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# Small Group Book Clubs for Urban Adolescent Girls of Color: A School Counseling Intervention

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Small Group Book Clubs for Urban Adolescent  
Girls of Color:  
A School Counseling Intervention  
by  
Star L. Zetocha  
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Star L. Zetocha

## **Abstract**

Research shows that urban adolescent girls of color lack safe spaces to explore issues of identity and improve self-esteem. Counseling interventions that encourage ethnic identity exploration have been shown to increase self-esteem, and a deeper understanding of one's ethnic identity has been shown to serve as a protective factor against microaggressions and other forms of discrimination. School counselors should foster identity development as a component of the comprehensive school counseling program. Book clubs are an effective means to foster identity and self-esteem development in urban adolescent girls. This project is a guide to be used by urban high school counselors to facilitate small group books clubs for adolescent girls of color. It fills a need by being a ready-to-use plan that counselors, already burdened with high student-to-counselor ratios, can utilize in their schools with little planning on their parts, and it helps urban adolescent girls of color build protective factors against the stressors in their lives.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Problem Statement**

Urban adolescent girls of color lack safe spaces and opportunities to explore issues of identity and improve self-esteem. Urban students grow up in “communities that are routinely associated with high crimes rates, violence, and few educational and occupational opportunities” (Lindsay-Dennis, Cummings, & McClendon, 2011, p. 67). Additionally, urban girls of color “often experience early sexual encounters, teenage pregnancy, increased adult responsibilities, and victimization...[and] grow up in a sexist and racist society” (Lindsay-Dennis et al., 2011, p. 67). At school, the classroom environment and culturally irrelevant pedagogies do not provide opportunities for students to engage in conversations that encourage identity development (Cholewa, Goodman, West-Olatunji, & Amatea, 2014), and if opportunities for such conversations do arise, female students often do not perceive the setting as a safe one for speaking openly (Wissman, 2011). Urban adolescent girls need interventions that foster identity development and improve self-esteem.

### **Importance and Rationale of the Project**

Urban girls of color face intersectional societal oppression based on race, gender, poverty, and other factors. Furthermore, the school environment often leaves female students feeling disempowered. Sexist, body-shaming dress codes (Pomerantz, 2007) and pervasive sexual harassment (Hill & Kearl, 2011) threaten girls’ body-image, self-esteem, and perceived and actual level of safety at school, which can lead to depression, attendance problems, and academic difficulties. Urban

girls of color face even further alienation “due to traditional curricula, pedagogical practices, and culturally irrelevant texts” (Polleck, 2010b, p. 104), and show lower levels of resiliency and higher discontent at school (Dierker, Solomon, Johnson, Smith, & Farrel, 2004) than their peers. Unfortunately, though the benefits of incorporating culturally relevant literature into curricula have long been known (Brooks, 2006), such literature is often relegated to special elective classes, and frequently the classroom environment does not provide girls with a high enough sense of emotional safety to engage in the types of conversations that lead to positive social/emotional growth (Wissman, 2011).

Interventions that address the social/emotional needs of urban students are important because “within low-income urban communities there is a confluence of economic constraints, under-resourced schools, and exposure to community violence that all work to impede the learning process” (Grant et al., 2014, p. 222). Per Dell’Angelo (2016), “race and class often marginalize students in impoverished urban neighborhoods, a reality that is evident in consistently low student achievement in many...[urban] schools” (p. 245). This systemic oppression impacts urban students nationwide, and girls of color also face intersectional discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). For these reasons, school counselors should provide interventions that allow urban girls of color the opportunity to build-up their self-esteem and identity, both of which serve as protective factors within the school and community environments.

The American School Counseling Association’s (ASCA; 2016) ethics charge school counselors with not only delivering comprehensive programs that reach all students, but to specifically serve as “social-justice advocates for students...from all backgrounds and circumstances” (p. 1). Also, students are entitled to “receive

the...support needed to move toward self-determination, self-development and affirmation within one's group identities...[especially] students who have been historically underserved in educational services" (ASCA, 2016, p. 1). School counselors work with students in the domains of academic, career, and social/emotional development. Thus, interventions that foster positive identity development and self-esteem (both of which align with student mindset and behavior standards upon which comprehensive programs are based) fit precisely into the school counselor's realm. Promoting racial, gender or other identity development does not fall within the curricular standards upon which teachers base their class work. Counselors, though, are qualified to do so, and encouraging identity development should be an integral part of a comprehensive school counseling program.

### **Background of the Project**

The link between self-esteem and emotional well-being cannot be emphasized enough. Self-esteem is a "key indicator of psychological well-being" (Clay, Vignoles, & Dittmar, 2005, p. 451). Self-esteem is lowest (and consistently so) during adolescence, especially for girls (Erol & Orth, 2011; Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010). High self-esteem has been shown to help adolescents of color avoid risky behaviors involving drugs and sex (Wheeler, 2010), lower the risk of depression (Orth, Robins, & Roberts, 2008), and promote subjective well-being (Vacek, Coyle, & Vera, 2010). Essentially, high self-esteem serves as a protective factor for students of color against various threats at home, in their communities, and at school (Luster & McAdoo, 1995). Urban girls of color experience marginalization not only because of race or ethnicity, but also because of their low socioeconomic level, their status (often) as the children of single parents, their past experiences with trauma and violence, and other aspects of personal identity.

The impact of perceived discrimination on the lives of adolescents is daunting. Acts of discrimination batter adolescents' self-esteem, and "racial discrimination...is a pervasive stressor in the daily lives of many adolescents" (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000, p. 690).

Perceived discrimination has also been linked to depression in adolescents (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007; Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008). In school, students of color encounter microaggressions more frequently than outright discrimination, and racial and ethnic microaggressions "are associated with elevated levels of anxiety, anger, and stress" (Huynh, 2012, p. 831). Importantly, Ayres and Leaper (2012) found that girls of color with high self-esteem who experienced discrimination were more likely to reach out for assistance and support from others, indicating that high self-esteem also positively relates to self-advocacy. Adolescents of color with high self-esteem cope better with discrimination than those with low self-esteem (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2008), and have better behavioral and academic outcomes (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). Clearly, self-esteem plays a significant role in the overall well-being of all adolescents, and for adolescents from marginalized groups high self-esteem can serve as a protective factor.

Identity is also vital to the development of adolescents. Indeed, "identity helps shape a teenager's sense of who she is becoming in the world—her choices, her behavior, and her relationships" (Johnson, 2014, p. 27). The identity development of urban adolescent girls of color "is complex because of race, gender, and class marginalization" (Johnson, 2014, p. 28). Because of the nature of test-driven educational practices, students are often denied the opportunity to engage in the types of activities that help inform their identities, and most classrooms do not feel like safe spaces to engage in

identity-building conversations. Warin and Muldoon (2009) posited that “the ability to know ourselves is an essential tool for life” (p. 298), and adolescence is the time when girls begin to define their identity.

For adolescents of color, the process of identity development is complicated by their feelings about their racial or ethnic background, including negative stereotypes about them that they may have internalized. Essentially, for these students:

...there is an additional layer of complexity involved as they must not only negotiate the identity formation process in terms of interpersonal relationships and occupations, but must also contend with their minority group status within the majority culture and define how this cultural aspect of their identity informs who they are and who they will become. (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007, p. 552)

Adolescents who engage in racial and ethnic identity-building are more adept at self-advocacy and have higher self-esteem than those who do not (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007).

School counselors must demonstrate multicultural competency as they deliver programs that focus on bringing about equity and systemic change, and providing opportunities for marginalized groups to work on identity-building fits within that scope. As a group marginalized by race, ethnicity, gender, and other factors, urban girls of color need their school counselors to help them “better understand how being a member of a marginalized group impacts their life experiences, political representation, and opportunities for advancement” (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016, p. 178). Counselors can promote positive identity development by proactively delivering social/emotional interventions that encourage adolescents to explore issues of identity, particularly urban adolescent girls of color who face intersectional oppression.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to create a plan for counselors to use to set up and facilitate in-school book clubs for urban adolescent girls of color. Prior research has shown that book clubs can effectively address the social/emotional needs of urban girls (Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Polleck, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b; Polleck & Epstein, 2015; Wissman, 2011). Book clubs also benefit urban girls as safe spaces to talk about issues of gender, race, poverty, and other identities without the constrictions of a traditional classroom environment, as well as allowing them to find power in their individual narratives (Boston & Baxley, 2007; Fisher, 2006).

Lloyd (2006) demonstrated how book discussions “have the potential to disrupt the reenactment of gender, race, and class hierarchies often implied in more traditional classroom pedagogies” (p. 31). For girls of color, who have historically been suppressed from engaging with and relating to canonical classroom literature (Carter, 2007), book clubs can serve as spaces where they are encouraged to engage with culturally relevant texts on a personal level, bringing their own stories into the discussions, thus developing more profound understandings of personal identity and power, while building self-esteem (Boston & Baxley, 2007; Fisher, 2006; Lapp & Fisher, 2009).

According to Sutherland (2005), “young people ‘try on’ multiple and often conflicting roles or identities as they work to find a place in the world through their reading and discussion of literature” (p. 369). By reading culturally relevant young adult texts and discussing them in a safe space, urban girls of color can find power in the various facets of their identities. The shared experiences of discrimination, poverty, racial stereotypes, and other factors are illuminated by the texts and explored by the girls

in their discussions. Thus, they will build not only pride in their forming identity, but also develop a deeper understanding of their values and beliefs.

Interventions that encourage self-esteem and identity development are crucial, as both high self-esteem and a strong sense of one's identity serve as protective factors against the personal, family, and community challenges students face. The benefits of boosting self-esteem are compelling. Therefore, this bibliotherapy intervention intends, in part, to improve girls' self-esteem. Vacek et al. (2010) indicated that "to enhance the self-esteem of low-income, urban, minority adolescents, counselors should engage in culturally relevant types of interventions by promoting positive aspects of identity, such as ethnic and racial identity" (p. 109). A book club is by nature communal, and the concept of it as a safe space for urban girls of color to express themselves freely and talk about issues relevant to their lives will be empowering.

Bibliotherapy has been shown to boost the self-esteem of adolescents (Karakan & Guneri, 2010), as well as their understanding of individual identity (Polleck & Epstein, 2015). As students discuss texts, they will relate them to their own lives and experiences, find support as they work on identity-building, and receive validation and empathy from their peers. Per Parsons and Nord (2013), bibliotherapy used in groups:

...offers a nonthreatening way for students to clarify feelings, validate emotions and objectively experience and cope with current and future issues relevant to their lives. It offers school counselors and students a way to initiate dialogue on a difficult topic when characters in the book are facing and overcoming the same problem students may be facing. Students are often more apt to discuss an extremely painful situation when it is happening to another person, especially if that other person is a fictional one, such as the main character. (p. 12)

Thus, group bibliotherapy is an appropriate method for girls to engage in the types of conversations they may be reluctant to have in other school settings, find support from one another and their counselor, and increase their sense of identity and self-esteem.

Urban adolescent girls experience intersectional discrimination in addition to the aforementioned stressors that characterize their neighborhoods and families. Wissman (2008) stressed that “urban schools are often contexts in which students are beset with silencing, surveillance, decontextualized curricula, and low expectations...[which] present distinct and critical challenges to young women in particular” (p. 341). A book club operating as a safe space can allow girls to “resist the politics of silencing” (Wissman, 2008) so they can find their individual and collective voices. Since a defined sense of identity and higher self-esteem serve as protective factors against myriad threats to their educational attainment and well-being, interventions that focus on those areas are sorely needed. Book clubs, when set up as safe spaces within urban high schools, can provide forums for girls of color to grow from literature discussions in ways they cannot with the traditional classroom.

### **Objectives of the Project**

The objective of this project is to improve urban adolescent girls’ self-esteem and sense of identity so they can cope better with stressors in their lives. Measurement scales will be used for pre- and post-tests, including the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and Phinney’s (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). If the objectives are met, post-test results will show that the participating girls have higher self-esteem and a higher score on the MEIM than they did prior to the intervention.

The book club will address multiple ASCA (2014a) Mindset and Behavior standards, which are research-based. These standards represent the attitudes, skills, and

knowledge that students need to be successful in school and life. Two mindset standards (ASCA, 2014a) will be addressed: Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional, and physical well-being (mindset standard one), and self-confidence in ability to succeed (mindset standard two). The books chosen for this book club are expected to bring up discussions about selfhood, and activities that go along with the discussions are intended to highlight the importance of and ways to maintain well-being in all its forms. Additionally, it is anticipated that as the girls build self-esteem, they will become more confident in their abilities to handle various situations that may have otherwise increased their levels of stress.

One self-management skill (ASCA, 2014a) will be addressed: Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem (self-management skill seven). The texts used in the intervention are expected to lead to discussions about how the girls would act if they were in the characters' shoes, as well as conversations about ways they have acted in the past when confronted with similar problems. The girls will be encouraged to share how they cope with problems and whether they or the characters in the books coped effectively.

Finally, three Social Skills (ASCA, 2014a) will be addressed: Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (social skill one), create positive and supportive relationships with other students (social skill two), and demonstrate empathy (Social Skill Four). As the book club will be driven by the girls' conversations, they will be expected to speak and listen appropriately to maintain the club as a safe space. Group norms that are set at the beginning of the club will require the girls to think about why the way they speak and listen can make others feel safe or threatened. The school counselor, as group facilitator, will be expected to teach the girls what a safe space

is, reinforce the importance of the group norms at the beginning of each meeting, and guide the discussions using provided questions intended to provoke meaningful dialogue.

The communal nature of the book club will bring the girls together in ways they perhaps will not anticipate at the beginning. As they talk collectively about their experiences and their feelings about the books, they are expected to bond in ways that create powerful friendships and alliances. It is hoped that demonstrations of empathy will be one of the hallmarks of the experience. Listening to others' share painful experiences, or reading about them, will require the girls to show empathy to one another. All of these standards are essential for positive social/emotional development (ASCA, 2014a).

### **Definition of Terms**

*Bibliotherapy* – “The use of reading to produce affective change and to promote personality growth and development” (Lenkowsky, 1987, p. 123).

*Book club* – A small group of students who meet regularly to freely discuss selected texts, their personal responses to the texts, and how the texts inform their own ideas of self.

*Identity* – One's cognitive understanding of one's total self and individuality.

*Microaggressions* – “Interpersonal interactions that relay subtle messages about group status and devaluation” (Huynh, 2012, p. 840).

*Protective factors* - Characteristics of the individual, family, or community that “enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes and lessen the likelihood of negative consequences from exposure to risk” (Jessor, Turbin, & Costa, 1998, p. 195).

*Safe space* – This project uses the Advocates for Youth (2005) definition of a safe space:

A place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability; a place where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to respect others. (Glossary)

*Self-esteem* – One's emotional attitude towards oneself, either positive or negative. Self-esteem is personally evaluative (Rosenberg, 1965).

*Young adult (YA) literature* – Literary works (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, graphic novels, etc.) written for and marketed to adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 (Cart, 2008).

### **Scope of the Project**

This project is to be used with urban adolescent girls of color. The project is a ready-to-use guide for school counselors at the high school level to use to facilitate book clubs for urban adolescent girls of color. The central aim of this project is that each girl, upon the wrap-up of the book club, will show marked improvement in her self-esteem and sense of identity. No formal guide, complete with specific contemporary texts, exists for a school counseling intervention of this nature for this population, so this project is innovative.

This project includes guidelines for establishing the book club as a safe space (including duration of the group, student agreement, parent letter, length of meetings, ideal number of students, and suggested group norms), discussion prompts for each

meeting of the group, and lists of the issues addressed by each specific text. It will also include documents and scales used for evaluation purposes. This project will not include suggestions for how girls should be invited to the book club, nor will it provide guidelines for funding book clubs.

This project cannot account for every possible sensitive direction discussions may go. Part of creating a safe space is allowing the girls the freedom to talk about things they cannot normally talk about in a classroom setting, and reinforcing notions of privacy (the concept of what is said in book club, stays in book club). At the same time, school counselors are bound by ethics, laws, and administrative rules, and book club participants should be made aware that certain issues (admissions of abuse, threats of suicide, or threats of harm to another individual) must be acted upon by the counselor for the safety of all involved; it is imperative that counselors obtain informed consent from each participant. The girls must also be informed that although they will be expected to maintain the confidentiality of the other girls, because of the group nature of the book club, that level of confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

One limitation that could influence the implementation of this project is the cost associated with obtaining multiple copies of texts so each girl has a book to use, though that can be remedied by seeking donations from publishers or working with the school's media center (if available) to obtain multiple copies of each book. Another possible limitation is that girls who may benefit from it might not find reading enjoyable or may not be at a Lexile level high enough to read the books selected, and they may decline to participate. This challenge can be remedied possibly by providing recordings of the books for girls who require them.

Additionally, the books chosen for this project are culturally relevant contemporary young adult texts. They involve themes that urban adolescents deal with at home, school, and in their communities, including realistic topics like relationships, drugs, violence, risky choices and behaviors, racial tension, sexual orientation and gender identity, and the hardships of poverty. They also delve into resilience, strength, pride, the power of friendship and love, hope, family, and humor. Counselors may run into road blocks if parents, administrators, or other school stakeholders object to the books' content. The American Library Association (ALA) offers guidance on how to deal with book challenges in schools. Counselors are urged to evaluate the climate at their school to determine if the books chosen for this project are appropriate for their setting, and guidelines for doing so are included in this project, along with content alerts so counselors know what potentially controversial issues each book contains. Importantly, all the texts selected are already present in many school media centers.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Addressing the problem of the lack of safe spaces for urban adolescent girls to build self-esteem and explore identity requires a review of the literature on the subjects that provide the rationale for this project. An explanation of this chapter's organization follows. First, the theoretical orientation of this project is explored. Then, this chapter analyzes the literature that informs this intervention with a three-pronged focus: 1) the use of bibliotherapy and book clubs with urban girls; 2) group counseling with urban girls; and 3) self-esteem and identity development in urban girls. Next, a summary provides an overview of the key research findings. Finally, a conclusion explains how the research reviewed in this chapter informs the project description that follows in the next chapter.

### **Theory/Rationale**

School counselors deliver comprehensive counseling programs that provide interventions to vulnerable populations in the pursuit of equity. Urban adolescents face myriad threats at home and in their communities that threaten their social/emotional well-being (Dell-Angelo, 2016; Lindsay-Dennis et al., 2011). In school, urban girls of color also face microaggressions and systemic oppression, which further marginalizes them (Fisher et al., 2000; Huynh, 2012). Interventions aimed at bolstering these students' self-esteem and sense of identity, like all interventions, must be grounded in theory. This examination is approached from two theoretical frameworks: relational-cultural theory (RCT) and critical race theory (CRT). Both relate directly to the focus of the research.

## **Relational-Cultural Theory**

Miller (1976) posited in her seminal work on RCT that fostering positive relationships between clients should be the primary goal of group counseling, as opposed to individuation. This theory, which arose out of feminist and multicultural theories, “places strong emphasis on the role of culture and oppression on the development and psychology of women” (Tucker, Smith-Adcock, & Trepal, 2011, p. 311). Per Tucker, Smith-Adcock, and Trepal (2011), “mutual empathy and mutual empowerment are central in RCT” (p. 311). Miller (1986) illuminated “five good things” (p. 2) that are characteristics of growth-fostering relationships, including:

Each person feels a greater sense of ‘zest’ (vitality, energy); each person feels more able to act and does act; each person has a more accurate picture of her/himself and the other person(s); each person feels a greater sense of worth; [and] each person feels more connected to the other person(s) and feels a greater motivation for connections with other people beyond those in the specific relationship. (p. 3)

Relational-cultural therapy is an increasingly prevalent method of helping minority populations examine their place within the dominant culture and how they can respond to it in a way that brings about growth and empowerment (Tucker et al., 2011). Effectively, RCT is predicated on the notion that “individuals approach optimal development while participating in relationships characterized by authenticity, relational connection, mutuality, and engagement” (Lenz, 2016, p. 415).

Because urban adolescent girls of color have “multiple social identities” (Walker, 2002, p. 2), they are oppressed by the dominant culture in multiple ways. RCT is an appropriate theory from which to work because it “focuses on the role of power in

relationships and strategies of relating” (Tucker et al., 2011, p. 311) to the majority culture, and it also helps individuals embrace the various facets of their identity within the majority culture. Tucker et al. (2011) outlined five activities used by school counselors who have adopted RCT as their theoretical orientation:

1. encourage (self-empathy, or self-acceptance without blame)...;
2. explore students’ relational images;
3. educate students about power;
4. explain disconnections (routine, cultural/societal, and traumatic) and conflict;
5. expand students’ relational capacities. (p. 312)

These practices are particularly useful in small group counseling because of the relationship-oriented nature of both that setting and RCT. Comstock et al. (2008) argued that RCT is powerful when used as a framework from which to amplify marginalized voices and is “the best way to strategically confront and challenge crippling stereotypes, various forms of internalized dominance and oppression, negative relational and controlling images, and other disempowering forces in society” (p. 286).

### **Critical Race Theory**

CRT originated in legal scholarship by, among others, Crenshaw (1989) and Bell (1995). CRT is predicated on the assumptions that: “race is a social construction, race permeates all aspects of social life, and race-based ideology is threaded throughout society” (Ortiz & Jani, 2010, p. 176). CRT is not merely applied to examinations of literature or the law, but also calls for societal changes via dialogue (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Ortiz and Jani (2010) posited that CRT is not only a theory but is “a way of thinking and being in the world” (p. 176). CRT gives voice to the silenced members of society and allows for intersectional examinations of marginalized groups. Lopez and Chesney-Lind

(2014) explained that CRT “acknowledges and validates the important role of people’s shared experiences – as filtered through classism, racism and sexism – in influencing how they view the world as well as how they see themselves in relation to others around them” (p. 530). Furthermore, CRT illuminates the reality that people of color frequently experience microaggressions that are subtle enough that those of the majority race do not even notice them (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT accepts that race and individual narratives matter and deserve acknowledgement, and that racism is ordinary, as opposed to being an aberration, because it is institutionalized in all aspects of society, including law, education, public discourse, entertainment, and more. Importantly, CRT is highly critical of the notion of colorblindness, the idea that race does not matter, as it denies the narratives of people of color and deprives them of bringing their voices into public discourse.

Intersectionality is an aspect of CRT. Crenshaw (1989), in her seminal work on intersectionality, stated that “because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which... [women of color] are subordinated” (p. 140). After all, an African American high school student is not singly African American, nor is she singly a girl. She belongs to a social class, has a sexual orientation, might be differently-abled, may practice a marginalized religion, and more. Collins (2015) defined intersectionality broadly as the idea that “race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities” (p. 2). CRT provides a framework from which to examine the ways that race interacts with

other facets of identity, such as gender and sexual orientation; thus, CRT and intersectionality are intrinsically linked.

Bell (1995) argued that most people whose practices are informed by CRT are “existentially people of color ideologically committed to the struggle against racism” and that those who are White “are cognizant of and committed to the overthrow of their own racial privilege” (p. 898). Therefore, school counselors whose work with students is informed by CRT engage in social justice advocacy. Within school, “counselors are in a unique position to foster communication about racial issues” (Benedetto & Olinsky, 2001, p. 68). More specifically, Holcomb-McCoy (2005) stressed that it is imperative that counselors address ethnic identity and its role in students’ development. For counselors to do this, they must understand institutionalized racism and the way that race interacts with other facets of identity, so CRT is a fitting theoretical framework for school counseling interventions for urban students of color.

### **Research/Evaluation**

The research analyzed in this section focuses on the uses of bibliotherapy and small group counseling with adolescent girls of color, as well as the impact of self-esteem and identity development on the social/emotional well-being of adolescent girls of color. Each of these subject areas is vital to the reasoning behind the project components that are detailed in Chapter Three, and the Appendices.

### **Bibliotherapy and Book Clubs**

Bibliotherapy has been used by counselors for over 100 years, though in the past 30 years, it been used more prevalently due to evidence that shows its effectiveness in bringing positive changes to clients. Pehrsson and McMillen (2010) found after examining reviews of the literature over many years that bibliotherapy used with adults

can result in multiple positive outcomes, including increasing self-concept and knowledge of one's values, making individuals more empathetic, building pride of individuals' racial and cultural identity, and increasing skills to cope with challenges.

Culturally irrelevant pedagogies alienate students of color (Morrell, 2004). More specifically, adolescent girls of color have been left out of truly engaging with literature in their English classes because of curricula that emphasize canonical texts that either neglect completely the stories of people of color, or present them in inaccurate, stereotypical manners; many canonical texts also put forth representations of femininity to which today's urban girls cannot and do not want to relate (Carter, 2007). Much research has shown that book clubs can serve as alternatives to the traditional classroom, where students can step outside of typical reader response format and instead read book and broach topics which are more relevant to their daily lives and challenges.

Numerous studies have found that school book clubs, run outside of the confines of the classroom, have been effective in bringing about positive social/emotional change in urban girls of color. Notably, Polleck (2010b) conducted ethnographic research with the goal of determining whether book clubs can be transformative spaces for teenage girls of color in urban schools. In her studies, she formed book clubs of five to eight girls that met once a week after school for either a full school year or a semester. The reading list for the club was made up of contemporary multicultural young adult literature, and the books suited the girls' interests and their literary capabilities (Polleck, 2010b). None of the books could be viewed as part of the traditional literary canon, and they encompassed such themes as weight, bullying, parents, sex, boys, being girls, rape, sexual harassment, grief, pregnancy, friendship, and bullying. Over the course of the year, the books sparked conversations about the girls' relationships with their mothers, their struggles with their

friends, their body-image issues, and the sources from which they draw their personal strength.

Polleck (2010b) found that though books clubs can be beneficial in all schools, they seem to be especially impactful in urban schools where adolescent girls of color encounter frequent challenges due to decreased access to educational and other resources, and because of the impact of culturally irrelevant books read in many of their traditional English classes. Comparing the surveys conducted at the beginning of the year to those from the end of the year showed that every girl indicated that she felt more confident standing up for her own beliefs, even when challenged by friends. All the girls were also able to explain what a healthy relationship looked like and describe ways of navigating the troubled waters of high school friendships. Additionally, they all showed growth in their social/emotional development. Polleck (2010b) determined that book clubs could be used to enhance the social/emotional development of urban adolescent girls.

Polleck and Epstein (2015) set out to expand that research and examined whether book clubs could be used to provoke critical conversations about oppression, and whether the girls who participated could apply the literature discussions to their own lives. This longitudinal study was conducted at an urban school in New York City, where most students were Latino or African American. All six participants were seniors in high school who met for one hour after school once a week for the duration of the school year. Girls in this book club were instructed to flag passages in the books they read where they felt issues of identity (gender, race, class, sexuality, etc.) were important to the story or resonated with their own lives (Polleck & Epstein, 2015).

Using coding procedures, the authors analyzed the data from pre-and post-interviews (including a third interview that took place one year after the book club

ended). They found that book clubs that operated as safe spaces and focused on raising girls' consciousness levels regarding various forms of oppression, allowed the girls to form and re-form their identities, and made them more adept at navigating situations where they detected oppression (Polleck & Epstein, 2015). One weakness of this study is the small sample size, but the ethnographic methodology required a small size, and other studies have resulted in similar findings (Brooks, Browne, & Hampton, 2008; Sutherland, 2005).

Other research has shown the benefits of adolescent girls of color engaging in literary discussions in "other spaces," meaning safe spaces within schools that are not centered around prescribed curricula or mandated tests. Wissman (2011) set out to determine, in part, whether adolescent girls of color brought "their own lived experiences and social identities" (p. 407) into their literary discussions. She also examined the impact of an in school "other space" and whether the girls developed socially or emotionally over the duration of the study. Since the author taught English to urban adolescents, she was also able to compare their responses in the "other space" to the way they responded in the traditional classroom with a mandated curriculum, which is a particular strength of this study.

Wissman (2011) found that though multicultural books were read in the classroom, the girls were mostly silent during discussions and did not appear to connect the stories to their own lives. Other studies also found this to be the case in classrooms where multicultural books were used (Beach, Thein, & Parks, 2008; Carter, 2007; DeBlase, 2003). However, in the "other space," when the girls read contemporary books by African American women, they not only spoke up about the characters and situations in the texts, but they brought their own narratives into the discussions, sometimes to such

a degree that the literature was only the starting point for their hour-long discussions about race, prejudice, oppression, and racial and ethnic pride (Wissman, 2011).

Wissman (2011) disclosed that one weakness of the study is that she was both researcher and teacher/facilitator, so she was an “insider,” but she mitigated that potential conflict by following the suggestions put forth for research practices by teacher researchers. Based on her research, Wissman (2011) concluded that in-school “other spaces,” particularly for urban adolescent girls of color, are sorely needed in today’s educational climate of state mandated tests and prescribed curricular standards that often do not honor cultural relevancy. Book clubs can also serve as safe spaces for urban girls of color to explore literature, weave in their personal stories to the discussions, shape their unique identities, and develop higher self-esteem (Boston & Baxley, 2007; Fisher, 2006; Lapp & Fisher, 2009).

Other research indicates that bibliotherapy with adolescents using contemporary young adult literature of various genres is impactful. Gavigan (2012) found that bibliotherapy with graphic novels can be used effectively with adolescents struggling with a variety of issues, including gang activity, homelessness, eating disorders, grief and loss, and confusion over sexual orientation; in that same vein, Moeller’s (2011) research pointed to the way that adolescents explored gender stereotypes through discussions about graphic novels. McCoy and McKay (2006) stressed the need for the use of culturally affirming bibliotherapy, particularly for children and adolescents, using texts that portray realistic characterizations of people of color, as opposed to relying on stereotypes.

Urban African American adolescent girls have been shown to respond particularly well in book clubs that involve urban fiction (also called hip-hop lit, ghetto lit, street lit,

or gangsta lit), which is a genre that “features fast-paced action, gritty ghetto realism, and social messages about the high price of gangsta life” (Brooks & Savage, 2009, p. 49).

Gibson (2010) examined the ways that urban African American girls respond to urban fiction read outside of the classroom setting in ways that provoke personal connections.

Gibson (2010) found that even reluctant readers enthusiastically read and discuss urban fiction, partially because the books are so realistic and edgy, while Marshall, Staples, and

Gibson (2009) noted that the books are also popular with adolescent girls because they are culturally relevant and challenge traditional notions of Black femininity.

There has been some criticism of the use of urban fiction in schools, whether in or out of the classroom, and some of the most popular works of this genre have been challenged at times over their coarse language and frank talk about sex and drugs, as well as the use of nonstandard English and what some consider the lackluster composition of the books. But Gibson (2010) explained that the books’ popularity with urban adolescent girls indicates that they are culturally relevant and merit attention. In fact, urban fiction books are checked out so much that there is rarely one to be found on the shelves of urban libraries—the moment a teen returns an urban fiction book, another teen checks it out (Morris, Hughes-Hassell, Agosto, & Cottman, 2006). Notably, Gibson (2010) suggested that book club facilitators who use urban fiction in their work with adolescents gain credibility with teens quickly, because the girls view their facilitators as open to literature that their English teachers may not be, and they are choosing books the girls may read on their own anyway.

Other research focuses on the practice of bibliotherapy. Pehrsson and McMillen (2010) based their quantitative study on a survey they conducted on the bibliotherapy practices of members of the American Counseling Association (ACA). The online

survey was completed by over 280 counselors from across the United States, in rural, urban, and suburban areas, and 22 percent of the respondents were school counselors. Overall, Pehrsson and McMillen (2010) found that nearly 80 percent of the counselors use bibliotherapy with their clients, either in individual, family, or group counseling. The authors admit that limitations of this quantitative study include the small sample size, prompted by the low number of responses they received to their survey. Importantly though, they offer recommendations based on their research for using bibliotherapy in counseling, including forming working relationships with librarians and selecting books in online bibliotherapy databases that have already been reviewed by people in the mental health professions and deemed valuable for bibliotherapeutic purposes (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2010).

In terms of running effective book clubs, Halstead (1994), in her foundational work on using bibliotherapy with P-12 students, identified techniques that successful book club facilitators use, including school counselors. These include selecting discussable books, reinforcing confidentiality of the discussions, encouraging students to talk about ways they have coped with situations experienced by characters in the books, educating students about group discussion conduct, ensuring that the discussion has an opening and closing, allowing the conversation to go naturally where the students take it, and being a facilitator rather than the leader of the conversation (Halstead, 1994).

The specific question of why some book clubs work and others do not is the focus of McArdle's (2009) research. Using the results of a survey that received responses from over 1,400 book groups across the country, McArdle (2009) identified some characteristics that participants wanted in book groups. These include ground rules or norms, a facilitator who reinforces the rules when needed but allows the conversation to

flow naturally otherwise, participation of all members of the group in the discussions, and books that invite conversation and even disagreement (McArdle, 2009).

Finally, counselors using bibliotherapy must also consider the risks of this practice. Pehrsson and Pehrsson (2006) identify precautions that school counselors must take when using bibliotherapy with students. They found that those who transition from teaching to counseling often experience role confusion when engaging students in bibliotherapy, from utilizing traditional classroom techniques to provoke discussions (which are not suitable for bibliotherapy), to focusing on students' reading skills rather than their social/emotional growth that comes from the experience. Pehrsson and Pehrsson (2006) concluded that because school counselors and teachers have different roles, they should "adopt very different behaviors" (p. 192), and counselors who were previously classroom teachers should be cognizant of that when utilizing bibliotherapy in counseling.

### **Small Group Counseling with Urban Adolescent Girls**

ASCA (2014b) considers small group counseling "vital to the delivery of the ASCA National Model to students as part of an effective comprehensive school counseling program" (p. 1). Small group counseling has been shown to be particularly effective with adolescents, due to its social nature and the way it highlights universality (Paisley & Milsom, 2007). Considering high student-to-counselor ratios, small group counseling is a useful and efficient method of working with multiple students at once (ASCA, 2014b). Examining the literature on group work with urban adolescent girls reveals that it is an impactful practice.

Thomas, Davidson, and McAdoo (2008) studied the effects of an intervention for African American adolescent girls that sought to bolster cultural assets, including ethnic

identity, awareness of racism, and collectivism. This intervention, called Young Empowered Sisters (YES!), intends to encourage these assets because they serve as protective factors against discrimination and microaggressions. The researchers administered pre-tests, post-tests, and research-backed measurement tools to evaluate the girls' ethnic identity, including 74 urban African American girls who completed the intervention over a period of time, as well as the control group. The groups met twice a week for ten weeks, and were led by two female facilitators. Results indicated that the girls who participated in the intervention showed significant increases in their measurements of ethnic identity, collectivism, and racism awareness as compared to the girls in the control group (Thomas, Davidson, & McAdoo, 2008). One weakness of this study is that the authors did not assess the girls' scores in the above areas after the post-test, so it is unknown if the results of this intervention were long-lasting or permanent. But given that every single student who evaluated showed improvement, this study points to the impact of such group work with urban girls of color, and the ways it can help girls develop ethnic identity and awareness of oppression.

Thakore-Dunlap and Van Velsor (2014) researched the impact of small group counseling on adolescent female South Asian immigrants. The counselors facilitating the group identified their theoretical orientations as RCT and multicultural counseling. The goal of this counseling group was to provide the girls with an in school safe space where they could build social support and self-confidence (Thakore-Dunlap & Van Velsor, 2014). The counselors laid out ground rules for the discussions, but the girls directed the way the conversations went. Topics discussed included what it was like to an immigrant, having disparate cultural expectations at home and school, and other issues about intersectional aspects of identity. Based on their research, Thakore-Dunlap and Van

Velsor (2014) recommended that providing girls with a safe space and defining what that means is vital to the success of groups like this, which requires counselors to be aware of their own privilege and explore their own biases or beliefs about the group of students with whom they work.

### **Self-esteem and Identity**

Providing interventions that help students improve self-esteem and focus on identity development fall directly within the expertise of school counselors. Padilla and Hipolito-Delgado (2016) investigated the ways that school counselors empowered marginalized adolescents by interviewing 15 counselors who worked in urban schools with primarily Chicana/o and Latina/o students and identified as being proponents of empowerment theory. Their results showed that one strategy was used almost universally by all 15 counselors; they encouraged positive ethnic identity in their students, in part, by initiating (in individual and group settings) conversations that brought about “sociocultural awareness...[of] the systemic inequities faced by Chicana/o and Latina/o students” (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016, p. 285). The authors suggested that all counselors provide opportunities for similar conversations with marginalized students.

Other research has had similar findings. Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley (2007) investigated whether parental racial pride messages and conversations that prepared students for racism they may face lessened the impact of discrimination on the students’ self-esteem. Nearly 130 African American students were administered multiple measurement tools that measured discrimination distress, racial socialization, and self-esteem. Results indicated that students who had been racially socialized by their parents to expect racism and bias had higher self-esteem after incidents of discrimination and showed better coping skills than those who had not been racially socialized (Harris-

Britt et al., 2007). The authors further concluded that adolescents who have not been educated on systemic racism may have difficulty coping with discrimination when they encounter it, or even fail to recognize it.

One weakness of the Harris-Britt et al. (2007) study is that all the data was obtained by self-reports from the students, and parents were not surveyed on whether they racially socialized their children; involving parents would have given the authors a more comprehensive set of data. However, other studies found similar connections between racial socialization messages, ethnic identity, and self-esteem (Hughes et al., 2009; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2008; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2006). All of these studies point to the need for counselors to engage adolescents of color in conversations about race, power, privilege, and systemic oppression so they can better cope with discrimination and are better buffered against the drop in self-esteem that discrimination causes, as well as the need for promoting ethnic identity development in adolescents through social/emotional interventions.

To promote racial and ethnic identity development in students, counselors should provide opportunities for them to explore stereotypes. Way, Hernandez, Rogers, and Hughes (2013), in a qualitative study involving 40 adolescents of color, found that the students in early adolescence were absorbed in not wanting to become a stereotype, but they could not necessarily express what those stereotypes were. Accordingly, they built their identities not on who they were, but rather on who they did not want to become. The authors suggested that talking to adolescent of color about stereotypes would allow them to build their racial and ethnic identity in a positive way, rather than in a manner of avoidance (Way et al., 2013). For school counselors, this means providing opportunities for and initiating dialogues with students and conversations amongst them that confront

racial, ethnic, and gender stereotypes in ways that encourage positive identity, rather than negative identity.

Identity development and self-esteem for adolescent girls of color involves not only exploration of race, but gender as well. Thomas, Hoxha, and Hacker (2013) observed African American adolescent girls engaging in small (3-4 member) focus groups where they were prompted with questions about gendered racial identity, their feelings about stereotypes, and their experiences with racism. The authors concluded that group conversations helped the girls come to better understandings about racial stereotypes, and that being afforded the opportunity to talk about what it means to be “them” led to moments of clarity about their gendered racial identity. These types of conversations are not happening in classrooms, but school counselors, by providing safe spaces that invite them, can support urban adolescent girls in building positive racial identity.

### **Summary**

Book clubs can be transformational spaces for urban adolescent girls (Polleck, 2010b). The nature of book clubs as safe spaces allows for girls to engage in conversations that help them form their identity and become more adept at detecting the ways that they are oppressed in society (Polleck & Epstein, 2015). Furthermore, Wissman (2011) identified the power that “other spaces” have within schools to allow for in-depth book discussions that invite girls to talk about race and discrimination, as well build ethnic and racial pride. Urban adolescent girls respond well in book clubs that rely on contemporary young adult literature that is culturally relevant (Gavigan, 2012; McCoy & McKay, 2006; Moeller, 2011). Urban fiction can be particularly engaging for urban girls of color, though using it does not come without the risk of resistance or challenge

from teachers (Gibson, 2010). Research suggests ways to select books (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2010) and facilitate book clubs effectively, with particular attention paid to setting ground rules or group norms, allowing everyone a chance to speak, and facilitating discussions rather than leading them (Halstead, 1994; McArdle, 2009). Importantly, Pehrsson and Pehrsson (2006) caution school counselors who used to be teachers against confusing their roles and focusing on literacy skills rather than social/emotional development when using bibliotherapy with students.

Small group counseling is effective in bringing about positive social/emotional change in urban adolescent girls of color in the areas of ethnic identity and racism awareness (Thomas et al., 2008). When counseling this population, however, the importance of creating safe spaces cannot be emphasized enough; but for counselors to successfully create safe spaces, they must explore their own biases and examine their own feelings about the population with whom they are working (Thakore-Dunlap & Van Velsor, 2014).

Fostering identity development in urban adolescent girls can better arm them to cope with discrimination they will encounter. Counselors should encourage positive ethnicity identity by helping students explore systemic oppression so they are better able to cope with discrimination when they experience it (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016). Similarly, counselors who engage students in conversations about race, privilege, and systemic inequities help prevent the drop in self-esteem students can experience when they encounter discrimination or racism (Harris-Britt et al., 2007). In addition to initiating conversations about discrimination, counselors should also help urban girls explore stereotypes about race (Way et al., 2013) and gender (Thomas et al., 2013) to promote positive identity, rather than negative.

## Conclusion

This review of the literature demonstrates that school counselors can and should provide interventions that guide students toward an understanding of their identity and boost their self-esteem. Group bibliotherapy is an appropriate means by which to foster ethnic and racial identity development (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005) as it provides a safe space in which urban adolescent girls of color can explore, shape, and reframe their identity and prepare them to better cope with oppression. Safe spaces allow girls to express themselves without fear of reprisal or judgement and provide opportunities for them to listen to and validate one another's personal stories (DeBlase, 2003). Thus, this project includes plans for the counselor to guide the girls in creating norms that are expected to establish the group as a safe space. Moreover, book clubs can bring culturally relevant texts up for discussion so girls can share their narratives in relation to the characters in the books, thereby defining their own identities (Polleck, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b); this project contains discussion prompts that invite those types of connections. Book clubs, not being bound by curricular standards, can engage urban girls in new ways, inviting conversations that likely are not happening for these girls at home or in any traditional classroom.

Urban girls of color face myriad threats to their emotional well-being. Beyond the dip in self-esteem that happens for virtually all adolescents, they also contend with feeling disempowered due to their status as females of color in a world still dominated by White males. They often endure poverty and, in turn, the feeling of voicelessness that comes along with it. They are not engaging in critical conversations about race, gender, and class that can impel them to consider their own identities, partly because culturally irrelevant texts fill their classrooms, and they are unable to relate on a personal level to

the canonical works being taught. Raising students' self-esteem is always positive, and in the case of urban girls of color, any measure that can move them in upper trajectories on their self-esteem scale is worth undertaking. Book clubs are fairly inexpensive to run and the payoff can be tremendous. Allowing these girls to have discussions about topics not addressed in the classroom or at home provides them with the perspective they need to better understand their own identities. Therefore, this project intends to provide a forum for girls to explore identity and bond with peers over shared experiences of oppression, thereby fostering identity development and self-esteem.

If urban girls are to escape the cycle of poverty (and its causes) from which they come, educators need to provide them with the personal tools required to succeed not just on an academic or career level, but on a social/emotional level, as well. In-school book clubs can encourage girls to read texts that are relevant to them on a variety of levels—texts they cannot just enjoy but can relate back to their personal narratives and feelings—in safe spaces where they will not have to worry about being silenced or redirected. By sharing their stories with one another the girls can bring to themselves and each other a sense of empowerment. There is strength in one's stories; they show survival. Higher self-esteem and a deeper sense of identity will situate urban girls of color in better positions for making decisions about relationships, social choices, and their priorities in life. Based upon research, this book club intervention is an appropriate way to seek to boost girls' self-esteem and foster identity development.

Small counseling groups are effective at addressing social/emotional development in adolescents; book clubs have also been shown to be effective for the same purposes. Combining these concepts into small group book clubs is logical but somewhat novel. Typical small group counseling interventions do not last for the duration of the school

year. This project, on the other hand, because of the weighty topics that will be discussed, requires many more meetings than the average group a counselor conducts. That the group lasts for most of a school year also helps create the safe space environment that is called for in order to engage in identity development. The theory and research discussed in Chapter Two provide the framework for this project and its components discussed in the next chapter. Relational-cultural theory and critical race theory stress the importance of individual narratives. In the small group setting of this book club, adolescent girls can—via literature discussions—share their own stories honestly and without fear of silencing, thereby giving voice to their struggles, triumphs, and experiences as girls of color. They can explore their intersectional identities and what those mean in the greater world around them, bond over shared experiences of oppression and discrimination, and learn how to challenge stereotypes and microaggressions when they encounter them. The next chapter includes a description of the project components, the plan for project evaluation, anticipated project conclusions, plans for implementation, and the Appendices described in the project components. The project described in the following chapter is based upon the breadth of research discussed in this chapter, and is therefore well-grounded from a theoretical standpoint.

## **Chapter Three: Project Description**

### **Introduction**

Urban adolescent girls of color lack safe spaces to explore identity and increase self-esteem. The goal of this project is to provide a ready-to-use guide for in-school book club designed specifically for urban adolescent girls of color and facilitated by a professional school counselor, so that each girl, at the conclusion of the book club, is expected to show marked improvement in her self-esteem and understanding of her identity. This project description is organized in a straightforward manner. First, the project components are clarified, including details on the set-up and format of the book club, and discussion prompts for each of the meetings. Second, the project evaluation is explained, including the scales used to measure the project's effectiveness, data collection methods, and indicators of success. Third, anticipated project conclusions are presented, with reference to both the prior body of research and the conclusions drawn from it. And fourth, the plans for implementation are explicated, with attention to how this book club guide should be used and how, when, and with whom information gained from the evaluation of book clubs run with this guide should be shared.

### **Project Components**

Bibliotherapy has a long history, and book clubs for urban adolescent girls have been shown to be highly effective in the school setting at helping girls explore issues of identity and increase self-esteem (Polleck, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b; Polleck & Epstein, 2015). Social/emotional interventions aimed at urban adolescent girls of color are important because this population faces intersectional oppression based on race, gender, poverty, and other factors (Vacek et al., 2010). This project provides school counselors with a roadmap to follow when organizing and facilitating book clubs in their schools, and its objective is to improve urban adolescent girls' self-esteem and sense of identity so they can cope better with stressors in their lives. Counselors at urban high

schools around the country can use this guide. Following, the project components are explained, with references to the appendices.

This book club guide includes discussion prompts for 22 weekly meetings, with one meeting for introductions and establishment of group norms, and one meeting for wrap-up discussions. This timeline allows for five texts to be used, and time at the beginning of the school year for counselors to obtain informed consent from participating girls, receive parental permission, and conduct pre-tests. Informed consent and explaining the limits of confidentiality within the small group setting is an ethical requirement (ASCA, 2016). Counselors must explain that though the concept of “what happens in book club stays in book club” is an important part of creating a safe space, the counselor cannot guarantee that confidentiality will not be breached because of the group aspect of the experience. The student participation agreement outlining these ideas (Appendix A) should be signed by each girl and returned to the counselor before the first session of the book club. The counselor facilitating the group will meet with each girl individually to ensure she understands the participation agreement. Additionally, each girl should also return a signed parent/guardian permission slip (Appendix B) prior to the start of the club. Ethically, counselors have the responsibility to balance the rights of parent(s)/guardian(s) with the confidentiality owed to students (ASCA, 2016). Therefore, the permission slip, which is provided in both English and Spanish, informs parent(s)/guardian(s) of the goals of the book club, a list of the texts the girls will read, and the limits of confidentiality.

The measurement tools used for evaluation have been selected because of their applicability to measuring the girls’ progress from the beginning to the end of the book club (in the areas of self-esteem and ethnic identity), but also because school counselors

are qualified to administer them. Importantly, the RSES (Appendix C) and the MEIM (Appendix D) are free to use, and therefore accessible to counselors working in urban districts with more limited financial resources. The reliability and validity of these scales have been established in the literature (Schmitt & Allick, 2005; Roberts et al., 1999). Prior to the start of the book club, counselors should meet individually with each participant and have her complete these scales, reading the scales to students who require that accommodation. Since the objectives of this project are to improve the girls' self-esteem and sense of identity, both scales should be used as a pre-test and post-test.

The overview of the book club schedule (Appendix E) shows a general timeline for the book club, the order the books will be used, and reading goals for each meeting. The group must meet regularly and for a long enough duration that the girls become comfortable revealing their stories and feelings (Polleck 2010a, 2010b). General book club guidelines (Appendix F) and the outline of the first meeting (Appendix G), including the establishment of group norms (Appendix H) and procedures for handling violations of norms, introduction of books, attention to confidentiality, and caution against focusing on literacy skills, are based upon the suggestions of Halstead (1994), McArdle (2009), Pehrsson and Pehrsson (2006), and Thakore-Dunlap and Van Velsor (2014).

The texts selected for this club have been chosen because they are discussable. The list of texts used for this club (Appendix I) and the issues highlighted by each text are based upon the recommendations of Halstead (1994), as are the prompts for discussing each text (Appendix J). These texts are culturally relevant contemporary young adult urban lit and literary fiction that urban adolescents often enjoy (Brooks & Savage, 2009). They fulfill Halstead's (1994) guidelines for books that invite students to discuss how they have or would cope with situations faced by the characters in the books.

They also involve themes that are central to conversations that foster ethnic identity development, like colorism and institutionalized discrimination (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005), and knowledge of gender oppression.

Several Appendices are intended for the collection of data. The ASCA (2012) National Model urges school counselors to gather data to evaluate interventions to show the impact of the comprehensive school counseling program. The results of the aforementioned pre- and post-test measurement scales (Appendices C and D) will be useful for data collection. The attendance sheet (Appendix K) should be used for record-keeping and gathering process data. The student evaluation (Appendix L) measures the students' satisfaction with the book club intervention and asks them to reflect on the books that were read, ways to improve the book club, and how they felt the book club may or may not have changed them over the course of the year. Further details on evaluation will be provided in the next section of this chapter.

### **Project Evaluation**

Evaluation is an integral part of a comprehensive school counseling program. This project's effectiveness will be evaluated in multiple ways by examining process, perception and outcome data. Process data will be obtained by compiling the information gathered on the attendance record sheet for each meeting, including the number of students involved, the number of meetings, and the duration of meetings. The attendance sheets can be used as physical records that each meeting took place. The pre- and post-tests (RSES and MEIM) and the student evaluation will provide perception data. Attendance outcome data will be obtained by comparing the girls' attendance from the year prior to the intervention to their attendance during the year the book club is conducted. Examining attendance records could be revealing because Hill and Kearn

(2011) demonstrated that oppression and discrimination experienced at school negatively impacts girls' attendance rates, and the objective of this project is to increase girls' self-esteem and understanding of identity so they can better cope with discrimination. If the girls' attendance improves over the course of the year or in the year after, it could be another indicator of the impact of this project. The success indicators of this project will be specific and measurable. If the project is successful, the students will show increases in their self-esteem (on the RSES) and ethnic identity development (on the MEIM) from the pre-tests to the post-tests.

### **Project Conclusions**

The idea that urban girls of color can benefit from programs that raise their self-esteem and improve their sense of identity is not a controversial one. In fact, it seems obvious based on the wealth of research that shows the challenges that this population faces on a daily basis in their home and school lives (Dierker et al., 2004; Hill & Kearnl, 2011), and the fact that urban girls of color are subjected to more stressors than the majority of their same-age peers in other settings (Dell-Angelo, 2016; Grant et al., 2014). The nature of the classroom environment does not allow it to function as a safe space to engage in identity exploration, but school counselors are both qualified and duty-bound to foster identity development as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program. Prior research has demonstrated how school book clubs can serve as safe and transformational spaces for urban adolescent girls of color (Boston & Baxley, 2007; Fisher, 2006; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Polleck 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b; Polleck & Epstein, 2015; Wissman, 2011). A deeper understanding of one's intersectional identity and higher self-esteem serve as protective factors against marginalization (Luster &

McAdoo, 1995; Wissman, 2008). For these reasons, it is anticipated that the project success indicators detailed above will be met by each participant.

Critical race theory and relational-cultural theory, which provide the theoretical orientation for the literature review in Chapter Two, are based upon the notions that both race and personal narratives matter. As the girls read the books included in this project, it is anticipated that they will related their own experiences to those of the characters in the books (Sutherland, 2005). Throughout the discussions, guided by the questions provided in this project, it is expected that the girls will take apart and reform their identities in light of what they learn about intersectional oppression and systemic racism.

This project fills a need. High school counselors can find time to run small group programs like this one, but they cannot often find the time to do all the legwork required to make it happen, from researching what texts to read to developing evaluative tools to measure the effectiveness of the program. Therefore, this project is intended to allow counselors to establish book clubs easily and quickly, because the research has already been done and the guide is complete and ready to use. It is likely that urban school counselors will welcome interventions like this to affect the social/emotional development of girls of color in positive ways. When conducted according to the guidelines provided, this project could potentially impact not just the outlook of the girls, but their future. Improving self-esteem and understanding of one's identity, especially for urban girls of color, can have a ripple effect throughout their lives. Interventions that intend to bolster protective factors in adolescent girls of color are needed and worth pursuing.

Some questions remain unanswered. This project does not answer the question of whether urban girls of color will want to read the books chosen for this book club. But

because the books have been chosen specifically because they are not only culturally relevant but also because they have been identified as high-interest to adolescent girls, it is a logical assumption to suspect that the girls will enjoy reading the books. The question of whether the girls will continue to participate for the 22-week duration of this club has also not been answered, but based upon the research of Polleck (2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) and Polleck and Epstein (2015), it is expected that the girls will feel more invested in the book club each week and will persist for its duration.

This project also does not answer the question of how to improve the self-esteem and foster identity development in *all* urban adolescent girls of color. As a small group intervention, the number of students this project can impact at one given time is relatively small. However, preparing students of color to better cope with and challenge systemic oppression is no small feat, and one student's actions can impact another, and so on; the ripple effect potential is real. Perhaps counselors who see the impact of a project like this one on their students will also then see the role that fostering identity development can have in the school counseling curriculum.

### **Plans for Implementation**

This project is intended to be used by urban school counselors to establish, facilitate, and evaluate school book clubs for adolescent girls of color. Counselors will ask English teachers for recommendations of students who may benefit from and be willing to contribute to the book club. Counselors will stress to teachers that they should not shy away from referring a student with reading accommodations, as recordings of the books will be available for students who require them. This group is intended for six to eight girls. In the weeks prior to the start of the book club, counselors will ensure that the girls' parent(s)/guardian(s) sign permission slips allowing them to participate. The girls

must also sign the agreements detailing their commitment to the book club and their understanding of the confidentiality limits, and complete the RSES and MEIM scales as pre-tests. At that point, the book club meetings can commence. At the conclusion of the 22 meetings, the counselor will administer the post-test scales and have the girls complete the evaluation. These evaluative measures have been discussed previously in this chapter.

After counselors have gathered all the process, perception, and outcome data, they will prepare an eye-catching one page summary of the intervention's results to be shared with administrators, the school board, the school staff, parents of participants, and other stakeholders. This information not only demonstrates the effectiveness of the school counseling program, but it also highlights the importance of high touch interventions like this one, which can make the case for lowering high student-to-counselor ratios. These data will also be used to obtain grants and foundational funding for the school counseling program, money which is sorely needed in under-funded urban schools. School counselors with the research skills required to conduct high quality practitioner research will contribute papers on the impact of this program to professional journals, so other school counselors can implement similar programs.

This project will be shared with other counselors by presenting it at area school counselor association conferences, such as the Michigan School Counselor Association conference, the West Michigan Counseling Association conference, and school counselor professional development sessions offered by area institutions like Kent Intermediate School District. This project would also be fitting for a session at the American School Counselor Association national conference. The concept of a ready-to-use program guide

will appeal to counselors in urban schools who are looking for ways to empower the girls they counsel.

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**Appendix A**  
**Student Participation Agreement**

## Student Participation Agreement

Thank you for your interest in the \_\_\_\_\_ Book Club! We will meet 22 times this year, each week on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Regular attendance is expected. Though illnesses and other issues may keep you home from school at times, it is expected that you will do your best to attend each group meeting if you are in school that day. Your contributions will be important to the group, but if at any time you feel you cannot keep up your commitment to the group, please let your counselor know as soon as possible. Your participation in this group is voluntary.

\_\_\_\_\_ Book Club will be a safe space. The meaning of that will be discussed at the first meeting, and based upon it the group will together decide on Group Norms about conduct. While opinions may differ at times, you will be expected to follow the guidelines outlined in the Group Norms document.

Please attend meetings even if you were not able to meet the reading goal for that week. You will still be able to take part in our discussions and your comments will be welcomed! If you feel you would benefit from listening to recordings of the books being read aloud, that can be arranged. All books will be provided for you. Please care for them as best you can so future students can enjoy them.

As a counselor, I will keep confidential anything you may reveal in group. Though if you indicate you or someone else is in danger or being hurt, I will need to approach others to get you the help you need. All the girls in this group will be expected to keep confidential everything the other girls say in group. However, because of the group nature, please be aware that I cannot guarantee that each girl will abide by that guideline.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about things said in group or your participation in it, please let me know. It is my goal to help create an environment of safety and openness.

Please initial and sign below to indicate that I discussed this document with you, and that you understand and agree to the statements above. I look forward to your participation in this group. Your opinions and story are important and valuable!

---

\_\_\_\_\_ My counselor reviewed the Student Participation Agreement with me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the guidelines on the Student Participation Agreement.

My signature below indicates that I would like to participate in this book club and I will abide by the guidelines outlined in the Student Participation Agreement to the best of my abilities.

---

**Appendix B**

**Parent/Guardian Letter & Permission Slip**

Date: MM/DD/YYYY

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Your daughter has expressed interest in participating in the \_\_\_\_\_ Book Club, a program offered by the counseling program at \_\_\_\_\_ High School. This book club will be conducted as a small group counseling experience and will meet 22 times over the course of the school year, for one hour each week. We will meet on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_.

The purpose of this book club is to explore issues of identity (ethnic, cultural, gender, etc.) through the lens of the books we will read and discuss together, so the girls develop a better sense of themselves and build self-esteem. Participation in this group is voluntary.

I will facilitate this group. I am a licensed professional school counselor. I will maintain your daughter's confidentiality, except if she reveals she or someone else is in danger. While all the participating girls have agreed to maintain the others' confidentiality, because of the group nature of this group I cannot guarantee that everything said in group will remain confidential.

We will read the following books over the course of the school year:

*The Skin I'm In*, by Sharon G. Flake

*Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, by Isabel Quintero

*Keesha's House*, by Helen Frost

*Teeny Little Grief Machines*, by Linda Oatman High

*The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas

Please fill out and return the portion below if you give your daughter permission to participate in this book club. If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Name

School Counselor

-----

I give \_\_\_\_\_ permission to participate in Book Club.  
Student Name

I understand the limits to confidentiality explained above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian Signature

Fecha: MM/DD/YYYY

Estimados Padres/Guardianes:

Su hija ha expresado interés en participar en el club de lectura \_\_\_\_\_. Esto es un programa organizado por el programa de consejería en la escuela \_\_\_\_\_. Este club sera compuesto por un grupo pequeño donde los estudiantes recibirán consejos. Habrán 22 reuniones durante todo el año escolar. Nos reuniremos por una hora cada semana los (día de semana) de \_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_ (horas).

El propósito de este club de lectura es para explorar diferentes tópicos de identidad (étnico, cultural, genero, etc.) desde el punto de vista de los libros que estemos leyendo. De esta manera, las niñas podrán conocerse mejor y desarrollar su estima propia. La participación en este grupo es voluntaria.

Yo estaré facilitando este grupo. Tengo mi licenciatura profesional en consejería. Todo lo que se diga en las reuniones sera confidencial, a menos que su hija exprese que ella o alguien esta en peligro. Todas las estudiantes del grupo mantendrán la conversación confidencial. Sin embargo, no puedo garantizar que ellas no compartan nuestra conversación con otras personas.

Durante el año escolar, estaremos leyendo los siguientes libros:

*The Skin I'm In*, por Sharon G. Flake

*Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, por Isabel Quintero

*Keesha's House*, por Helen Frost

*Teeny Little Grief Machines*, por Linda Oatman High

*The Hate U Give*, por Angie Thomas

Favor de completar y devolver la parte de abajo si usted le dar permiso a su hija de participar en este club. Si tiene alguna pregunta o preocupación, siéntase libre de llamarme al

\_\_\_\_\_.

Sinceramente,

Nombre

Consejera de la escuela

-----

Yo le doy permiso a \_\_\_\_\_ de participar en el club de lectura.

Nombre del estudiante

Entiendo que los límites de confiabilidad explicadas en la parte de arriba.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre del padre/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del padre/guardian

## Appendix C

### Pre- and Post-test: Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

### **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: Counselor Guide**

The scale is a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 High School Juniors and Seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State.

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle **SA**. If you agree with the statement, circle **A**. If you disagree, circle **D**. If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
2.*	At times, I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.*	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.*	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
8.*	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.*	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem.

The scale may be used without explicit permission. The author's family, however, would like to be kept informed of its use:

The Morris Rosenberg Foundation  
 c/o Department of Sociology  
 University of Maryland  
 2112 Art/Soc Building  
 College Park, MD 20742-1315

### Student Pre- and Post-test

There are no right or wrong answers on this pre-test. Please be as honest as possible with your answers. Your answers will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone.

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle **SA**. If you agree with the statement, circle **A**. If you disagree, circle **D**. If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

- |   |    |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.                                  | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. At times, I think I am no good at all.                                     | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.                             | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.                       | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.                                  | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. I certainly feel useless at times.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.                               | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.                     | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.                                 | SA | A | D | SD |

**Appendix D**

**Pre- and Post-test: Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure**

## **The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM): Counselor Guide**

The MEIM was originally published in the following article:

Phinney, J. (1992). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with adolescents and young adults from diverse groups. Journal of Adolescent Research, 7, 156-176.

It has subsequently been used in dozens of studies and has consistently shown good reliability, typically with alphas above .80 across a wide range of ethnic groups and ages. On the basis of recent work, including a factor analysis of a large sample of adolescents\*, it appears that the measure can best be thought of as comprising two factors, ethnic identity search (a developmental and cognitive component) and affirmation, belonging, and commitment (an affective component). Two items have been dropped and a few minor modifications have been made. Attached is the current revision of the measure, without the measure of Other-group orientation. The two factors, with this version, are as follows: ethnic identity search, items 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10; affirmation, belonging, and commitment, items 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12. (None of the items are reversed.) The preferred scoring is to use the mean of the item scores; that is, the mean of the 12 items for an over-all score, and, if desired, the mean of the 5 items for search and the 7 items for affirmation. Thus the range of scores is from 1 to 4.

The suggested ethnic group names in the first paragraph can be adapted to particular populations. Items 13, 14, and 15 are used only for purposes of identification and categorization by ethnicity.

The Other-group orientation scale, which was developed with the original MEIM, is not included, as it is considered to be a separate construct. It can, of course, be used in conjunction with the MEIM.

Translations of the measure into Spanish and French now exist and are available, but we currently have no information on their reliability.

No written permission is required for use of the measure. However, if you decide to use the measure, please send me a summary of the results and a copy of any papers or publications that result from the study.

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\*Roberts, R., Phinney, J., Masse, L., Chen, Y., Roberts, C., & Romero, A. (1999). The structure of ethnic identity in young adolescents from diverse ethnocultural groups. Journal of Early Adolescence, 19, 301-322.

### Student Pre- and Post-test

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be \_\_\_\_\_

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

**(4) Strongly agree   (3) Agree   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree**

- 1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
- 2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
- 3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
- 4- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
- 5- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
- 6- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
- 7- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
- 8- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
- 9- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
- 10- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
- 11- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
- 12- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
- 13- My ethnicity is
  - (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
  - (2) Black or African American
  - (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
  - (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
  - (5) American Indian/Native American
  - (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
  - (7) Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_
- 14- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
- 15- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)

## **Appendix E**

### **Overview of Book Club Schedule**

### Overview of Book Club Schedule

- Meeting 1:** Introductions, creation of Group Beliefs, overview of books, introduce first book: *The Skin I'm In*, by Sharon G. Flake. Reading goal for next meeting: Chapters 1-7.
- Meeting 2:** *The Skin I'm In*. Reading goal for next meeting: Chapters 8-15.
- Meeting 3:** *The Skin I'm In*, continued. Reading goal for next meeting: Chapters 16-24.
- Meeting 4:** *The Skin I'm In*, continued. Reading goal for next meeting: Chapters 25-32.
- Meeting 5:** *The Skin I'm In*, complete. Introduce second book: *Keesha's House*, by Helen Frost. Reading goal for next meeting: Parts 1-4.
- Meeting 6:** *Keesha's House*. Reading goal for next meeting: Parts 5-8.
- Meeting 7:** *Keesha's House*, complete. Introduce third book: *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, by Isabel Quintero. Reading goal for next meeting: July 24-November 4.
- Meeting 8:** *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*. Reading goal for next meeting: November 6-December 31.
- Meeting 9:** *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, continued. Reading goal for next meeting: January 2-April 29.
- Meeting 10:** *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, continued. Reading goal for next meeting: May 2-end of book.
- Meeting 11:** *Gabi, a Girl*, complete. Introduce fourth book: *Teeny Little Grief Machines*, by Linda Oatman High. Reading goal for next meeting: pages 1-116. Note: most students will likely read the entire book as there are few words per page and the story is compelling.
- Meeting 12:** *Teeny Little Grief Machines*. Reading goal for next meeting: pages 117-end. Note: most students will have already read the entire book as there are few words per page.
- Meeting 13:** *Teeny Little Grief Machines*, complete. Introduce fifth and final book: *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas. Reading goal for next week: chapters 1-3.
- Meeting 14:** *The Hate U Give*. Reading goal for next week: chapters 4-6.

- Meeting 15:** *The Hate U Give*, continued. Reading goal for next week: chapters 7-9.
- Meeting 16:** *The Hate U Give*, continued. Reading goal for next week: chapters 10-12.
- Meeting 17:** *The Hate U Give*, continued. Reading goal for next week: chapters 13-15.
- Meeting 18:** *The Hate U Give*, continued. Reading goal for next week: chapters 16-19.
- Meeting 19:** *The Hate U Give*, continued. Reading goal for next week: chapters 20-22.
- Meeting 20:** *The Hate U Give*, continued. Reading goal for next week: chapters 23-26.
- Meeting 21:** *The Hate U Give*, complete.
- Meeting 22:** Wrap up. “Tie it all together” discussion. Celebrate and tally the number of pages read.

## **Appendix F**

### **General Guidelines for Book Club**

### **General Guidelines for Book Club**

- As book club operates as a small counseling group, a maximum of 6-8 girls should participate.
- Reinforce the concept of what happens in book club, stays in book club.
- Guide the girls in creating group norms that the students can monitor, with defined cues for signifying violation of group norms.
- The counselor is the facilitator, NOT the leader of the book club. The girls collectively “run” the group, with the counselor there to facilitate discussions and explain concepts such as systemic racism, microaggressions, etc., as needed. But the girls should do the majority of the talking.
- Do not focus on reading skills, and do not scold or shame students for not meeting the reading goals. This group’s focus is social/emotional development, not literacy skills. Girls can still participate in discussions even if they have not completed the reading. The books act as conversation starters.
- Counselors should be mindful of any topics that come up in group that may require individual follow-up with students later.
- Allow discussions to flow naturally. All the texts selected for this book club invite discussions that delve into the primary themes of the texts (for example, racism, grief, etc.). The facilitator can and should ask questions that provoke specific discussions, but should not firmly direct the conversations and instead allow them to flow in the paths they naturally go.
- Engaging students in conversations about race and gender oppression requires counselors to be cognizant of their own biases and privilege. If counselors are not comfortable broaching the topic and are not committed to dismantling their own privilege, they are not ready to facilitate a book club like this one.

**Appendix G**  
**Outline for First Meeting**

### Outline for First Meeting

**Materials needed:** Attendance Record Sheet, Group Norms Document, one copy of all five texts, a copy of *The Skin I'm In* for each girl

- I. Welcome the girls to book club (up to 15 minutes)
  - a. Introductions – these can be done using an icebreaker or some other activity, if desired
  - b. Explain the counselor's role: simply to facilitate discussion. The girls collectively "run" the book club.
- II. Establish group norms (20 minutes)
  - a. Ask a student to read the definition of a safe space aloud.
  - b. Guide the girls to create group norms based upon the definition and record them on the Group Norm Document.
    - i. Example of a norm: Wait until someone finishes talking before you speak. Why is this important to book club? If girls feel silenced or ignored they may not want to share or will not feel it is a safe space. How will this norm be monitored by the group? If a girl notices someone is interrupting someone else or speaking out of turn, she will say "Focus Norm" to remind everyone to focus on the speaker.
    - ii. Other suggestions for norms: what happens in book club stays in book club, use kind and respectful language with one another, be honest with the group.
    - iii. The girls should create the norms together, with the counselor serving as a facilitator if the girls get stuck or need suggestions.
    - iv. Keep this document when it is complete and bring it to each meeting in the event that any of the norms need revisiting or the girls decide they need to add or modify a norm.
- III. Show the girls the five books that they will be reading for the book club and explain these books were chosen because they are culturally and socially relevant to their lives as young women of color. Pass them around and allow them to briefly share any comments they have. Are they excited about reading them? Intimidated? Has anyone read one or more of the books? (10 minutes)
- IV. Give each girl a copy of *The Skin I'm In*. (10 minutes)
  - a. Read aloud the summary of the book.
  - b. Ask the girls how they feel about the book, based on the cover and the summary.
  - c. Explain that the reading goal for the next meeting is chapters 1-7, but they may read more if they wish. Remind them that even if they cannot complete the reading, they should attend group because they can still contribute to the discussions. Explain that no one will be shamed for not completing the reading. However, stress that the books have been selected because they tend to be interesting to girls their age and they will likely find themselves enjoying the stories and will want to discuss what they have read.

- V. Conclude the meeting (5 minutes)
  - a. Ask each girl to share one word that describes how she is currently feeling about book club
  - b. Close the meeting by showing excitement for the next meeting and reminding the girls of the reading goal.

**Appendix H**  
**Group Norms Document**

### Group Norms

Norm	This norm is important for book club because...	How will this norm be monitored by the group?

Safe Space, as defined by Advocates for Youth (2005): “A place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability; a place where the rules guard each person’s self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to respect others.”

## **Appendix I**

### **List of Books and Brief Summaries**

### List of Books and Brief Summaries

*The Skin I'm In*, by Sharon G. Flake. 176 pages. Published in 1998 by Hyperion Books for Children. ISBN 9781423103851. Grades 6-12. This book of realistic fiction won the 1999 Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Authors, as well as numerous other awards that year. Summary provided by Anti-Defamation League: "Seventh-grader Maleeka Madison is tormented by other students because of her dark skin. When Maleeka sees her new teacher, whose skin is blotched from a rare skin condition, she thinks she has finally met someone who is worse off than her. As she watches Miss Saunders refuse to accept the taunts of children, Maleeka begins to explore her response mechanisms to the cruelty of her peers. In rethinking how she defends herself, Maleeka learns that she too often judges people by their appearances. This novel explores the ways in which people's own insecurities can affect how they are treated along with how they behave."

Issues for discussion: colorism/skin tone bias, image versus reality of self, response to bullying, self-esteem, grief and loss

*Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, by Isabel Quintero. 284 pages. Published in 2014 by Cinco Puntos Press. ISBN 9781935955955. Grades 9-12. This novel won numerous awards the year it was published. Summary from School Library Journal: "Sixteen-year-old Gabi Hernandez has a lot to deal with during her senior year. Her best friend Cindy is pregnant; her other best friend Sebastian just got kicked out of his house for coming out to his strict parents; her meth addict dad is trying to quit, again; and her super religious Tia Bertha is constantly putting a damper on Gabi's love life. In lyrical diary entries peppered with the burgeoning poet's writing, Spanglish, and phone conversations, Quintero gives voice to a complex, not always likable but totally believable teen who struggles to figure out her own place in the world. Believing she's not Mexican enough for her family and not white enough for Berkeley, Gabi still meets every challenge head-on with vulgar humor and raw honesty."

Issues for discussion: teen pregnancy, sexual orientation and coming out, body image, growing up in dual cultures, family problems, consent and healthy relationships, ethnic stereotypes, parental death, college-going

*Keesha's House*, by Helen Frost. 144 pages. Published in 2003 by Square Fish Publishing. ISBN: 9780312641276. Grades 7-12. This novel told in poem form won the Michael L. Printz Honor Award. Summary from Square Fish Publishing: "Keesha has found a safe place to live, and other kids gravitate to her house when they just can't make it on their own. They are Stephie—pregnant, trying to make the right decisions for herself and those she cares about; Jason—Stephie's boyfriend, torn between his responsibility to Stephie and the baby and the promise of a college basketball career; Dontay—in foster care while his parents are in prison, feeling unwanted both inside and outside the system; Carmen—arrested on a DUI charge, waiting in a juvenile detention center for a judge to hear her case; Harris—disowned by his father after disclosing that

he's gay, living in his car, and taking care of himself; Katie—angry at her mother's loyalty to an abusive stepfather, losing herself in long hours of work and school.”

Issues for discussion: teen pregnancy, sexual orientation, abuse, abandonment, addiction, belonging, teen social supports, foster care

*Teeny Little Grief Machines*, by Linda Oatman High. 243 pages. Published in 2014 by Saddleback Educational Publishing. ISBN: 9781622508839. Grades 9-12. This book is present on several lists of the best street/urban lit books for young adults. Summary from BookSource: “In a novel in verse, Lexi, a year after her baby half-sister's death, attempts to cope with the problems of everyday life as well as with her alcoholic father, now in jail, her anorexic, bipolar stepmother, and her autistic half-brother.”

Issues for discussion: self-harm, grief and loss, mental health, eating disorders, incarcerated parents, role models, poverty

*The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas. 464 pages. Published in 2017 by Balzar & Bray. ISBN: 9780062498533. Grades 9-12. This book is a likely future award winner. Summary from Harper Collins: “Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what *really* went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.”

Issues for discussion: prejudice and racism, Black Lives Matter movement, racial profiling, police brutality, White privilege, grief and loss, microaggressions, activism, code-switching

## **Appendix J**

### **Discussion Prompts for Each Meeting**

## Discussion Prompts

Note: These questions are suggestions and do not have to be used exactly as stated. Start off each meeting by asking the girls to give short emotional responses to what they read and draw out conversations based on what they share, using these prompts as guidelines or as conversation starters.

### Meeting 2

Discussion of *The Skin I'm In*, chapters 1-7.

- What do you think Maleeka means when she describes herself as “a freak,” and why does she think Miss Saunders is also “a freak” like she is?
- Do you or have you ever felt like a freak? Why?
- How would you describe Maleeka’s self-esteem? Is it low, high, or something else?
- Do you identify with Maleeka in any ways? Explain.
- Almost all the students in Maleeka’s school are Black. So why is she teased for the darkness of her skin?
- Why does Maleeka think Malcolm is lucky for having a White father?
- Are Black people with lighter skin “luckier” than Black people with dark skin? Explain.
- What is skin tone bias?
- How do you feel about Char? Why do you think Maleeka is friends with her? Would you be friends with Char? Why or why not?

### Meeting 3

Discussion of *The Skin I'm In*, chapters 8-15.

- How is Maleeka’s friendship with Sweets different than her friendship with Char?
- How is Maleeka’s mom impacted by grief, and how does that carry over to her relationship with Maleeka?
- Why can’t Maleeka say no to Char? Have you ever been in a relationship that was similar to Maleeka and Char’s? Have you ever been in trouble because you didn’t stand up to someone who wanted you to do something wrong?
- Who could Maleeka have gone to for help over the bullying she was experiencing?
- What is Char’s role in the trouble Maleeka gets in? Who is at fault for the fire?
- Is Char a true friend? How do you define true friendship?
- Why does Char say that Maleeka is “workin’ like a slave” in the office?
- Maleeka changes her hair and clothing but the bullying continues. Why don’t these changes end the bullying she endures?
- Maleeka places a lot of value on outer appearance. Why? Do you agree with her outlook?

### Meeting 4

Discussion of *The Skin I'm In*, chapters 16-24.

- Why do you think Miss Saunders gives Maleeka the diary assignment?
- What does Maleeka realize about Miss Saunders in these chapters? How does she identify with Miss Saunders now?
- How does finding the poem from her father impact Maleeka? How does she act and think as a result of reading her father's words?
- Maleeka uses the diary to relate to the people in her life. Have you ever used characters in a book for the same purpose? Are there characters in this book that you identify with or you relate to other people in your own life?
- How do Char's words about slave versus master impact Maleeka? What do you think of her comments?

### Meeting 5

Discussion of *The Skin I'm In*, chapters 25-32. (Final discussion on this book.)

- What does Maleeka mean when she says she wishes she could go back to the beginning of the school year, before she was "somebody's fool"? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like that?
- How has Maleeka's self-esteem changed from the beginning of the book to the end? What contributed to that change the most?
- How do you feel about Char now? Has your opinion changed over the course of the book?
- Maleeka decides to help John-John. Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?
- Would Maleeka have changed if she hadn't met Miss Saunders?
- Was meeting Miss Saunders good or bad for Maleeka? Have you ever encountered a teacher or other person who impacted you in the way Miss Saunders impacted Maleeka? What was the person like?
- If you have ever been bullied, bullied another person, or witnessed someone bullying someone else...has this book changed how you might act in those situations?
- What is the difference between racism and skin tone bias?
- What is the difference between bullying and discrimination?

### Meeting 6

Discussion of *Keesha's House*, parts 1-4.

- What do the characters all have in common?
- With which character do you most identify? Why?
- Whom do you feel is the most empowered character? What qualities do you admire in that person?
- Harris says that at school "anyone with half an ounce of individuality gets crushed." Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?
- Who is Joe? How do you feel about him? What are his motives?

- Were you surprised to learn that Stephe's mom had given birth as a teen and put the baby up for adoption? How does this change your expectations about Stephe's story through the rest of the book?
- Dontay's caseworker thought his problems would be solved when she placed him in a new foster family, "a nice family, of his own race." Why isn't that enough for Dontay? What assumption does the caseworker make about this young man of color?
- What misconceptions do the adults in the book have about the young people? What misconceptions do the adults in your life have about you?

### Meeting 7

Discussion of *Keesha's House*, parts 5-8. (Final discussion on this book.)

- Katie's mom is suspicious of Joe. Why? Were/are you suspicious of Joe?
- Jason observes that "the kids at Keesha's house are wearing lives designed for people twice their age." What does he mean by that. Do you relate to it?
- Everyone reacts to the murder of Tobias in different ways. What does this say about grief?
- How has Carmen's addiction impacted her life?
- Jason says that all of the kids at Keesha's house "want freedom." What does freedom mean to you? How do you achieve freedom from the hurt in your life?
- How do you define family? What role do friends play in your life?

### Meeting 8

Discussion of *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, July 24-November 4.

- Gabi expresses fear that her mom will say she is "trying to be White." What does "trying to be White" mean to you? Has someone ever said that to you? How do you feel about it?
- Gabi and her mom not see eye-to-eye on most things. Why?
- Gabi does not want to wear the "pink sparkly dress" for her senior picture. Why? What does the dress signify to her?
- What stereotypes does Gabi identify in her school's Mexican Independence Day celebration? As a Mexican American girl, is her opinion different than her peers?
- What stereotypes have you encountered about your own race or ethnicity? Are your views of these stereotypes different than those of the adults in your life? Why do you think that is?
- Gabi does not like her light skin tone and that people think she is White, and that she has to "go into a history lesson every time someone questions my Mexicanness." How does this compare to Maleeka's situation in *The Skin I'm In*?
- Gabi considers ending her friendship with Cindy because she wonders if maybe "Cindy was a bad girl, and she would somehow smear her badness on me." What does Gabi mean by "bad girl," and what does that mean to you?
- When Joshua begins dating Sandra, Gabi automatically assumes that he does not like "fat girls" like her. Why is that her assumption? Do you agree with it?
- How would or do the adults in your life react to you dating someone of another race? Have they said anything about it? How does that make you feel?

- Who could Gabi have gone to with her concerns about the stereotypes she sees reinforced at school? Have you ever had a situation where you confronted stereotypes or discrimination in school? Tell us about it.

### Meeting 9

Discussion of *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, November 6-December 31.

- Gabi’s mom says that “girls are never free.” What does this mean? Is this your experience? How might you feel differently about this compared to the adult women in your life? How are expectations for girls and boys, men and women different? Are expectations different for White girls and women than girls and women of color? How? Why?
- How do you feel about Gabi’s mom frequently commenting on her weight? How does it impact Gabi?
- Sebastian, Gabi, and Cindy, as they exchange Christmas gifts, talk about being proud of being poor. Where does that pride come from? What stereotypes about “rich kids” are they perpetuating?
- Gabi is Mexican American. She is also a girl. You are a person of color, and a girl. What does this mean for you in terms of feeling “free” in the way Gabi’s mom talks about freedom?
- Are there different expectations for your behavior at home and at school? How does culture impact that? How do you navigate that?

### Meeting 10

Discussion of *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, January 2-April 29.

- What does “heartache soup,” which Gabi refers to in her haiku, mean? What would be in your heartache soup?
- How does Gabi’s dad’s death impact her? Can you relate to the way she acts based on your own experiences with grief?
- How is Beto’s experience as a Mexican American boy different than Gabi’s experience as a Mexican American girl?
- What is the point of Gabi’s list of questions? What questions would you ask the adults in your life?
- How does Gabi feel about her weight? Does she use “fat girl” as a negative, positive, or both? Does her weight impact her self-esteem? Do you identify with her feelings?
- Talk about Gabi’s feelings about going to college. How do her race and culture impact her feelings about moving away to college? Do you feel the same?
- What is the significance of Gabi’s female body zine? What is she realizing about being a Mexican American girl?

### Meeting 11

Discussion of *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, May 3-end of book. (Final discussion on this book.)

- Explain how Gabi’s self-esteem and sense of identity changed over the course of the book. How has your self-esteem and sense of identity changed over the years?

- How would Gabi describe herself? How would Gabi's mom describe her? Why are those descriptions different?
- Why didn't Cindy report her rape? What do you think of Gabi's "Instructions for Understanding What *Boys Will Be Boys* Really Means," and what does it say about her understanding of expectations for boys and girls, men and women?
- Gabi's mom has different standards for her son and daughter. Have you experienced this in your own life? How do you challenge double standards?
- Gabi talks about the expectation for Hispanic men to be macho. How does this compare to the expectation for Hispanic women to be feminine, which Gabi struggles against a lot?

### Meeting 12

Discussion of *Teeny Little Grief Machines*, pages 1-116.

- How would you describe Lexi's mental state?
- Do you think Lexi's thoughts are typical for a teenage girl? Why or why not?
- Lexi sees college as an escape from the daily madness of her family and her life. Would college really be an escape for her? Would college be an escape for you?
- Lexi talks positively about Carissa Grace, her dead baby sister, and Ms. Rose, her school counselor. What does she appreciate about the people?
- Lexi admits to cutting (engaging in self-harm), but she denies that it is a problem. She also takes 25 pills but denies it was a suicide attempt. What is your perspective on these incidents?
- Lexi paints everything blue. What color would you paint your life? Why?

### Meeting 13

Discussion of *Teeny Little Grief Machines*, pages 117-end. (Final discussion on this book.)

- Lexi's father is in jail frequently. What impact does having an incarcerated parent have on a kid?
- Lexi remembers a time when she was "confident, outgoing, outspoken." She remembers when she knew she was cool. What do you think happened to change that? Do you relate to this? Do you think all girls relate to it?
- Lexi, like Gabi, is committed to going to college, as she sees it as her way out of her "trailer park life." How are Lexi's motives different than or the same as Gabi's?
- What impact does Ms. Rose's leave of absence have on Lexi? Why do you think this is? Why are role models important? Who are your role models?
- Lexi describes herself as a freak, just like Maleeka did. What makes Lexi feel like a freak?
- When Lexi says we are, all of us, "Teeny Little Grief Machines," what does she mean? Do you agree with her or not?
- Why won't Lexi talk to her new school counselor? What assumptions does he make about Lexi? What does this say about his level of privilege? Is he aware of his privilege? How does it feel when someone makes assumptions about you based on their own life experiences?

- Lexi’s outlook in Part III is very different than in the previous parts of the book. To what do you credit that?
- What aspects of Lexi’s personality do you admire? Do you see yourself in her? Does that scare you?

### Meeting 14

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 1-3.

- Starr says at the party that she feels more comfortable at Williamson Prep where almost everyone is White than she does in Garden Heights where almost everyone is Black. Why?
- Khalil explains to Starr that Tupac’s Thug Life was an acronym for The Hate U Give Little Infants F\*\*\*\*\* Everybody. He says, “Meaning what society gives us as youth, it bites them in the ass when we wild out.” What does this mean? What does society give Black people? How does that impact White people AND Black people?
- Starr reveals that her mom once gave her the birds and the bees talk, following up with “the other talk... about what to do if a cop stopped me.” Have the adults in your life had that talk with you? Do you think White parents have that talk with their children? What does it mean that Black parents have that talk and White parents don’t?
- What is White privilege? How does it apply to “the talk” about Black and police?
- Khalil was shot by the officer who pulled him over. He was pulled over for, according to the officer, having a broken tail light. What are the similarities between this fictional scene and the stories in the news about police shooting Black men?

### Meeting 15

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 4-6.

- How does it make you feel to read that Khalil’s body is left uncovered in the street while officers surround the shooting officer and comfort him? How do you think this makes Starr feel?
- Starr has flashbacks to Natasha’s death, by drive by shooting, six years earlier. She has now lost two best friends at young ages, one innocently caught in the crossfire of gang violence, and one killed by police. Do you think these incidents are connected? Does society think they are connected? How?
- Starr reflects on the police shootings she has seen in the news. She says, “I always said that if I saw it happen to somebody, I would have the loudest voice, making sure the world knew what went down. Now I am that person, and I’m too afraid to speak.” Why is she afraid? Do you think you would feel the same if you were in her position?
- Carlos asks Starr’s dad why he thinks it always has to “be about race.” How would you answer that question? What role do you think race played in Khalil’s death?
- Starr takes on a different persona at Williamson Prep. She “flips the switch” in her brain to fit in there, and she hates herself for it. How do you feel about it?

What is code-switching? What purpose does it serve for Starr? Do you code-switch?

### **Meeting 16**

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 7-9.

- Hailey commits a microaggression when she makes the fried chicken remark to Starr while they are playing basketball. Then she tells Starr that what she said isn't racist. Who gets to define what is and isn't racist? Would you handle this situation the way Starr did, and confront Hailey about the comment?
- Explain the meaning of Starr's statement: "You can say something racist and not be a racist." How have you see this play out in your life?
- Have you experienced microaggressions at school? How have you handled them?
- Starr gets angry at Chris because he says he doesn't care that she's Black and poor, but she says those qualities are part of her. Chris is White and rich. How has the shooting changed Starr's feelings about Chris? Does it make sense to you?

### **Meeting 17**

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 10-12.

- In chapter 10, Starr has a conversation in the car with her dad about Tupac, oppression, black empowerment, racism, and the meaning of Tupac's Thug Life. This is the moment when Starr realizes the issues in the world are bigger than what happened to Khalil. Have you had a moment in life like this? Tell us about it.
- Why is Starr angry about her classmates' protesting in support of justice for Khalil? What don't her White friends understand about the situation?
- Starr breaks her silence by posting captioned photos of Khalil on Tumblr. How is this a turning point for her?

### **Meeting 18**

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 13-15.

- Is Starr's dad anger at her dating a White boy different than or the same as Chris's mom's discomfort with him dating a Black girl? How?
- Starr compares the White officer's purported desire to make a difference in the lives of the Black people in her neighborhood to slave masters thinking they were "saving" slaves from savagery. How are the impacts of slavery demonstrated in society today?
- Hailey doesn't think she is racist because she says she never mentions race. How would you respond to that if someone said it to you?

### **Meeting 19**

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 16-19.

- People call Starr brave for giving the news interview. What else does she do that is brave? How have you shown bravery in your life? What is your definition of bravery?

- Starr tells the reporter, “This all happened because he...assumed that we were up to no good. Because we’re Black and because of where we live. We were just two kids, minding our business...His assumption killed Khalil.” Let’s talk about the power assumptions have to cause harm.
- Maya and Starr bond over their shared experience of Hailey’s racism. Do you share bonds like this with anyone? How can that bond empower you?
- Seven hesitates to go away to college, feeling like he’s leaving the neighborhood behind. Do you understand where he’s coming from? Can you identify with his feelings?

### **Meeting 20**

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 20-22.

- Maya says that “minorities gotta stick together,” and Kenya adds that “White people been sticking together forever.” What do you think this means? Why is it important?
- Starr feels empowered by the sisterhood she shares with her friends and relatives of color. Why? Do you feel empowered in a similar way?
- What do you think of the Grand Jury’s decision? Is it what you expected? Why? What does this moment in the book have in common with police shootings we hear about on the news?

### **Meeting 21**

Discussion of *The Hate U Give*, chapters 23-26 (end).

- Starr tells her friends that White people “gave me the hate.” What does she mean? How does this relate back to the conversation about Thug Life in the first chapter? What does it say about society?
- Seven tells Chris he’s caught up in the idea of the White standard. What does he mean by that? How does the White standard impact people of color, in school, in the world?
- When Starr tells the reporter at the riot that “none of this makes sense,” what do you think she means?
- Ms. Ofrah tells Starr that the most powerful weapon she has is her voice. What does she mean by that? How can one’s voice be used as a weapon to combat systemic racism? What is systemic racism?
- Starr says she is no longer ashamed of her background. Why should you not be ashamed of your background?
- How can engaging in activism bring about change? Why does a single voice matter? What does the Black Lives Matter movement signify? What is the meaning behind it? How can you use your voice to induce change, at home, at school, in your community, in the world?

### **Meeting 22**

Use the final meeting as a wrap-up.

- Pages read over the course of the book club: 1,311
- Allow a few minutes for the girls to complete the evaluation
- Have each girl respond to these processing questions/prompts:

- Share with us at least one thing you learned this year about your place in the world as a female of color. How will you approach your future with that knowledge?
- Thinking about the books we read this year, with which character or characters do you most identify? How are those characters like you? How are they different?
- Share one thing you learned about yourself in book club. How will this change the choices you make or the way you act in the future?
- Closure is important. Talk to the girls about the growth you have noted in their conversations over the course of the meetings and praise them for their honesty and courage to share their stories. Encourage them to be supportive of one another when confronting microaggressions or discrimination.

**Appendix K**  
**Attendance Record Sheet**

Attendance Record Sheet  
Book Club

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign in:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

**Appendix L**  
**Evaluation**

### Evaluation

Please place a check in the box that most closely reflects your feelings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed my book club experience.					
In general, the books we read were interesting.					
I felt comfortable sharing honestly in book club.					
I would participate in book club again if I had the chance.					
I found the reading goals each week manageable for me.					
I know myself better now than I did before I participated in book club.					
Racism is the norm, not the exception.					
Race/ethnicity are important parts of one's identity.					
Systemic racism impacts me in multiple ways.					
My counselor seems comfortable talking about race.					
Book club has led me to think about my identity in ways I didn't before.					

What was your favorite thing about book club?

What would you change about book club?

Which books did you like the most? You may circle all, some, or none of these.

*The Skin I'm In*

*Keesha's House*

*Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*

*Teeny Little Grief Machines*

*The Hate U Give*

Which books did you like the least? You may circle all, some, or none of these.

*The Skin I'm In*      *Keesha's House*      *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*

*Teeny Little Grief Machines*      *The Hate U Give*

Has your experience in book club changed you in any way? Yes    or    No  
If so, how?

Is there anything else you would like your counselor to know about your book club experience?

**GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**ED 693 Data Form**

**NAME:** Star L. Zetocha

**MAJOR:** (Choose only 1)

<input type="checkbox"/> Adult & Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Differentiation	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Content Specialization	<input type="checkbox"/> Education Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Level Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading
<input type="checkbox"/> College Student Affairs Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Counseling
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary Level Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Developmental Delay	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Administration
<input type="checkbox"/> TESOL		

**TITLE:** Small Group Book Clubs for Urban Adolescent Girls of Color: A School Counseling Intervention

**PAPER TYPE:** (Choose only 1)

Project  
 Thesis

**SEM/YR COMPLETED:** Winter/2017

**SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL** Shawn A. Bultsma

Using key words or phrases, choose several ERIC descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your project.

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. School Counseling    | 6. Females                |
| 2. Urban Youth          | 7. Self Esteem            |
| 3. Bibliotherapy        | 8. Consciousness Raising  |
| 4. Self Concept         | 9. Social Development     |
| 5. High School Students | 10. Emotional Development |