numbers: This is an activity that can be done with almost any size group, from 5-65. Size, however, will dictate how you facilitate the sharing of ideas afterward.

Number of presenters:

One person can take responsibility for this exercise. This exercise can also stand alone for its own varied purposes.

Time needed: 20-30 minutes

Space needed: Standard training space with chairs or comfortable seating

Materials needed:

CD of song, CD player, paper and pens for participants

Description:

Invite people to listen to Dar Williams’ song, “When I Was a Boy.” Or, choose a song or piece of art that speaks to your audience. Let them know that they will have an opportunity to write down their observations after listening or looking, and then volunteers will be asked to

share some of their responses with the group.

- Play the song or present the artwork – 6 minutes
- Allow about 5-10 minutes for people to write their observations and responses to the lyrics. How did you feel? What ideas did the song/art bring up for you? How did it relate to your own childhood or life experiences? What does it say about the idea of gender in our culture?
- Invite a few people to share their thoughts and reflections. Facilitate this conversation for 10-15 minutes depending on your agenda.
- If using this activity in conjunction with the Hourglass Exercise, add both positive and negative comments appropriately within it using black and blue markers for the negative ones and bright colors for the positive comments (see Hourglass Exercise p. 40).

Observations:

This activity provides an introductory framework for understanding some culturally-normed gender issues, and can help set the stage for the remainder of the workshop. It is also a piece of the training that can easily stand alone as an activity in a support group or in a meeting, etc.

Our experience has been that “When I Was A Boy” brings forward a lot of new and previously unexplored memories for some people. Remember, however, that this workshop has grown out of the rural state of Vermont. This particular song may not resonate so deeply with other audiences. In that case, choose a piece that is relevant and accessible to your audience. Remember, too, that talk about gender in terms of masculine **or** feminine, boy **or** girl creates constraints that bind people who do not conform to stereotypical gender roles. This exercise provides an opportunity to open up conversations about experiences that the LGBTQ community faces around gender expectations and labels.

When I Was A Boy

© Dar Williams

I won't forget when Peter Pan came to my house, took my hand
I said I was a boy; I'm glad he didn't check.
I learned to fly, I learned to fight
I lived a whole life in one night
We saved each other's lives out on the pirate's deck.

And I remember that night
When I'm leaving a late night with some friends
And I hear somebody tell me it's not safe, someone should help me
I need to find a nice man to walk me home.

When I was a boy, I scared the pants off of my Mom,
Climbed what I could climb upon,
And I don't know how I survived,
I guess I knew the tricks that all boys knew.



And you can walk me home, but, I was a boy too.
I was a kid that you would like,
Just a small boy on her bike,
Riding topless, yeah, I never cared who saw.
My neighbor came outside to say,
"Get your shirt,"
I said "no way, it's the last time
I'm not breaking any law."

And now I'm in a clothing store,
And the sign says less is more
More that's tight means more to see, more for them,
Not more for me.
That can't help me climb a tree in ten seconds flat.
When I was a boy, see that picture? That was me
Grass stained shirt and dusty knees.
And I know things have gotta change,
They got pills to sell, they've got implants to put in,
They've got implants to remove
But I am not forgetting
That I was a boy too

And like the woods where I would creep, it's a secret I can keep
Except when I'm tired, except when I'm being caught off guard
I've had a lonesome awful day, the conversation finds its way
To catching fire-flies out in the backyard.

And I tell the man I'm with about the other life I lived
And I say now you're top gun, I have lost and you have won
And he says, "Oh no, no, can't you see

When I was a girl, my mom and I we always talked
And I picked flowers everywhere that I walked.
And I could always cry, now even when I'm alone I seldom do
And I have lost some kindness
But I was a girl too.

And you were just like me, and I was just like you.

When I Was A Boy Exercise Handout

Etymology

Objective/Purpose:

To explore the root origins of the words sensuality, intimacy, erotic, and sexuality and to discuss our current cultural understanding of the words including how we've become removed from their origins.

Audience:

Age range: Adults and older teens

Professions: Parents, students, teachers, advocates, prevention educators, survivors, non-professionals, campus educators, coaches, people working with young people

Numbers of participants: Any number from 2 to 60. Group can be divided into smaller groups, depending on number of participants.

Number of presenters:

One person can lead the activity. If being used in conjunction with the Hourglass Exercise, it's helpful to have a second person who can be charged with writing relevant words and phrases on the hourglass (see Hourglass Exercise p. 40).

Time needed: 10 to 20 minutes

Space Needed: Standard training space with chairs

Materials needed: Etymology handouts, flip chart, markers

Description:

Introduction:

It may be helpful to give participants a brief introduction by explaining that it's hard to think for very long about sexual violence and how to prevent it without coming up against the problem of language. The working group that developed this exercise spent a lot of time talking about the words that we use in popular culture that relate to sexuality.

Activity:

Have participants split into pairs, depending on the group size and dynamics (with 20 or fewer, we usually do pairs, with more people, you can use small groups). Then divide the room (and the groups) into three sections.

Assign each of the three sections of the room a single word: one part of the room gets “intimacy”, another part talks about “erotic”, and the third section of the room discusses the word “sensuality”. Ask them to spend two minutes free-associating with each other about what their word evokes for them. Try asking the following questions if participants need a prompt: What’s the first thing that comes to mind when you hear this word? What does the word invoke/mean in our general popular culture?

After the pairs/groups have had a couple minutes to talk, bring them back together and ask if anyone is willing to share a few words or phrases about their group’s discussion.

After a couple of pairs/groups have shared, distribute the etymology worksheet. Ask them to quickly read it, starting with the word they considered with their partner/group.

Give them 1 to 2 minutes to read through the sheet, then ask again if anyone would like to share any reflections on what they’ve read and how it relates to their earlier discussion. You can also ask them to reflect on the etymology of the word “sexuality” and how the origin relates to the understanding that they’ve been exposed to by popular media and culture.

Observations:

Generally, groups will become quickly engaged in their conversations and may need to be reined back in to share their observations.

The handout is structured so the etymology of each word begins with older definitions and proceeds to the “American Heritage” definition. In other words, the last definition is closest to the way the current US mainstream culture defines it. Unfortunately, most of the American Heritage definitions relate to the most sterile, un-sensual, “sex” understandings of the words.

Some observations to make to the group: the roots of many of these words come from much gentler, more organic expressions. Erotic, for example, comes from a Greek god, Eros, who personified love in *all* its manifestations. Eros personified creative power and harmony. This is in sharp contrast with the American Heritage definition, which relates entirely to “dominated by sexual love or desire”.

You can discuss the origins and current understanding of the word sexuality as a group, which can provide a nice transition into the “Childhood Messages” activity (see Childhood Messages p. 36).

ETYMOLOGY

EROTIC

Eros (Columbia Encyclopedia – sixth Edition)

From Greek religion and mythology – the god of love, the personification of love in all its manifestations, including physical passion at its strongest; tender, romantic love; and playful sportive love. One of the oldest gods, he was born from Chaos and personified creative power and harmony.

erotic (Barnhart)

Borrowed from the French word *erotique*- from Greek word Eros, meaning love

erotic (American Heritage)

1. Of or concerning sexual love and desire; amatory. 2. Tending to arouse sexual desire. 3. Dominated by sexual love or desire. From the Greek *erōtikos*, from *erōs*, *erōt-*, sexual love.

INTIMACY

Latin *intimāre*, *intimāt-*, to make known, **from** *intimus*, **innermost**

intimacy (American Heritage)

1. The condition of being intimate. 2. An instance of being intimate.

intimate (American Heritage) (adjective)

1. Marked by close acquaintance, association, or familiarity. 2. Relating to or indicative of one's deepest nature: *intimate prayers*. 3. Essential; innermost: *the intimate structure of matter*. 4. Marked by informality and privacy: *an intimate nightclub*. 5. Very personal; private: *an intimate letter*. 6. Of or involved in a sexual relationship.

Latin *intimātus*, past participle of *intimāre*, to make familiar with.

intimate (transitive verb)

1. To make known subtly and indirectly; hint. 2. To announce; proclaim.

SENSUALITY

sensual (Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology)

probably dates to before 1425, carnal, unspiritual; later, pertaining to the physical senses; borrowed from middle French (sensuel) and directly from Latin sensualis – endowed with feeling, sensitive.

sensuality (Barnhart)

from Latin, meaning capacity for sensation (before 1340)

sensual (American Heritage)

1. Relating to or affecting any of the senses or a sense organ; sensory. **2a.** Of, relating to, given to, or providing gratification of the physical and especially the sexual appetites. **b.** Suggesting sexuality; voluptuous. **c.** Physical rather than spiritual or intellectual. **d.** Lacking in moral or spiritual interests; worldly

sensuality (American Heritage)

1. The quality or state of being sensual or lascivious. **2.** Excessive devotion to sensual pleasure.

SEXUALITY

sexual (1651) – borrowed from late Latin sexualis – of or pertaining to the sexes.

sexuality (Roget's)

The quality or condition of being sensual

sex (Barnhart)

(related to secare – to divide or cut)

Latin sexus – state of being either male or female, gender. The meaning of the quality of being male or female. (first recorded 1526)

sexuality (American Heritage)

1. The condition of being characterized and distinguished by sex. **2.** Concern with or interest in sexual activity. **3.** Sexual character or potency.

Etymology Exercise Handout

© *Childhood Messages*

Objective/Purpose:

To allow participants to explore the connection between the messages received about sexuality in their own childhoods and the messages they are then communicating to the next generation through parenting, prevention education or role-modeling.

Audience:

Ages: Adult

Professions: Parents, teachers, prevention educators, advocates, survivors, non-professionals, campus educators, coaches, people who work with young people.

Numbers: Works best in groups of 25 or less, although we have done it with groups as large as 60. You can also lead this activity in groups as small as 4 or 5.

Number of presenters:

One person usually takes leadership for this exercise which is an important component of the larger Hourglass Exercise. The exercise can stand alone for its own purposes.

Time needed: 30-40 minutes

Space Needed: Standard training space with chairs

Materials needed:

Flip chart, 3 markers, red, blue and black

© *Safety:*

Make it clear to the group that their participation is completely voluntary. Survivors of childhood sexual assault might not identify with some of the messages discussed in this exercise

Description:

- Divide into groups of 3-4 people to discuss the topic and then have individuals report out to the large group. If the group has already developed a comfort level with personal information sharing, or the group is very small, you can go immediately to one group. Otherwise, ask permission to do it as one group if your time is short.
- Begin by acknowledging that talking about sexuality is a challenge. This activity is actually going to let us know at least one of the big reasons we have such trouble talking about it to our children or within whatever community we are working.
- Using a black marker on a flip chart, you will already have written two questions across the top:

What messages did you get about sexuality as a child?	From whom or what?

- Draw lines under these words and down the middle of the chart. In case people are feeling uncomfortable about sharing from their experience, you can ask: "How do you think young people generally learn about sexuality in our culture?" Ask people to discuss these two questions in their small groups first, or if you are doing it in one group, ask for a courageous person to get the conversation going. Be prepared to put up an example yourself in case you have a very reluctant group (we have actually never had this happen.) Often, as people break into groups and begin talking, you will hear bouts of giggling throughout the room. This is an obvious and healthy way to deal with our embarrassment, and you can acknowledge that if it seems helpful.
- Give the groups about 10 minutes to share their stories and then begin collecting observations and recording them on the chart.
- When someone says something like, "My parents actually never said anything about sex," note that the message inherent in that idea is, "Don't talk about it." Ask how many others in the room got that message. This is an important piece of the exercise. So if it doesn't come forward independently, ask about it yourself. We have never had an audience that did not include many who received this 'no talking' message.

- If no one shares messages about sexual orientation, you can ask them about related stories directly. Most people have gotten either negative/inaccurate information through jokes and/or name-calling or have been given no information about sexual orientation which, by default, assumes that heterosexuality is the only acceptable norm.
- Although common themes might emerge that transcend diversity, be prepared for variation as well. For instance, issues of cultural oppression and inequality will most likely impact participants' experiences.
- Record the many different types of messages; healthy information, facts only, inaccurate or funny information from friends, rumors, etc.
- Ask if anyone had specific messages from their religious education. For example, some folks have reported that throughout their religious training, they were taught that sex was a sin before marriage and a duty after marriage.
- Also, make note of how old people were when they learned about sexuality. This will vary largely, often beginning from ages 11-13 through adulthood. There are people who say that they've gotten information at an earlier age and some who say they knew nothing until marriage.
- We get messages from books, magazines, jokes, soaps operas, various family members including siblings, peers, TV, movies, farm life and from sexual abuse itself.

Observations:

- With your red marker, make two large boxes on the left side of the chart, among the varied responses, maybe even overlapping some of them. Write boldly, SILENCE in one and SECRETS in the other. Note that this chart always supports these words. This is our cultural norm. People may note that this is changing and, to a degree, that may be true. However, in leading this exercise even with groups of adults all of whom were in their twenties, we have always gotten the same messages supporting silence and secrets.

- The most important learning from this exercise is this – it is this very culture of secrecy and silence that perpetrators of sexual abuse are relying upon. We hand it to them on a silver platter. But we can change. Because we have experienced such silence, it is no wonder that we speak about sexuality with insecurity and embarrassment. Understanding how silence undermines the safety of our children, we can bolster our resolve to communicate clearly, fully and appropriately.
- This is where the age question becomes important. The median age of victims of child sexual abuse is nine. For the most part, even the most responsible adults have not broached the subject of sexuality with their children at this age. So, these victims learn about sexuality through abuse – unconscionable given what we now know! We encourage people to begin the conversation early. Preschool children should be able to name all body parts, including genitals by their proper names. Additionally, they should have permission to use this language comfortably. We must end the silence. A perpetrator is not going to find a child who is comfortable talking about sexuality a safe target for abuse – s/he talks! This quotation from a sexual perpetrator makes this horribly clear, “Show me a child who knows nothing about sexuality, and you’ve just introduced me to my next victim.”

End the silence!

Using in conjunction with the Hourglass Exercise:

When using this activity as part of the more comprehensive Hourglass Exercise, you would add the words ‘silence’ and ‘secrets’ to the hourglass chart using black and blue markers just outside the middle of the hourglass diagram. Within the small center and around that same area, add any other negative words you hear when people share. We got the idea of making these negative words in black and blue because the hourglass looks like the figure of a woman. And in the days of middle-cinching corsets, women often became bruised. Restrictive and unhealthy messages about the full expression of sexuality can leave anyone spiritually and emotionally bruised as well (see Hourglass Exercise p. 40).

© Hourglass



Objective/Purpose:

To illustrate both the positive and negative messages that we get about sexuality. And, to show that, while the negative messages restrict and bind us, the positive messages still can make it through. This exercise is an excellent way to bring a workshop together, but it can also be used alone to make a point quickly.

Audience:

Age range: Teens through Adults

Professions: Parents, students, teachers, advocates, prevention educators, survivors, non-professionals, campus educators, coaches, people working with young people

Number of Presenters: Two or more

© *Safety*

Remind the audience that their participation is voluntary and keep in mind that survivors of childhood sexual assault or other forms of violence may not identify with some of the messages brought up during this exercise.

Time Needed:

Prep Time:

5 minutes for gathering materials needed and drawing the hourglass

Time Needed to Complete Activity: This exercise can be done in 15 minutes if you use it after the “Silence and Secrets” activity because you will have the brainstorm recorded from that exercise. If you use it alone, you will need to get more information from your audience, 25 minutes would be necessary.

NOTE: It is best to do this exercise after doing *Silence and Secrets* so you can write the responses to the question “What messages did you get about sexuality as a child?” into the hourglass. You can also use the thoughts the audience produced from processing “When I Was a Boy” and the

“Sensual Feast” and add them directly to the hourglass while you are facilitating those exercises.

Materials Needed:

Writing Surface

Markers- make sure black, blue and two other colors are available

Description:

Step 1

Draw an hourglass with black marker large enough to write 20-30 words in both ends on your writing surface.

Step 2

If you have done “silence and secrets” use the responses here. If not, ask “what messages did you get about sexuality when you were younger?”

- write responses that are “good/joyful” in a bright color towards the top of the hourglass
- write responses that are “bad/negative” in black and blue around the middle of the hourglass (the narrow part)

Step 3

Processing Hourglass: 15min

Ask what the audience notices about the hourglass (you are prompting them to observe the negative things are around the middle and they are constricting and that the positive things are there too).

POINTS TO MAKE:

- Negative messages constrict our sexuality and our joy.
- Like hourglass sand trickling through, positive messages and emotions about sexuality are there.
- Even if we didn’t have a positive influence as a kid or if we are survivors of violence, we can still access these positive things. We can change our perceptions of sexuality now, because we’ve all experienced the negative messages -we can break through the silence and secrets. This is a reminder that sexuality is bigger than *sexual intercourse*. Sensual connection to the world can be a window into reclaiming sexuality.
- We can expect and build joy and a fuller sense of sexuality in our relationships.
- If time allows, try filling in the bottom of the hourglass with brainstormed ideas of ways that participants can personally and professionally expand their lives and work to include *WholeSomeBodies*.

Flag Making

Objective/Purpose:

Participants will become aware of what brings their bodies joy on the most fundamental level by making flags with cloth, paint and markers. Participants will be able to keep their flags as a reminder to celebrate their connection to their bodies and to the world.

Audience:

Age range: This activity can be modified easily for all ages from three years to adults.

Numbers of participants: Flag making lends itself well to small and large group workshops, support groups, and with children's groups. It also works well as a booth event for children and adults at community events and fairs.

Number of Presenters: Two or more

Time Needed:

Prep time:

Gathering materials: Initial time is needed to gather and purchase the materials, cut cloth into flag shapes, and pin cloth onto sticks. If you have a longer time with participants, you could have them cut and pin the clothes as part of their activity.

Set up: Set up can take up to do minutes depending on the room layout (if you need to set up tables, etc.)

Activity time:

Workshop setting: 30-45 minutes

Welcome to the activity, instructions: 5-10 minutes

Flag Making: 10-20 minutes depending on group, whether participants are constructing flags as well as writing and painting on them.

Dialogue/Processing: 15 minutes (less or more depending on group)

Community Fair setting: Individual

If you are doing this at a community fair, participants come along and make their flags individually instead of in a group. Individuals can take anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes to make their flags.

Space Needed:

Work Space: The space should be large enough to comfortably allow participants to make their flags individually. Covered tables or hard floor space should be provided as workspace.

Drying Space: There should be large space set aside for flags to dry away from other activities. A bucket of sand works nicely. You should allow at least 20 minutes of drying time before taking flags to their next homes.

Materials Needed:

- White or beige cotton cloth cut into pennant shapes (about 13 inches long)
- Sticks or wooden dowels (about 18 inches)
- Small safety pins (two per flag) to attach stick to cloth
- Permanent dark colored, medium point markers
- Watered down tempera or poster paint in a variety of colors
- Jars, buckets, or containers for paints (preferably re-sealable so that you can save the paint)
- Water
- Paint brushes 2-3 inches in width with long handles
- Hand wipes
- Protective materials:
 - Table or floor coverings (plastic table clothes work well)
 - Paper towels
 - Smocks in you want
- Wet rags and towels for cleaning up

Description:

Welcome to the activity, instructions: 5-10 minutes

Presenters introduce flag making as a fun activity that helps us become aware of what brings us joy on the most fundamental level. Participants will be able to keep their flags home as a reminder to celebrate their connection to their bodies and to the world.

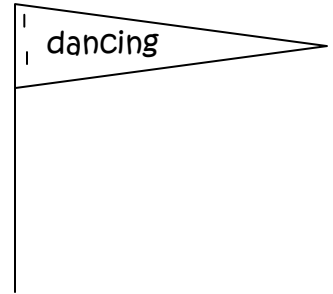
Presenters then ask participants to take a moment to think about this guiding question:

“What are you doing when your body is the happiest?”

Presenters then give instructions for making the flags (see below).

Flag Making: 10-20 minutes depending on group

- **Constructing flags (can be done ahead of time):** Attach the flat short end of the cloth triangle to the top of the stick or dowel by rolling it and pinning it with two safety pins.
- **Writing on flags:** Participants are encouraged to come up with a one or two word answer for the guiding question and write it on their flag cloth with a permanent marker. The question is:
“What are you doing when your body is the happiest?”
- **Painting flags:** Participants are then encouraged to paint their flags with the paints and brushes provided. The paint should be watery so that colors can blend together.



Dialogue/Processing: 15 minutes (less or more depending on group)

Presenters can be creative and flexible about this part of the activity.

- Participants could each be asked to present their flags as a ‘go around’ talking a little about the words on their flags, how it felt to make their flag, where they will hang it, etc.
- You can also incorporate a sharing about the flags into the ending of a day long workshop.
 - Have participants show their flag to others and talk about how they answered the question.
 - Take your flags outside and create a temporary piece of artwork. For instance, a spiral. To do this, bring your flags outside, join hands and make a circle. After the circle is made, one person drops their hands and leads the circle into a spiral (moving into the middle layer by layer. Once the first person is in the middle, everyone drops hands and places their flag on the ground or sticking out of the snow or dirt. The first person can then double back slowly leading the group back out of the spiral. This way, everyone can see each other’s flags.

Endings

Letters to self

Hand out an envelope and a piece of paper to each participant. Ask them to address the envelope to themselves. Invite participants to write themselves a note. You can suggest that the note contain thoughts and feeling that relate to their experience in the workshop. These can be thoughts about insights, reminders about how to incorporate Joyful Sexuality into their work, anything that is meaningful. Invite participants to put a little something from the *Sensual Feast* display into the envelope and seal it (a bean, some dirt, etc.). Trainers take the envelopes, post them, and send them to participants about a month or so later.

Poetry, Quotes, Readings

Find poetry, quotes or readings that relate to WholeSomeBodies. Reading one of these pieces can be a centering ending for a workshop.

Here is one that we sometimes read:

“...When we live outside ourselves, and by that I mean on external directives only rather than from our internal knowledge and needs, when we live away from those erotic guides from within ourselves, then our lives are limited by external and alien forms, and we conform to the needs of a structure that is not based on human need, let alone an individual’s. But when we begin to live from within outward, in touch with the power of erotic within ourselves, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us, then we begin to be responsible for ourselves in the deepest sense. For as we begin to recognize our deepest feelings, we begin to give up, of necessity, being satisfied with suffering and self-negation, and with the numbness which so often seems like the only alternative in our society. Our acts against oppression become integral with self, motivated and empowered from within.”

-Riane Eisler,
Sacred Pleasure (1995)
quoting
Audre Lorde (1984)

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Sacred Pleasure
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Ending Quote Handout

Flag Making/Sharing

If you plan to do the Flag Making Exercise in your workshop, you can incorporate a sharing about the flags into an ending.

- Have participants show their flag to others and talk about how they answered the question.
- Take your flags outside and create a temporary piece of artwork. For instance, a spiral.

To make a spiral, bring your flags outside, join hands while holding your flags and make a circle. After the circle is made, one person drops their hands and leads the circle into a spiral (moving into the middle layer by layer. Once the first person is in the middle, everyone drops hands and places their flag on the ground or sticking out of the snow or dirt. The first person can then double back slowly leading the group back out of the spiral. This way, everyone can see each other's flags.

It is nice to sing or chant as you make the spiral. Choose a song that you think is appropriate to the group. Some ideas are:

Chant:

"The earth the air the fire the water; return, return, return, return"

Songs:

In the Circle of the Sun by Sally Rogers

Ⓢ *Physical Centering Exercises*

Exercise #1 – Physical Centering

Goal:

To have participants engage in limited movement to ground themselves in the moment, feel centered and connected to their physical environment and to further encourage the self-care that they have engaged in throughout the workshop.

Activity:

- Ask participants to stand or sit up as tall as they can – whatever is most comfortable for them. If they're comfortable, they can close their eyes.
- Ask them to rock slightly back and forth and around in circles until they feel their bodies coming to a place where they feel the most balanced. Encourage them to roll their heads around in a circle, and bring them to a place where they feel the most supported – imagine a

string from the crown of your head going up into the sky. Ask them to hunch their shoulders up and then roll them back, opening up space in their chests and feeling tension roll away down their backs. Ask them to relax their jaws, their necks, their shoulders, arms, stomachs, legs, and feet. Then encourage them to breathe deeply in this posture, just letting their body relax.

- Ask them to contemplate how they are physically connected to the space where they're standing/sitting. If they'd like, they can imagine that they have roots shooting out from their feet that ground them to the earth's energy, and branches from the top of their heads stretching out toward the sky and the healing light of the sun and moon. Remind them of how much their bodies are able to do for them every day - they take us wonderful places, they take in nourishing food and turn it into energy, they allow us to touch and smell and drink in all the sensual feasts that surround us, they support us in our work and our play. Sometimes our bodies groan and complain when we overwork them or when we don't pay enough attention to them. Encourage them to appreciate all that their physical self does for them, and to take time to feel the many ways in which we are grounded and connected to our environment.
- When participants feel ready, they can reopen their eyes and/or refocus their attention back into the room. Encourage them to take that centeredness and appreciation with them as they travel back out into the world.

Exercise #2 - Observe

Observe your breath; don't purposefully try to change it. Just observe your breathing in and out for the next two minutes.

Exercise #3 - Notice

Restrict your breath by holding it and just letting in a tiny bit through your nose. As you breathe in this way what do you notice? Now take a big deep breath and let it out with a deep sigh. Do this slowly and gently 5 times. Now what do you notice? When we constrict our breathing it affects our entire well-being. It is the opposite of openness and relaxation. When we have rigid thinking or insistence that things must be a certain way, it affects us in the same way.

@ Safety

Remind the audience that their participation is voluntary and keep in mind that survivors may not be comfortable with aspects of this exercise.

Everybody Needs a Rock Activity

Spread out on the Sensual Feast table enough small rocks for every participant plus several extras. They will be providing another beautiful collection of objects at this point. You can choose smoothed rocks, striped rocks or even purchased tumbled rocks. Rocks from their natural habitat appeal to many as better representatives of both Baylor's book and the Sensual Feast idea, but if obtaining them is difficult because of your location, you can use the tumbled stones.

As a closing of a workshop or a day long event, read aloud Byrd Baylor's book Everybody Needs a Rock. You may have to skip some pages for timing's sake. Instruct the participants that while you are reading the book they can come up to the table to choose a rock as they feel inspired. If you have a very large group, you may suggest that only 5-6 people be at the table at one time.

Suggest that the rock can be a reminder of their experience either with the WholeSomeBodies presentation itself, or some part of the larger workshop if that's applicable.

Optional: People can write a word on their rock that will serve to remind them of the day. Use a permanent marker, maybe silver or gold. At the end, ask participants to share something they have enjoyed and/or found helpful about the experience to share with others.

Additional Activities

There are many activities that groups can insert into trainings or workshops that are not formally explained as exercises. These are activities that the original workgroup found inspirational during their initial exploration.

- Finger-painting
- Reading poetry or passages and free writing
- Listening to music and songs
- Sharing family pictures
- Telling stories of childhood or about daughters and sons
- Playing in the sand
- Cooking and eating
- Finding things in nature to share
- Taking walks

Resources

Advocates For Youth: www.advocatesforyouth.org

Established in 1980 as the Center for Population Options, Advocates for Youth champions efforts to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Advocates believes it can best serve the field by boldly advocating for a more positive and realistic approach to adolescent sexual health.

SEICUS: www.seicus.org

SIECUS-the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States-has served as the national voice for sexuality education, sexual health, and sexual rights for almost 40 years.

SIECUS believes that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of life and that all people have the right to the information, skills, and services they need to make responsible sexual decisions.

The Website has many helpful documents available for download. One document that we referred to during our work is entitled: *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education Kindergarten - 12th Grade, Second Edition*. <http://www.siecus.org/pubs/guidelines/guidelines.pdf>

Planned Parenthood Of Northern New England: www.ppnne.org

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) is the largest reproductive health care and sexuality education provider and advocate in northern New England. PPNNE was founded in 1965 and now has 26 health centers across Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Their mission is to provide, promote, and protect access to reproductive health care and sexuality education so that all people can make voluntary choices about their reproductive and sexual health.

PPNNE's training department is known for delivering outstanding workshops and trainings. Their professional workshops focus on how to expand our knowledge and skills and become more comfortable, confident, and competent when working with students or clients around issues of sexuality.

Training department: www.ppnne.org/trainings

Care for Kids – a child sexual abuse prevention curriculum

This is a comprehensive Canadian curriculum for preschoolers. The curriculum includes a training of teachers, care providers and parents who then incorporate the children's curriculum into settings. The content of the curriculum is based on giving *healthy messages* rather than *fear-based messages* to young children. An additional curriculum is available for children K-6 grades.

Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit
Brockville, Ontario K6V7A3 613-345-5685

National Sexual Violence Resource Center: www.nsvrc.org

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) is a comprehensive collection and distribution center for information, statistics, and resources related to sexual violence. It serves as a resource for state, territory, and tribal anti-sexual assault coalitions, rape crisis centers, allied organizations, community projects, policy-makers, government entities, media, educators, health care providers and others working to address and eliminate sexual assault.

Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA): The National Women of Color Leadership Project: www.connsacs.org

c/o Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.
96 Pitken Street
East Hartford, CT 06108
Phone: 860-282-9881; Fax: 860-291-9335

The National Women of Color Leadership Project is a Department of Justice funded initiative to identify, train, and support Women of Color in attaining or maintaining leadership positions at state and territorial sexual assault coalitions. The Connecticut Sexual Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) and the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NYSCASA) coordinate this Leadership Project. The steering committee of the Project has adopted the name Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA), to reflect a long-term goal of ensuring that women of color are given an opportunity to influence and affect system-wide responses and social change initiatives related to sexual assault. Therefore, going forward, the Leadership Project will be referred to as SCESA: The National Women of Color Leadership Project and will strive to ensure

continuity and build long-term recognition with women of color in the anti-sexual assault movement.

Arte Sana/ALAS: www.arte-sana.com/arte_sana

Arte Sana History

In February 2001, a small group of concerned artists and victim rights advocates based in Austin, TX, met to reflect on existing racial and ethnic disparities within the victim service field, and the historical predominance of art as a vehicle for expression, education, and healing. After several deliberations, an organization was formed under the name Arte Sana (art heals) and the preliminary steps towards developing a nonprofit were set into motion.

About ALAS

The *Alianza Latina en Contra la Agresión Sexual* or ALAS, (Latina Alliance Against Sexual Aggression) is a national Latina professional resource-sharing group that focuses on cultural competency, bilingual material development, training and policy issues related to underserved Latina survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence. ALAS members have a collective experience of over 25 years in the anti-violence field and the majority of them have bilingual skills that include speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish. As Latina advocates of varying ages, levels of experience, personal backgrounds, and specific Latina cultural origins, we celebrate the diversity within our culture and are committed to help make risk reduction and victim service information more accessible to Spanish-speaking Latina/os.

National Sexuality Resource Center: www.nsrc.sfsu.edu

The National Sexuality Resource Center gathers and disseminates the latest accurate information and research on sexual health, education, and rights. Through active outreach to advocates, academics, researchers, policy makers, and diverse communities, NSRC initiates constructive dialogues – both online and face-to-face – on sexuality to promote social justice and improve the quality of life in the United States.

WHOLESOEMBODIES WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Your feedback is very important to us – these workshops are a work in progress and they will continue to evolve based on your input. Please feel free to be candid. And please check the box at the bottom if it's okay for us to use your comments anonymously in preparing for future workshops and in our materials. Thank you!

What was your experience of this workshop (how did you feel about it)?

Did any part of the workshop especially appeal to you or inspire you? _____
Please describe:

Did any part of the workshop change the way you think about sexuality or sexual violence prevention? _____
Please describe:

Was any part of the workshop particularly difficult for you? _____
Please describe:

Did you feel safe in the environment that the presenters created? _____
Please describe:

On the back, please share any general comments **and** ideas for songs, poetry, or activities that you think might enhance this workshop and support the *WholeSomeBodies* approach to sexual violence prevention.

May we share your comments anonymously with the WholeSomeBodies working group and on our materials? If yes, please check the box below:

THANK YOU!

Evaluation Handout

What Workshop Participants Have to Say...

Professionally, incorporating WholeSomeBodies thinking into my work was an important part of sustaining myself in this work. We spend so much time on the negative that it can be overwhelming. Taking time to look at the positive, at the 'what could be', was a crucial step in reframing my thinking and recommitting myself to anti-violence work.
- Sexual Violence Advocate

I am going to share this to empower the women in my family. Their silence about sexuality has crushed their joy of sexuality. – Participant at WholeSomeBodies Training of Trainers

I had a ball at WholeSomeBodies. I wrote poetry... was in my journal the entire weekend (after the workshop). It was so eye opening, it was so encouraging, it was so inspirational, it was fabulous. I've had so many ideas since then...about how to make this work for other groups. I am going to do this workshop for women of color from NYC. Absolutely incredible. - Domestic and Sexual Violence Youth Educator

I found the workshop a peaceful spiritual approach to sexual violence prevention work. My awareness of my senses increased dramatically during the workshop and that experience has stayed with me. The outcome of the workshop has reminded me of how precious our sense of self is, particularly regarding sexual issues. It is the most intimate part of each of us and to have it violated reaches deep within us. I will incorporate the message into my teen dating violence program...presentations and support groups.
- Advocate/Educator Participant at Training of Trainers

I'd had very little exposure to working with sexual violence prevention in an educative manner (previously worked as a therapist), and no training regarding sexuality as a whole. The experience reinforced my own beliefs/pursuit of education about sexuality as another aspect of being human and "in life" - a healthy, positive expression of who we are as individuals. Our WholeSomeBodies experience has already translated into...programming for healthy relationships/sexual relationships week and programming for Women's Wellness Week. - Director for Health Promotions for University of Vermont Students, Participant at Training of Trainers

*We recently used the **Sensual Feast** (exercise) during our winter Volunteer Training to talk about 'wellness'. After experiencing the feast, we talked about what it was like for us which lead to a conversation about taking care of ourselves. We followed this up with a letter writing exercise in which participants made a 'wellness pledge' or reminder to themselves. They really seemed to enjoy the exercise!* – Sexual Violence Advocate