

Young Women and Family Violence

Understanding Barriers and Honouring Strength



15 November 2018



About NIFVS

Northern Integrated Family Violence Services (NIFVS) is the partnership that leads the integration of family violence and related services in Melbourne's northern metropolitan region.

Our Mission

To maintain and continually develop the integrated family violence service system in the North, in order to improve the safety of women and children and to hold perpetrators accountable for their use of violence.

Our Partners

- 25 committee members
- 173 services responding to family violence
- 1,918 professionals linked to various initiatives





About YSAS

Youth Support + Advocacy Service (YSAS) is a leading youth health not-for-profit agency. YSAS engages, supports and strengthens highly vulnerable and high-risk young Victorians affected by, or at risk of being affected by, alcohol, drugs, mental health issues and social disconnection.

Our Vision

A community where all young people are valued, included and have every opportunity to thrive.

Our Purpose

To enable young people experiencing serious disadvantage to access the resources and support they require to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.





What is Family Violence?

Family violence is 'a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another in order to dominate and get his way. It is behaviour that physically harms, arouses fear, prevents a person from doing what she wants, or compels her to behave in ways she does not freely choose'.

Jones, A. & Schechter, S. (1992). *When Love Goes Wrong*. Melbourne: HarperCollins.

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Why young women?

Family violence is a gendered crime, overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women and children.

Young women aged 18 – 24 experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence of any age group and yet most of our services and resources are geared towards adult women.*

For this reason, NIFVS and YSAS partnered this year to convene and resource a quarterly Young Women and Family Violence Community of Practice.

The Community of Practice was overwhelmingly popular, signalling a desire from workers to improve responses to young women experiencing family violence.

* Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2012





What to expect from today

Today's forum will draw on local skill and knowledge to improve our collective understanding of effective responses to young women.

Participants will:

- **Explore** young women's experience of intimate partner violence
- **Reflect** on the social contexts that create barriers to safety
- **Improve** responses that honour young women's strength

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What to expect from today

Today's forum will not focus on adolescent violence in the home.

This violence can be carried out by an adolescent towards parents, carers or siblings and can have a profoundly negative impact on family relationships.

Whilst this is an important and emerging issue, today is about young women's experience of violence and abuse in their intimate relationships with young men.

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Agenda

Activity One Social Context and Barriers to Safety

Presentation Bianca Johnston: Theories and Frameworks that Uphold the Young Women's Voices.

Presentation Helena Guina and Sarah Santana: Being Heard and Seen

[BREAK]

Panel Discussion Arabic Welfare Inc., Berry Street, Darebin Community Legal Service, YSAS, Hope Street

Activity Two Strengthening Practice





What concerns you about working with young women?

- The influence of social media
- Lack of education about healthy relationships
- The prevalence of violence perpetrated against them
- Though resourceful, many are unsure where to go to access support when experiencing violence
- Generational gender stereotyping and the consequences
- That there is significant inequality
- When they don't/ can't see their enormous worth

voice • choice • power





What do you like about working with young women?

- That early intervention will prevent future violence and ongoing issues
- Seeing the ways in which young women use their resources, resilience and strength to challenge sexism and forge a better future for themselves and generations of women to come
- Being able to work alongside young women to empower their choice and realise their worth in society
- Seeing them recognise their strength and positive effect on their communities
- Witnessing their unfolding story and strength



Activity One

At your table, introduce yourself and your role.

Discuss the following and record on the coloured circles:

As a community in what ways do we make it difficult for young women experiencing intimate partner violence to access safety?

[20 mins]





YSAS

THEORIES AND FRAMEWORKS THAT UPHOLD YOUNG WOMEN'S VOICES

BIANCA JOHNSTON
SENIOR PRACTITIONER

YSAS YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE
NORTHERN TEAM

PRESENTATION AGENDA

Theories and Frameworks that uphold the voices of Young Women.

Adolescent Development.

- What are the key tasks of adolescence?
- Stigma, History and Context

Adolescent Intimate Partner Violence

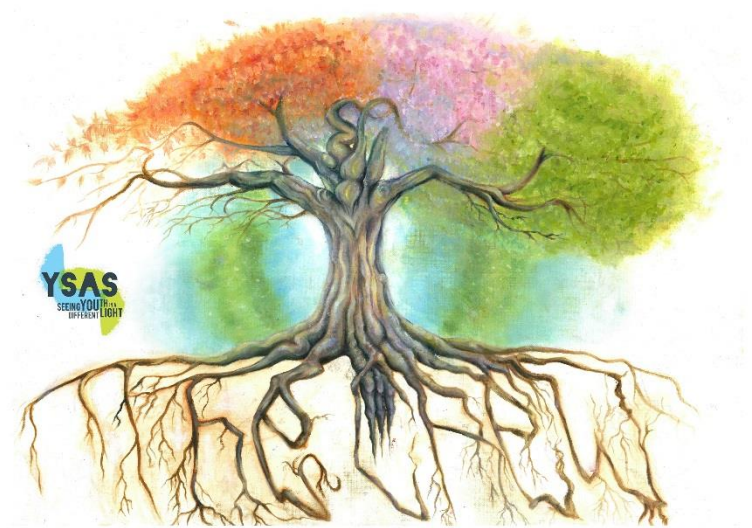
- Narratives, sex and intersections.

Practice Approaches and Frameworks

- Voice, Creative Therapies and Group Work

Questions

References

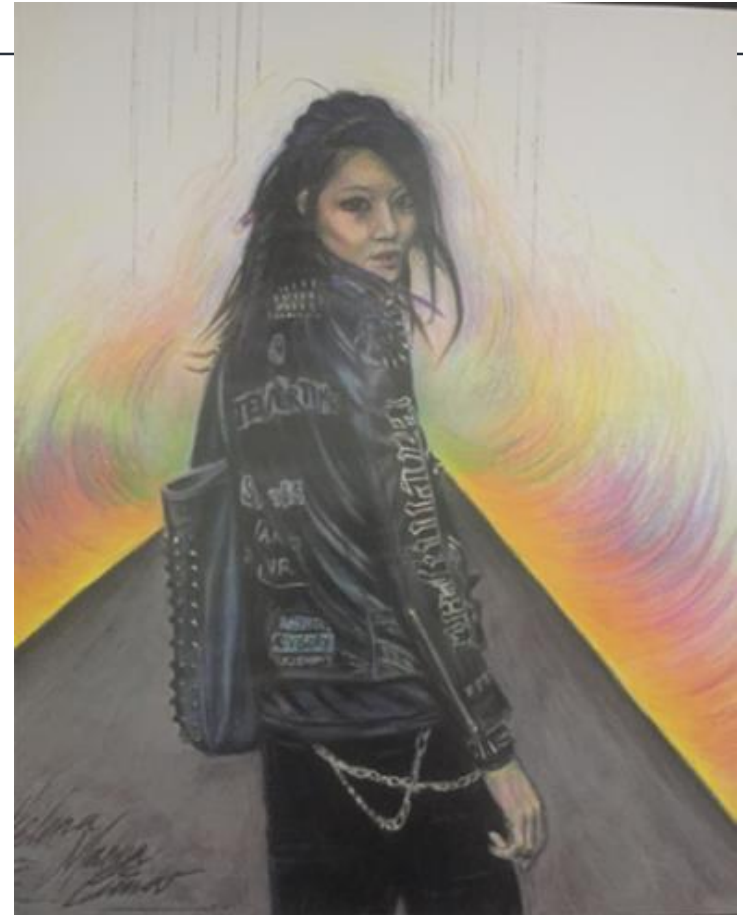


Art: @heralennox

YOUNG WOMEN

Key Developmental Tasks:

- The onset of puberty
- Expansion of social relationships
- Establishment of intimate partner romantic relationships
- Sexual identity formation
- Autonomy Seeking : The practicing of independent decision making and power shifts within the home
- May be at time when mental health issues emerge.



Art: @heralennox

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Discourse : Considers the deeper embedded social constructions and power relations underlying social relationships, expectations, human interactions, language, communication and settings

- Historical framing of women's distress in pathological terms "mad/bad/sad" "hysteria" "immorality" in 1800s and 1900s.
- Early focus on young women's "unnatural sexual delinquency"
- Continued to 1970's in Australia where young women could be charged with being *"uncontrollable, exposed to moral danger, in need of care and being sexually promiscuous"*
- Child Protection and Juvenile Justice System separated in 1987 and much of the former behaviours redefined as "criminal issue" rather than "welfare issue".

Sources: Carrington 2006; Payne 2014; Chesney-Lind, Shelden 2016.



Artist:
Lauren

- 1980's and 1990's "zero tolerance" and "tough on crime" rhetoric.
- Media sensationalism in the last two decades surrounding "Ladettes" "Bad Girls" "Nasty Girls" "Girl Gangs"
- **How we define criminality is critical**
- Concept of "*double deviance*" – young women are both breakers of both the law and their gender norms (Heimer, De Coster 1999)
- Feminist argument that these young women are both labelled and criminalized "*as a result of their active participation in youth gangs or subcultures, are being punished for not confirming to a passive culture of adolescent femininity*" (McRobbie 1991 cited in Carrington 2006;44)

Sources: Carrington 2006; Payne 2014; Chesney-Lind, Shelden 2016; Heimer, De Coster 1999;

KEY FRAMEWORKS FOR ASSESSMENT

Alder and Baines 1996 Australian study of the attitudes of staff within a justice setting believed that young women pose a higher degree of difficulty to work with.

Factors contributing to this include:

- Unconscious bias in how young women's behaviour is framed. For example, stereotyping against young women in correctional settings was identified in US, UK, Scotland, Canada and Australia.
- Lack of practice frameworks for working with young women.

A key reason for this is that young men constitute the majority of the criminal justice system, and as a result there is a “gender blindness” and “invisibility” surrounding young women in programming and practice frameworks. Most programming relates to older women.

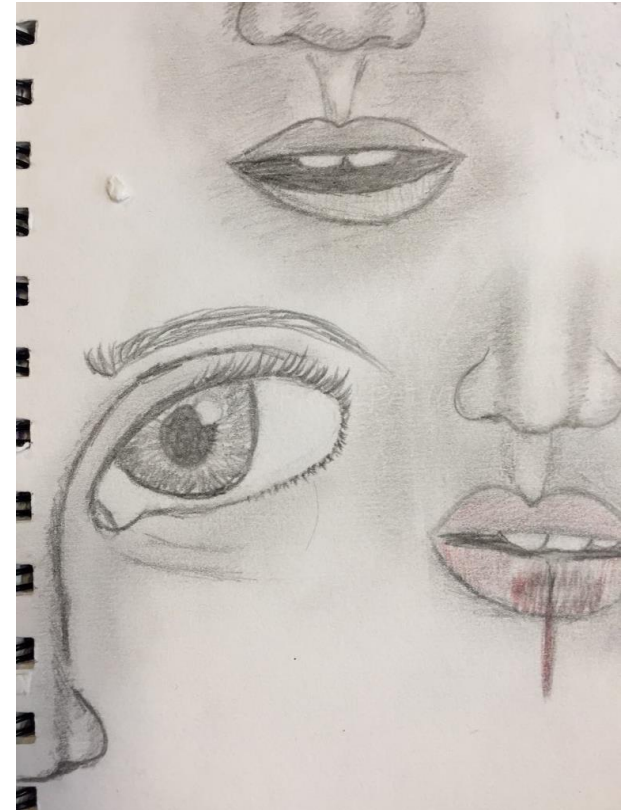
Sources:

Baines, Alder 1996 pp467-480; Burman, Batchelor 2009;280; Lanctot, Ayotte, Turcotte, Besnard 2012 p2240-2246; Chesney-Lind, Shelden 2014 pp220-224;

INTERSECTING COMPLEXITIES

The key point is that there are intersecting vulnerabilities that occur during adolescence.

These are compounded due to the framing of young women and the lack of practice frameworks that exist specifically that understand and honour their experiences.



Artist: Lauren

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

There is no term used in Australia that specifically describes intimate partner violence within the context of female adolescence.

- Family Violence
- Intimate Partner Violence
- “Teen dating violence” commonly used in U.S

Like adult family violence, there are gendered power discourses that exist in teenage intimate partner violence such as men's sense of entitlement and dominance within a relational power discourse.

However due to the intersection of age and gender, there exist complexities that are unique to the experiences of young women.

COMPLEX INTERSECTIONS

- Can be the first intimate relationship in the life of the young woman;
- Often coincide with autonomy seeking.
- Many teenage romantic narratives guise rape under lust and don't recognize sexual coercion, with a strong emphasis on male initiation and young women's virginal gatekeeping.
- Young Women are framed as being a "subject of desire" rather than "their own desires" in much sexual education.
- The relationship may act as an alternative to residing within the family home;

Sources: Schute 2007; Hird, Jackson 2001; Davis, Lee 1996; Miller, 2016.

Art: Lauren



EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG WOMEN

Love.	Takes control of what you want Control
<p>feels nice he they trust you need about encouraging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes you feel bad for doing good things • Double Standards → Not ok for you to do what he does • Criticism • Makes me ask his permission to do things that I can do normally.
Jealous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignores you. • calls you dog + cunt. • Copping bollenit • Name calling • Beating of • Punishing me • Apologizing • Making u feel pathetic * Makes you feel insecure

PRACTICE APPROACHES AND FRAMEWORKS

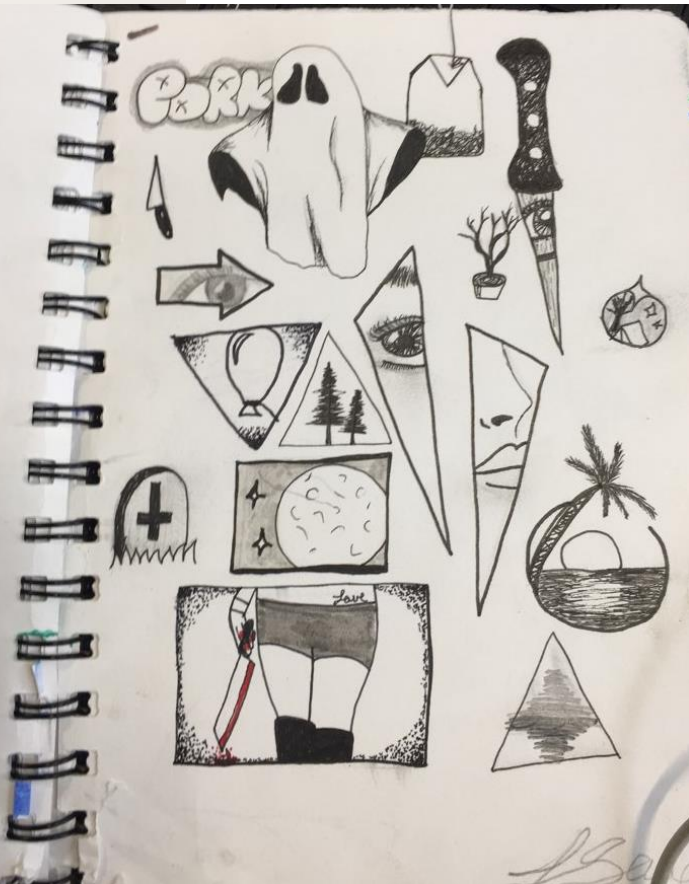
When it comes to practice, what we are asking young women to do is to behave differently. But what we need to remember is that we are asking them to behave in a way that resists the dominant power discourse. We are asking them to continue to be brave and courageous and to go against the grain.

How do we do this?

There are no dominant theoretical practice frameworks for working with young women.

Feminist theory provides a good starting point because our work needs to be bi-directional.

IDENTITY



Artist: Lauren

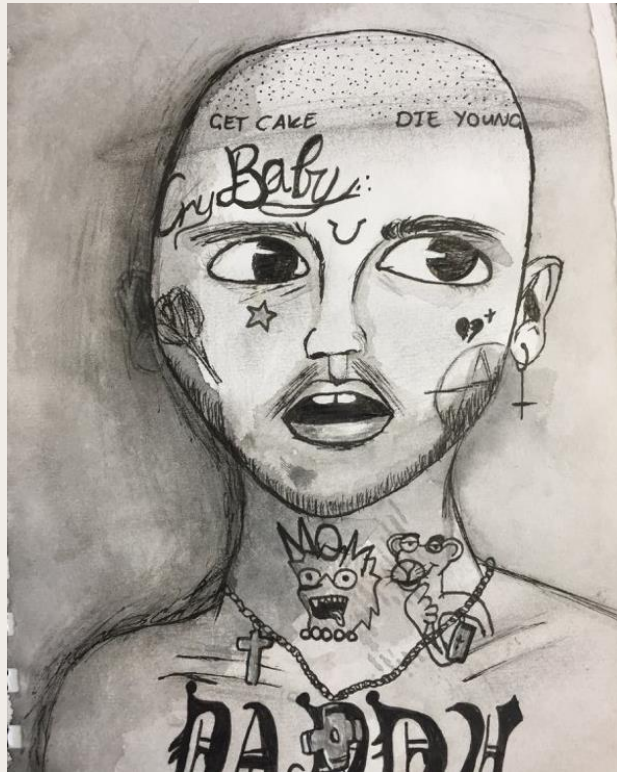
Looking Glass Self:

- Davis (2017) applies to young women – theory of Symbolic Interaction in which our self identities are formed through the reflections and perceptions of others and the effects of, including how we interpret these meanings to form perceptions of ourselves.
- Reciprocal and reinforcing dynamic.

Minority Stress Theory:

- Intersectional
- Levels of stress that minority groups face daily.
- Can relate to heightened levels of anxiety, depression and self harm.
- Perhaps, as stated by Marie-Anne Bertrand in 1969 we need to consider whether young women's behaviours are a rational response to their social experience.

ASSESSMENT



Artist: Lauren

Social and Gender Role Analysis

- A framework under the feminist approach that evaluates causes and coping mechanisms surrounding the issues young women face.
- Re-frame and re-narrate.
- Concepts such as self-sacrificing, self-silencing, misogyny towards other women, self blame, sexual objectification and passivity can be internalized into a young women's identity.
- CBT can dismiss these as "irrational" but a Social and Gender Role Analysis considers such behaviours as coping mechanisms in the face of oppression.
- This framework allows a structural insight into how "womanhood" is constructed via social conditioning, role expectations and internalizing these roles.
- Useful for challenging self blame.
- Particularly useful with eating disorders
- Useful for behaviours when paired with resocialization

PRACTICE

Voice:

- Importance of maintaining and expressing adolescent voice.
- Loss of voice is the suppression of self and is problematic in adolescent development.
- Suppression of voice has been linked to mental health issues, self harm, eating disorders, anger, aggression and relationship difficulties with other adolescent women.
- Voice is your heart, your values, it is your personal embodiment and is a "Sense of meaning and a tool for meaning making"
- Expressed diversely.



Artist: @Deityqueen

PRACTICE APPROACHES THAT ENHANCE VOICE

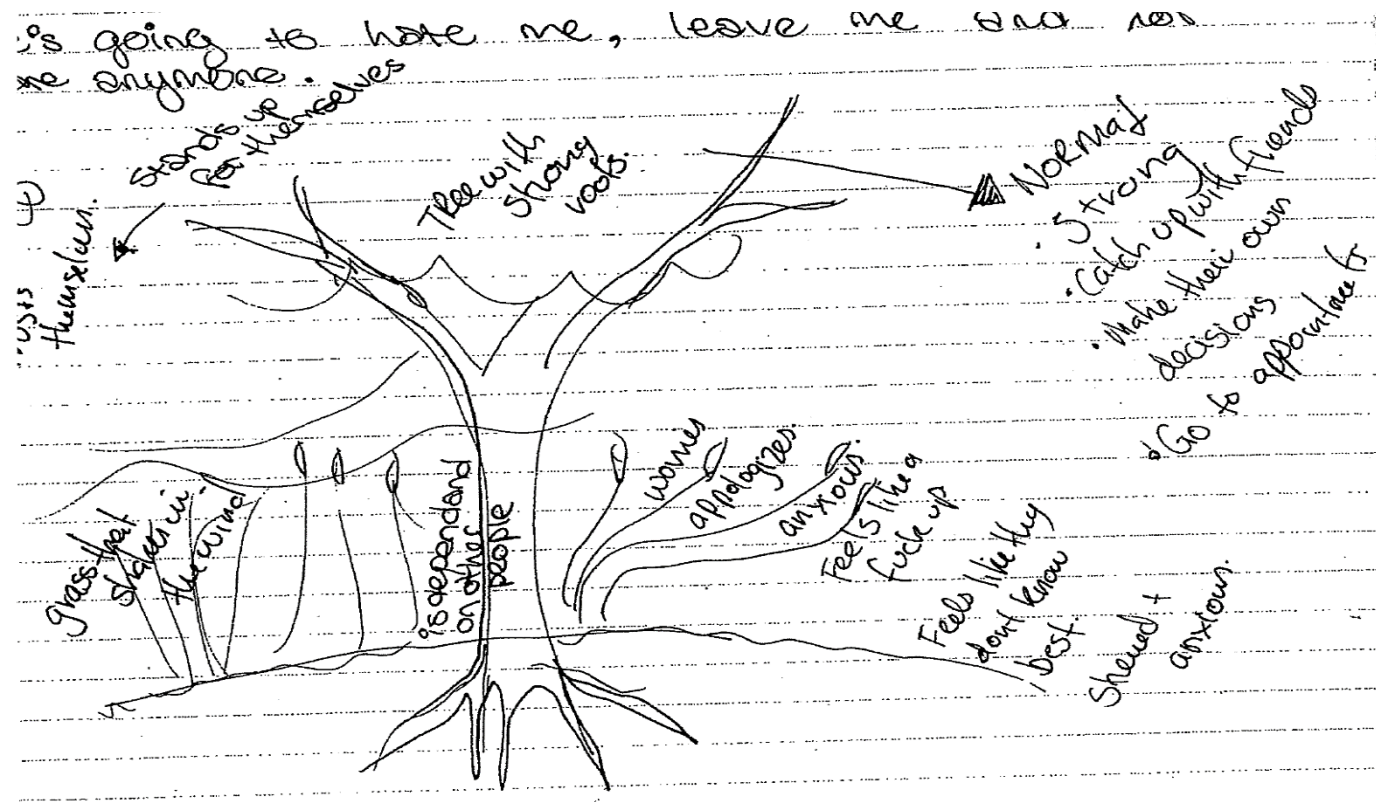
Feminist Narrative Therapy

- Unlike Narrative Therapy which explores construction, Feminist Narrative Perspectives consider representation.
- It explores the injustices resulting from the resistance of being a woman that can be shared through storytelling.
- Supports young women in believing that they are entitled to their own stories
- Construct stories with positive perceptions of feminine identity.
- They challenge the dominant narrative and awake to oppression. They re-author their narratives and create new meanings with positive explorations of womanhood.

Feminist Creative Therapies

- No universal language of voice.
- Individual discovery and growth, but also advocacy and empowerment.
- Creative therapies offer the opportunity to share with others or be private expression.
- Enhances Self-efficacy through symbolism. When self-efficacy is activated in one arena, it can be generalized to others.
- Enhances motivation through providing a past example of success to build upon.
- Lets young women be seen and elevates voice.
- Opportunity to share stories without criticism.
- Art programs, music programs, collage, structure, drama and writing.
- Journaling and writing.

SYMBOLISM



GROUP WORK

Group work has been repeatedly trialled globally and demonstrated to hold significant therapeutic benefits for young women, particularly with justice involved young women.

- Traditional Intervention Models of Anger Management and Social Skill Training developed with young men are increasingly recognized as insufficient for the needs of young women. (Calhoun, Bartolomucci, McLean 2005;18)
- Enhances voice
- Challenges the internalization of misogyny and the disdain for one's femininity. Allows re-narration of femininity, supports self-confidence and encourages social acceptance.
- Challenges emotional isolation and can create community in the absence of family structures to provide this.

Sources: D'Haene 1995 ; Israeli, Santor 2000; Turner, Mashi 2015; Chesney-Lind, Morash, Stevens 2008;
Chesney-Lind, Shelden 2014

FEMINIST THERAPY

Mindfulness Based Feminist Therapy

- A technique that fuses social justice elements of feminism with the self-compassion practices associated with mindfulness. Has been successful in treatment of self-injury. (Crowder 2016)

Empowerment in Sex Education

- Sexual identity formation is an extremely important part of the adolescent developmental process and the way in which sexual education is both framed and delivered is critical as it influences the tone and expectations of young people as they enter the world of intimate partner relationships.
- Sex education has been traditionally concerned with the domain of risk that place women in “subject positions.”
- Successful Sex Education is bidirectional. Tolman’s Model fuses Individual, Romantic Relationships, Social Relationships and Socio-Political Context as important domains of sexual education.

(Tolman 2003) (Miller 2016).

QUESTIONS?



Art: @heralennox

CONCLUSION

For years, people have assumed that all you have to do to make a program designed for boys work for girls is to paint the walls pink and take out the urinals.

Daniel 1996 cited in Chesney Lind 2014;266

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Being Heard and Seen

Sarah Santana

Helena Guina





Sarah Santana @deityqueen



Helena Guina @HeraLennox

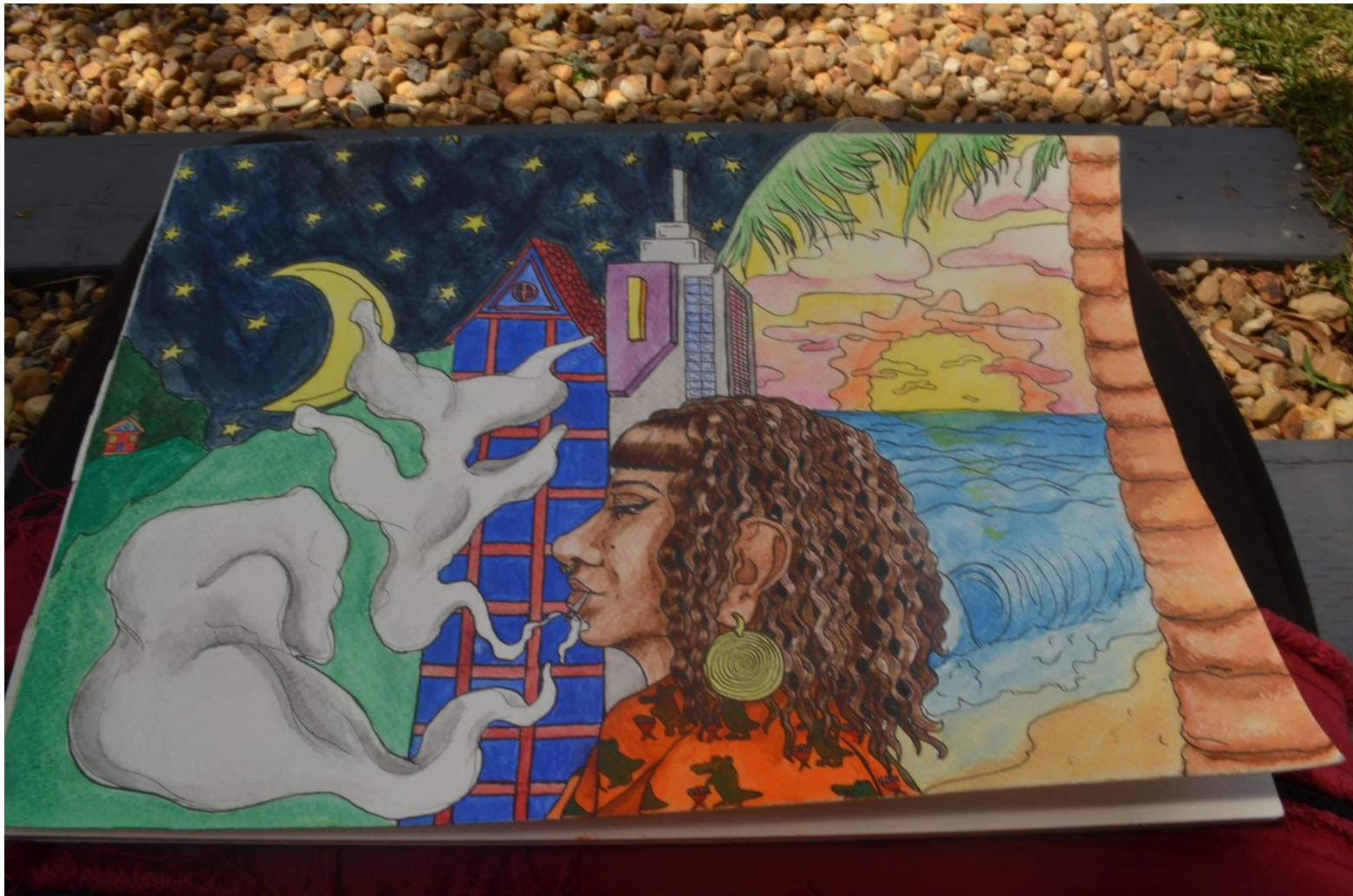
GROWTH.



Sarah Santana @deityqueen



Helena Guina @HeraLennox



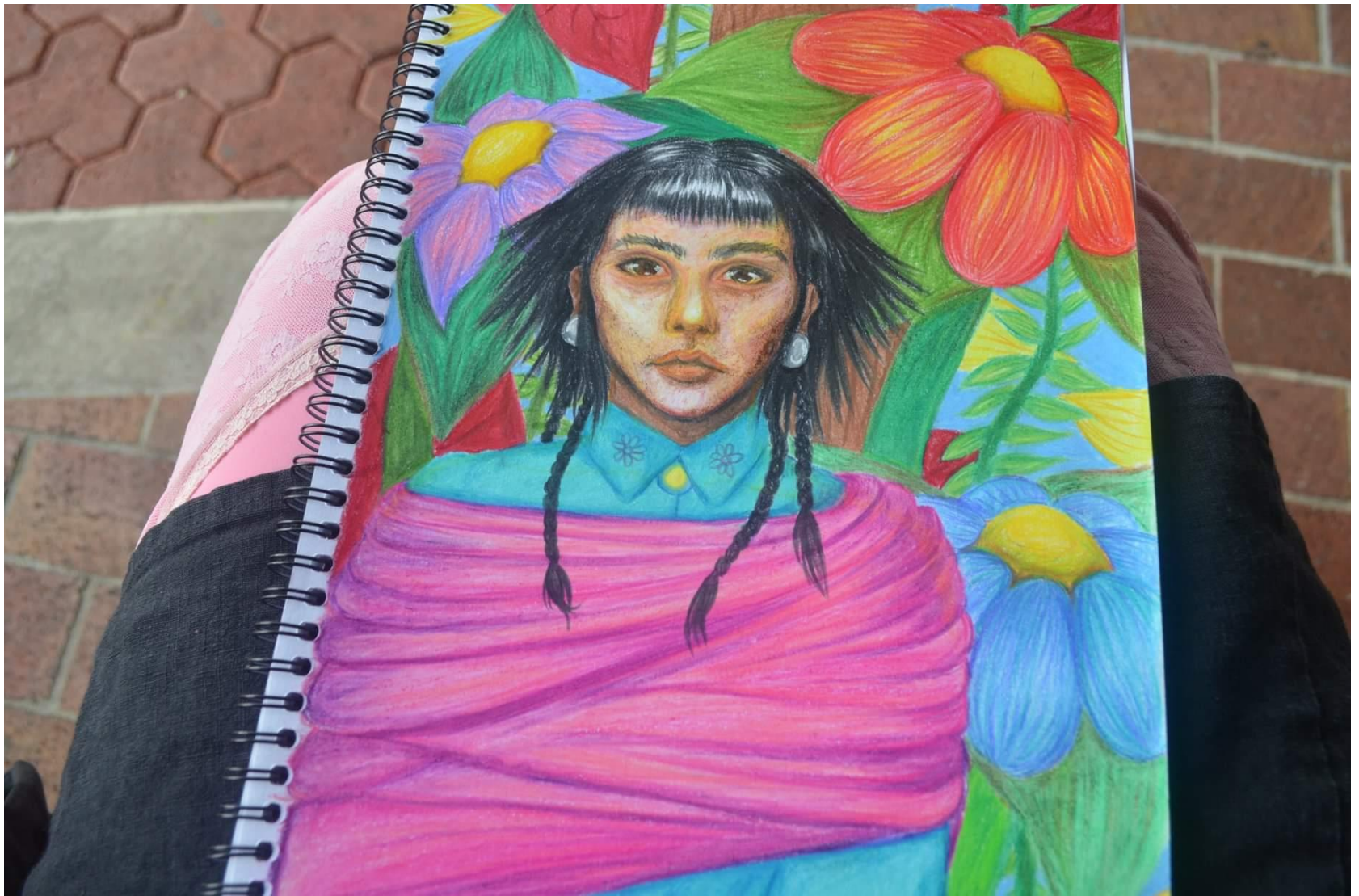
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Helena Guina @HeraLennox



Sarah Santana @deityqueeen



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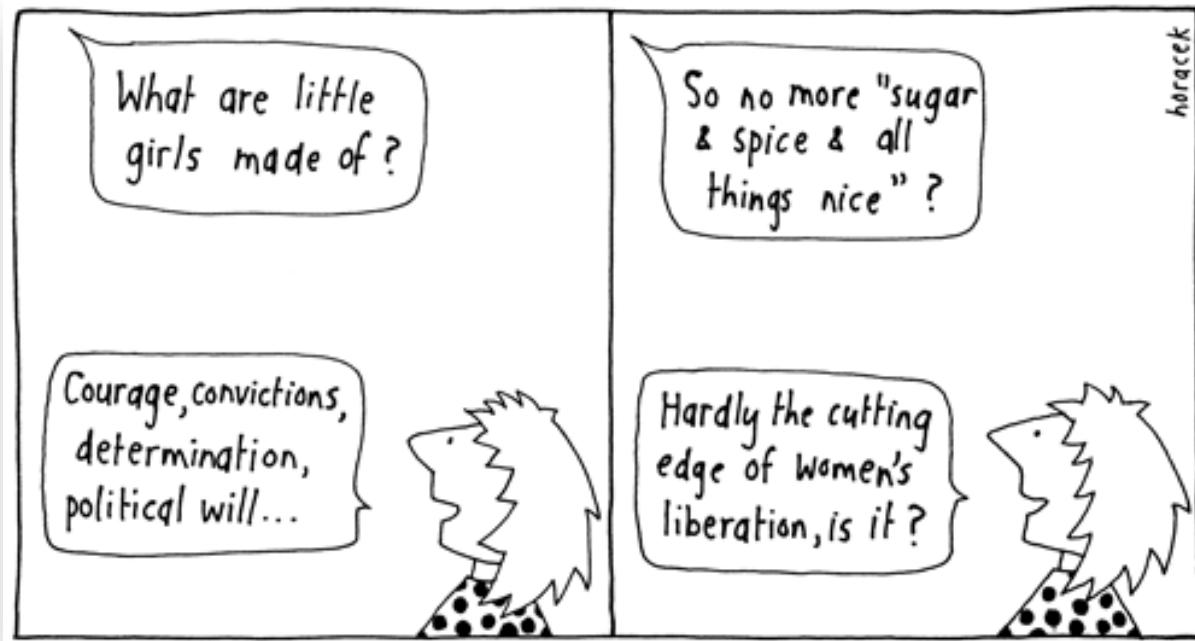


Sarah Santana @deityqueen



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Take a Break



See you in 20 minutes





Panel Discussion

Abir Melhem Social Worker, Arabic Welfare Inc.

Beth King Outreach Lawyer, Darebin Community Legal Centre

Chad Chan Specialist Young Person's Case Worker, Northern Family & Domestic Violence Service - Berry Street

Kat Perdriau Youth Counsellor, Hope Street

Vesna Courtot Registered Nurse, YSAS





Activity Two

In pairs, discuss and record on your worksheet:

- 1. My service responds well to young women experiencing intimate partner violence by....*
- 2. My service could respond even better to young women experiencing intimate partner violence if...*

[20 mins]



Stay Involved

There are a number of ways to stay connected with the work of family violence integration:

- **Join** the *Young Women and Family Violence* Community of Practice (February 2019)
- **Attend** Regional Family Violence Induction
- **Participate** in *Working with Male Perpetrators of Family Violence: Considerations on Collusion* training (12 December)
- **Participate** in *Identifying Family Violence: Responding to Women* training (13 December)
- **Join** a Local Family Violence Network
- **Order** and display family violence posters

www.nifvs.org.au



Thank You



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