

Running head: LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: A GROUP FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Let's Talk About It: A Group for Adolescent Girls

A Practicum Report for Completion of Masters of Education

Department of Educational Psychology

University of Manitoba

Kathleen McNamara

September 7, 1998

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**LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:
A GROUP FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

BY

KATHLEEN McNAMARA

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of
MASTER OF EDUCATION**

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Abstract

'Let's Talk About It' was a discussion group run for a group of grade 7 girls. The primary goal of the group was to provide some of the essential skills and support the girls would require as they made their way through adolescence. Through providing girls with the opportunity to explore issues that have particular relevance in their lives, it was hoped they would become more able and confident in their decision making. The exercises and topics discussed in the group were secondary to providing a safe environment for the girls to express themselves and explore issues without being judged. It was the opportunity, more than the content covered, which was the stimulus for growth. The feedback from the girls was positive and overall the girls rated the group as a success.

'Let's Talk About It!': A Group for Adolescent Girls

'Let's Talk About It!' was offered to help girls achieve and maintain a positive sense of self, to foster self-acceptance, to give them time to share their personal stories and feelings, and to give them the opportunity to discuss issues that were of importance to them. The ultimate goal was that the girls would become increasingly confident in their ability to make choices, develop more assertive communication skills, and be able to speak more freely about their beliefs. It was important that the girls were able to express themselves, and to know that their thoughts and feelings were acceptable. Rice and Russell (1995) discuss helping young women take up space, value their physical, emotional and spiritual selves, reaffirm their feelings, thoughts, and perspectives and re-inhabit their worlds.

This is important because in today's society there is a tremendous amount of pressure placed on young girls. They are expected to act a certain way, look a certain way, and think a certain way. It is important to develop support systems in order to help these girls achieve a positive sense of self. They need a safe place where they can learn skills; a place where they can question information they may have otherwise taken for granted; and a place to explore their feelings and beliefs related to a variety of issues. The issues that adolescent girls struggle with are rarely discussed in our culture. Language doesn't fit their experience. Protest is called delinquency, frustration is called bitchiness, withdrawal is called depression and despair is labeled hormonal (Pipher, 1994). If we care about girls and truly want to understand them, we must provide opportunities for them to talk

about the issues of growing up female that are so real and relevant (Irwin-DeVitis and Benjamin, 1995).

For over a century, psychologists have described adolescence as a time of heightened psychological risk for girls. Girls at this stage have been observed to lose their vitality, their resilience, their immunity to depression, their sense of themselves, and their character (cited in Brown and Gilligan, 1993). Although girls generally enter this phase with great strength and psychological vigor, the transition from girl to woman is often a treacherous one. Many girls begin to doubt their own knowledge and experience, ignore and devalue their own feelings, and move toward relationships based on cultural stereotypes rather than honesty and truth (Irwin-DeVitis and Benjamin, 1995). Adolescence is often a very difficult time in the lives of girls. There is clearly a need to understand what is happening in the lives of girls inside and outside of schools, and why adolescence is a time of psychological distress and risk (Rogers, 1993).

Elizabeth B. Rubin listened to a group of women discussing their adolescent years. They spoke of this time as emotionally tumultuous, fraught with conflict and, in general, not a particularly happy time of their lives (1992). Gilligan and Brown (1990) found adolescent girls to be unsure of their perceptions. They reported that they were afraid that speaking up would damage relationships and compromise their image in the eyes of others (cited in Rubin, 1992). As adolescence ensues, girls find themselves less and less able to reconcile their own voices (that is, their wants, needs, interests, and ambitions) with the ideal that society expects and frequently demands (Irwin-De-Vitis and Benjamin,

1995). Brown and Gilligan reported that girls show a tendency to be vulnerable to certain psychological losses as they move from childhood to adolescence: the loss of clarity, of self-confidence, of voice itself (cited in Rogers, 1993).

Educators have an important role in encouraging girls to confront the dilemma of maintaining voice in relationships and helping them to question societal expectations that they be pretty, passive, and compliant (Irwin-DeVitis and Benjamin, 1995).

"Let's Talk About It!" was offered to provide support to the girls in the practicum group as they faced the challenges of adolescence. A group format was chosen, as it is particularly useful when working with adolescents, because their peers are such a large part of their existence. Adolescents like to be with their contemporaries, and groups are a part of their lives (Greydanus, 1991). Another benefit to working with a group is that it is cost and time efficient. As a facilitator, I was able to reach more girls and use their personal contributions as resources within the group. Within her practice, Rubin struggled to find a modality that would allow women the opportunity to develop clarity of vision and begin to truly value their own beliefs so that they were not always second guessing themselves. In her experience as a therapist she found that the connection and affirmation that comes in the context of a women's group is very powerful (1992).

The focus of the group was primary prevention and early intervention. The group was voluntary and had an educational focus, using a facilitator to guide group discussions and encourage active involvement from each girl. The procedures used in the group were informal, non-threatening, and

nonjudgmental, in an effort to create a safe, warm and comfortable environment for growth. The goal was to create a positive environment that was safe and flexible enough to meet the needs of each girl, as well as the needs of the group.

Most, if not all girls could benefit from a group that was supportive of their growth and provided opportunities to transform judgement into curiosity, to examine current beliefs and the stereotypes that are commonly held in society. This group and similar programs should also serve as a reminder to people working with this population of how important it is to provide support to and acknowledgement of the many obstacles adolescent girls must overcome.

Method

Participants

Ace. The group consisted of grade seven girls who were attending Earl Grey School and were part of the "all girls program", which means they were in a segregated classroom within a co-ed school. This was the first year the girls had been together, coming to Earl Grey from separate primary schools. This age/grade was specifically chosen for this group because throughout the adolescent years, change occurs quickly and constantly. "Early adolescence is a time of physical and psychological change, self-absorption, preoccupation with peer approval and identity formation" (Pipher, 1994). At this age girls are presented with an incredible amount of stimuli that can be overwhelming for them. They begin to suffer from depression, stress and other signs of psychological distress (Friedman, 1997).

Recruiting Participants. After receiving permission from the principal of Earl Grey School to run a group, I approached the grade seven-classroom teacher. After some discussion, it was decided that a brief presentation explaining my intentions would get the girls to think about whether they would be interested in participating in such a group. In January 1998, I spoke to the grade seven girls, introduced myself, explained my intentions, and answered questions. It was explained that participation in the group would be voluntary, that a limited amount of space would be available, and that the first ten girls who were interested would have the opportunity to participate. The girls were promised a pizza party at the end of the group, which served as a motivator to ensure that there would be adequate interest in this opportunity. The girls that wished to participate were sent home with a permission slip (Appendix A) for their parents to sign. The form had to be signed and returned prior to commencement of the group.

Group Design

Size. There were ten girls who chose to participate in the group. This was the maximum number allowed to ensure sufficient group interaction and to create a safe, comfortable environment for the girls to work in. Because of the relational way in which girls develop, they feel safest in small groups (Friedman, 1997). As well, it was thought that this would be a manageable size for one facilitator to work with. In retrospect, ten girls may have been large for some participants to feel comfortable. In the future, reducing the numbers to only five or six girls may be more beneficial.

Duration. The group ran for 5 weeks, from February 24th to March 24th. We met on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the lunch hour. Nine, 45-minute sessions were conducted. Originally the group was to meet one day per week and run for ten weeks, but due to a variety of circumstances, the time available did not allow for this. It should be noted that making this change might have impeded the development and process of the group, because the girls had less time to adjust to the group and become comfortable in sharing within the group.

Setting. The group met in the third floor music room at Earl Grey School. It was a comfortable room, with large glass windows and carpeted floors. It was important that the room did not resemble a regular classroom in order to make the girls more open to a new experience. The girls sat in a circle on the floor to facilitate open discussion. It was arranged that the girls would bring their lunches to eat, and snacks were set out for everyone to share.

Group Guidelines

Confidentiality Policy. As in any group situation where participants share personal information, a confidentiality policy was required. This policy was established to protect the group and each individual that was involved in the group process. Having a formal policy on confidentiality allowed the group members to speak freely while minimizing the risks involved with making personal disclosures.

The policy was explained and discussed at our first group meeting. It was also explained that the law obligates me, as the facilitator, to report any disclosures of abuse or any risk of personal harm. After the girls seemed to have a clear understanding of the

policy and it's importance we all signed the contract, which stated that we agree to the policy and that we all agree to honor it. As well, at the final session, the policy was reinforced and the girls were reminded that although the group has ended, all of the information that was shared in the group is still and will always be confidential. (Copy of policy – Appendix B)

The group took confidentiality very seriously. Within the group it was decided that if confidentiality were broken the fate of the person would be discussed and decided upon by the other group members. Fortunately, none of the group members violated the policy and all of them treated it with respect.

Group Statement. The group statement was developed after talking with the girls during the first session. They were asked what guidelines they wished to govern the group and what things needed to be agreed upon and respected (appendix C).

Procedures

Choosing Topics. The girls chose most of the topics that were discussed during the group. At the first meeting they were all given paper and were asked to write down the topics that were of interest to them. Giving participants the opportunity to decide what was discussed ensured that the topics were more likely to be relevant and interesting to the girls. The topics were collected and typed on to small pieces of paper; all of the topics were folded and placed in a basket, from which the girls took turns drawing for the topic of the day. (As the facilitator, I took the liberty of adding some of my own topics and putting the girls ideas into question format.) This process gave control to the group. It also

validated the girls' concerns and helped them to recognize that their issues were real and that they deserved to be listened to.

Session Outlines. Aside from the basic outline of the sessions, the girls controlled the direction of discussion and were responsible for raising issues that were of concern. The outlines found in appendix D, served as "jelly molds" that dictated the general format of the individual sessions, but were also flexible and were able to be adapted to the mood and movement of the group each day. Having a specific routine each session, beginning with check-in and the group statement, and ending with the check-out, gave the girls consistency and security. While giving the majority of control to the participants throughout the sessions provided them with the opportunity to explore and speak about their beliefs and at the same time, they were not restricted as to what they could share with the group or express. This structure is consistent with adolescent development. While busy exploring and testing limits, participants still require structure and subtle guidance from supportive adults.

Techniques

Check-in. At the beginning of each session there was a check-in. This gave each girl the opportunity to share how she was feeling, how her week was going, and raise any concerns she presently had. This also served as a transition device, allowing the girls to leave behind where they have just been and get focussed on the upcoming session. This practice also gave each girl the opportunity to speak, become involved, and recognize that her feelings were important. As well, speaking at the beginning of the session allowed each girl to

hear her own voice, making subsequent participation less threatening. As a group leader, check-ins were helpful in that they gave me a sense of where the group was and how they were feeling. At the beginning of the group the girls were given the option of declining to speak at any time during any of the sessions.

Check-out. At the end of each session there was a check-out. This gave each girl the opportunity to share how she felt about the session, raise any existing concerns, and it also gave each girl a chance to achieve a sense of closure. Along with the check-out, a "self-care" basket was passed around the circle. The basket contained various items, such as, soap, chocolate, hair accessories, candy, etc. As the basket was passed around each girl was invited to take an item; this gave everyone something tangible for self-care and was a small token of my interest in and appreciation for them as individuals.

Written Exercises. During six out of the nine sessions the girls were asked to complete written exercises prior to check-out. The exercises were used as an alternative method for the girls to express themselves and as a tool for the facilitator to become better acquainted with each girl individually. The exercises ranged from the initial session, which involved submitting topics of interest, to completion of the feedback form during the final session. Copies of the exercises are included in appendix E.

Question box. There was a special box available for the girls to use to ask any questions or raise concerns that they did not feel comfortable raising in front of the large group. During each session pencils and paper were available for the

girls to use to add questions to the box. These questions were typed and then placed in the basket with the original topic questions. The girls were also encouraged to ask questions throughout all of the sessions. If they wanted to raise an issue, they did not have to wait until it was picked from the pile of topics.

Individual Follow-up Interviews. After the last session, the girls were told that the facilitator would see them each individually within two weeks from the last session. The interviews were unstructured, and were intended to ensure that the participants each had adequate supports in their lives and to make them aware of resources that they could access if they needed extra support or someone to talk with. It also provided the opportunity to talk more with the girls and to find out their personal reactions to the group after they had some time to process what had taken place. Records of each interview can be found in appendix F. Each girl was given a handout with some important phone numbers, words of encouragement, and a thank you (appendix G).

Discussion and Results

Overall the girls who participated in the group rated it positively. The main objectives were accomplished and these were; helping girls achieve and maintain a positive sense of self, fostering self-acceptance, giving them time to share their personal stories and feelings, and giving them the opportunity to discuss issues that were of importance to them. The ultimate goal was that participants would become increasingly confident in their ability to make choices, develop more assertive communication skills, and be able to speak more freely

about their beliefs. This goal was impossible to reach in the time we spent together, as most people work on this goal throughout their lives. However, a seed was planted and the girls are off to a positive start. Within the group, the girls were encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas; they were listened to, treated with respect, and no one was judged for her beliefs, struggles, or reactions. These were the factors that lead to the groups' success. The specific topics and activities were secondary and of little relative importance, compared with having the opportunity to be heard and respected.

Comments and feedback from the girls provide support for the belief that the group was successful in achieving the above stated goals. The girls were asked to share something they had learned during the experience. Some of these observations included; " the kids in my class are not as critical as I thought they were; I have higher self-esteem than I thought; I was encouraged to look at other perspectives; that I can talk about personal issues without other people gasping; and, that I can be open to discuss my feelings."

Other significant comments from the girls included; "my grades have gone up and I have more confidence; having problems doesn't mean that you are weird; I am a nicer person; I felt that I could say things that I couldn't other places; and, the group was good for support, because individuals didn't have to raise personal issues, but the topics were discussed and suggestions were made." These statements stand on their own in supporting the success of the group and indicating how the girls responded to the opportunity of being able to explore issues in a safe environment.

Results and outcomes that were not anticipated included the following: the girls became more accepting of the differences among them, breaking down some of the barriers caused by social cliques, and they began to work together as a team, both within the group sessions and in their regular classroom. Over one half of the girls indicated that through the group they had become "more accepting of people's individuality" and that "individual groups had become more accepting of other groups/kids". Several girls described their classmates as being more caring and said their class is now more of a group. The classroom teacher indicated that there was "a lot of positive 'fall-out' from the group sessions".

Overall eight out of the ten girls that participated in the group said (without being asked) that they would be interested in doing this again and/or, that the group should have been longer (over more weeks). The classroom teacher, after speaking candidly with her students said, "the experience was certainly worth it from their perspective".

Group Dynamics

As mentioned earlier, the girls were recruited from an all girl classroom, within a co-ed school. The girls had come from separate primary schools to attend Earl Grey, and this was their first academic year together. Therefore although the girls had been recruited from the same classroom, they were not all friends and did not know each other very well.

Having the group over the lunch hour was difficult because this was the only opportunity the girls had to socialize with the boys. Adolescent girls place so

much emphasis on "what boys think" and this often plays a large part in the way they feel about themselves. Providing these girls with private opportunities to develop on their own will perhaps help them to form opinions, independent of the boys. It would be interesting to offer a similar group to girls from a co-ed classroom and observe if they were also reluctant to give up their lunch hour, and if so, would it be for the same reasons?

Group Process

At the first session the girls came with various levels of apprehension. This was exhibited in various ways; some girls were shy and quiet, some listened intently, and some were distracted.

From the beginning it was apparent that there were different levels of interest and commitment among individual girls. I think part of the process for the girls was to determine if this group was 'the cool thing to do'. Some of the girls would make the effort to be punctual and were interested and enthusiastic about participating, while some of the others would stroll in and at the same time interrupt the group dynamics and flow. This lack of commitment was also demonstrated in "the tardy group's" level of participation after they arrived.

Punctuality was definitely a problem that interfered with the group process. The girls who made the effort to arrive on time got very frustrated and raised this issue as a source of conflict. During the fourth session we as a group discussed possible solutions. It was decided that the group would run for forty-five minutes from the time everybody arrived. Therefore if everyone arrived on time, the girls got some free time after the group meeting, and if the girls were late they did not

get any free time. Another stipulation that was made was that if anyone was more than ten minutes late, they were not allowed to participate. After the girls raised this issue and it was discussed within the group, punctuality was no longer a problem. From that session forward, all the girls would race upstairs to the meeting room trying to get there first. This was an excellent demonstration of peer importance in adolescence. It did not matter how I felt about punctuality, however, when raised by peers the issue was taken very seriously.

As a result of the punctuality problem being solved, the individual sessions ran more smoothly without the constant interruptions experienced previously. More of the girls started sharing their thoughts and feelings and wanted to be more involved in the process. There were still some side conversations as well as adolescent giggling, but this was expected. It was a challenge to engage all ten girls in one large discussion.

With each session that passed the girls became more open and trusting. They started to settle down and began to demonstrate more confidence in their self-expression, knowing that they would not be judged for their comments or views. Had time permitted it would have been wonderful to give these girls more time and opportunity to continue their exploration.

Limitations

One limitation was that I expected the girls to interact and explore issues in the same way my peers and myself would; this interfered with my seeing progress along the way. I was not confident and did not believe that the group was useful until after I received feedback from the girls and spoke to them

individually. This turned out to be a good example of how important it was for the girls to have this opportunity to speak without judgement. According to my perspective, wonderful group dynamics were not occurring. The girls were not taking what had been said and building upon it and reacting to it. They were sharing whatever personal thought came into their minds. Of course, adolescents are by nature self-absorbed!

The time limit was another factor that interfered with the groups' ability to build a solid working relationship. The girls themselves pointed out that it would have been more beneficial to have the group run over an extended period of time. Some of the girls had just started to become more comfortable and open up. Another insightful girl said that to have greater, longer lasting effects, the group should have run over more weeks.

Initially the group had a punctuality problem. The girls wanted to participate in the group, but were reluctant to come at lunchtime. Other distractions kept them from arriving on time for the group sessions (boys and 7-eleven). The girls that were making an effort to arrive on time raised this issue in the group. It was decided that the door would be closed at 12:10pm and those that did not make it wouldn't be allowed in. It was decided that the group would run for 45 minutes and that if the girls arrived on time, they would have a few minutes of free time after the group to do as they wished. If they did not arrive on time they lost this opportunity. This arrangement worked well. The girls started to make an effort to arrive on time and would run into the room, look at the clock, and announce their arrival!

Another pitfall to holding the group at lunchtime was that the girls were required to give up all of their free time. One girl made an impressive point, "the system must think that after elementary school, fresh air is not important any more". Some of the girls missed their free time and the opportunity to be outside. Another problem with lunchtime was that the group was limited to 45 minutes. Having more time would have allowed for more time-consuming activities.

Summary

In facilitating 'Let's Talk About It' the intent was to provide some of the essential skills and support the girls would require as they made their way through adolescence. It was interesting to hear about the girls' opinions, their goals, and their fears. By providing the girls with the opportunity to explore these things it was hoped that they would become more able and confident in their decision making. As well, the more knowledge these girls have the better their chance of surviving in our society. Increasing their knowledge, sharing their perspectives, and building their self-confidence reduces their chances of being abused, harassed, pressured, or experiencing any of the other dangers associated with being an adolescent female. It is important for all girls to explore the impact that culture exerts on their growth and development. They can all benefit from consciousness-raising. Once girls understand the effects of the culture on their lives, they can respond to it more effectively. They learn they have conscious choices to make and ultimate responsibility for those choices. Intelligent resistance keeps the true self alive (Pipher, 1994).

The exercises and topics discussed in the group were secondary to providing a safe environment for the girls to express themselves and explore issues without being judged. It was the opportunity more than the content covered, that was the stimulus for growth. Change cannot occur overnight, but the process was definitely started for the girls who took part in 'Let's Talk About It'.

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Appendix A
EARL GREY SCHOOL

Date: February 11, 1998

Dear Parent (s),

I am a Masters of Education student in the Faculty of Education, specializing in the area of School Psychology, at the University of Manitoba. In order to complete my practicum requirements, I am running a discussion group for grade seven girls. Your daughter has shown interest in being a participant in this group. The group will meet at Earl Grey School, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, over the lunch hour, and will run from February 24th to March 26th. The focus of the group will be to facilitate self-acceptance and to help the girls explore some of the issues that they may face as they move through adolescence. The girls will be given the opportunity to choose what topics they want to discuss. Some of these may include; peer pressure, dating, healthy relationships, body image, decision making, and cultural stereotypes.

I will be submitting a written report after the group is completed. The information in this report will come from my observations of the group and written notes about the topics and any issues that come up during or after the sessions. The girls will also be asked to fill out suggestion forms in the first session, to indicate what topics are of interest to them, and feedback forms in the last session, to indicate what they found useful and what should be changed. As well, the girls will be given written exercises to do each week (time will be given during the sessions) and I may be using information taken from these exercises in my report. The girls are not required to put any identifying information on any of their work. Their identities will be protected at all times and in the written report pseudonyms will be used. After the report has been completed, all personal information and data pertaining to the group will be destroyed, to ensure that the girls' anonymity is protected. I will however provide all of the participants and their parents with a summary of the findings.

The entire group will sign and agree to a confidentiality policy prior to the start of the group. This policy will state that no information shared in the group is to be discussed outside of the group. It will also state that I am required to report any disclosure of abuse or any other risk of personal harm. Please note that, if desired, the girls may withdraw from the group at anytime without penalty.

I am excited about working with the upcoming group, "Let's Talk About It" for adolescent girls, and expect that this group will be a positive experience for your daughter. Your cooperation in signing and returning the bottom portion of this form prior to Thursday, February 19th is appreciated. If you have any questions, or wish further information about my qualifications, please contact myself, Kathleen McNamara at 489-1346, or my supervisor Dr. Riva Bartell at 474 9048.

Sincerely,

Kathleen McNamara

My daughter _____ has my permission to participate in "Let's Talk About It", a group for adolescent girls at Earl Grey School. Signed February _____ 1998.

Parent Signature

Appendix B

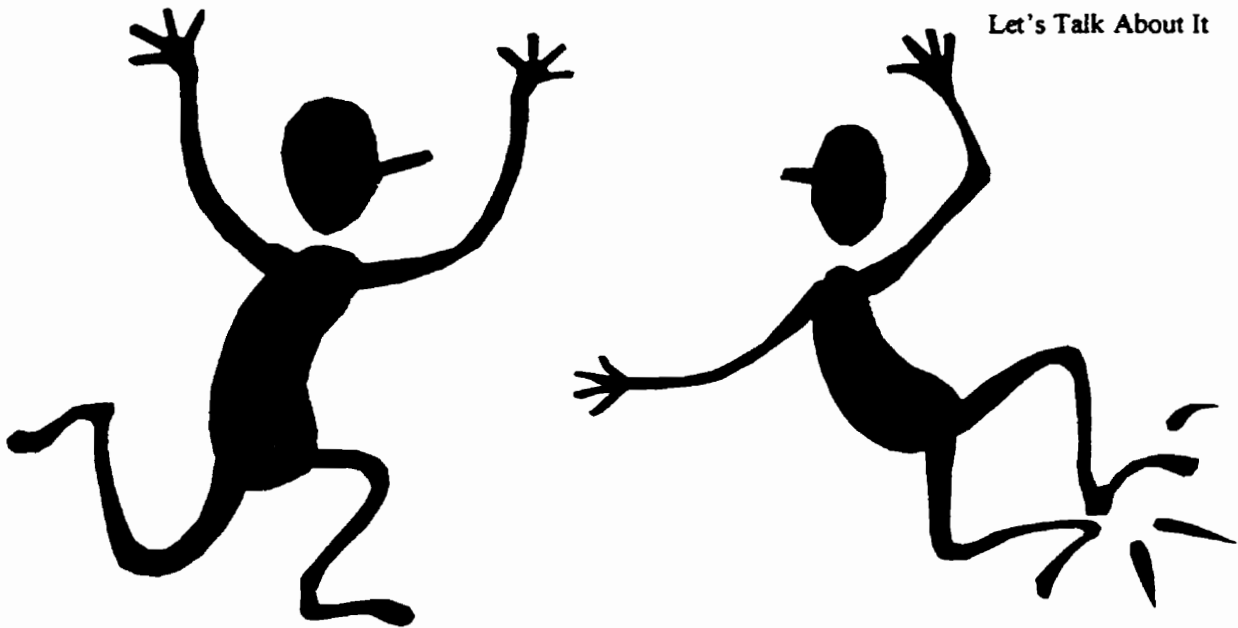
February 24, 1998

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

As a group and as individuals we agree to honor this contract. We understand that what is shared in the group is not to be discussed at any other time, with any person that is outside of the group. We have discussed the value and importance of maintaining confidentiality, and agree to this in policy and principle. The conditions under which confidentiality must be broken have been explained, and these are; 1) if we indicate that we are thinking of causing harm to ourselves or another person, and 2) if we indicate that we are being harmed or are at risk of being harmed by another person.

We understand and agree to honor the above contract, signed February 24, 1998.

Participants Signatures,



Appendix C

The Group Statement

This is our group. As a group we have agreed that the following things are expected from each group member: Confidentiality, Respect, Commitment, Honesty and Trust. Together we are responsible for the success or failure of the group. There are two rules for this group: 1) no side conversations, and 2) we must be kind to each other.

Appendix D

Individual Session Outlines

Session One

- Introductions, name cards, and collecting permission slips
- Explanation of Check-in procedure
- Why you chose to come today?
- Discussion re: Confidentiality, the definition, the importance of, having respect for etc.
- Group signing of confidentiality policy
- Discussion of group guidelines; developed "Group Statement"
- First topic: Did you know?
 - 85% of all women are unhappy with their bodies
 - at least 5% of women will suffer from anorexia or bulimia
 - only 10% of women actually like their bodies

Why do you think this is?
- Written exercise: Please write down 1) topics/concerns that are of interest to you, 2) questions that you would like addressed during the group sessions, 3) suggestions you have regarding how the group should be run.
- Check-out and Discussion about the meaning of the "self-care basket"

Session Two

- Check-in
- Review of confidentiality policy
- Read "Group Statement"
- Brief introduction about the basket with the typed topics in it
- Pick a topic: 1) What do friends fight about? How can things be resolved?
2) Discuss both sides of this statement. One person as the parent, the other as the adolescent. You are going to a party, you think all of your friends can stay out until 1:00 am, but your parents have asked you to be home at 11:00pm. How could this conflict be handled in a positive way?
- Check-out/Self-care basket: Something nice you will do for yourself.

Session Three

- Check-in
- Read "Group Statement"
- Pick a topic: Someone from the "in" crowd has invited you to a party, but your best friend is not welcome... Should you go to the party, or find something else to do with your friend?
- Reminder: add any additional questions/topics to the question box
- Check-out/Self-care basket: Thoughts from today.

Session Four

- Check-in
- Read "Group Statement"
- Discuss: Punctuality is a problem. How should we deal with this as a group?
- Pick a topic: 1) Your parents have recently separated and your little brother/sister is very upset. What could you do if you were in a similar situation? 2) Have you ever done something that you knew was wrong because you were with your friends? How did this make you feel?
- Check-out/Self-care basket: Something you are looking forward to this weekend.

Session Five

- Check-in
- Read "Group Statement"
- Pick a topic: 1) What is the difference between boys and girls? 2) Can boys and girls just be friends?
- Written Exercise: Describe your family for me
- Check-out/Self-care basket: Share a thought of your choice.

Session Six

- Check-in
- Read "Group Statement"
- Pick a topic: Reports in the media suggest, that youth violence is increasing. Why do you think this is happening?
- Written Exercise: Tell me about yourself
- Check-out/Self-care basket: What is your favorite kind of pizza?

Session Seven

- Check-in
- Read "Group Statement"
- Pick a topic: 1) At what age do people start dating? 2) What do people do on a first date? 3) Teen sex: Why are kids doing it? What is the difference between love and sex? (NB: Topic #3 was brought up by one of the girls as an aside, this was not in the topic basket)
- Written Exercise: The Me Tree
- Check-out/Self-care Basket: What is your favorite thing to do?

Session Eight

- Check-in
- Read "Group Statement"
- Pick a topic: What do you do if someone tells you that they want to die?
- Written Exercise: When you look in the mirror first thing in the morning, what do you say to yourself?
- Check-out/Self-care basket: Heavy topic today, how do you feel?

Session Nine

- Check-in
- Read "Group Statement"
- Pizza and drinks

- Pick a topic: What are some positive things you can do if you do not like yourself? (ie. your body, your personality, your life, etc.)
- Written Exercise: Feedback Forms
- Closing: Thank you for your participation. I will be coming to meet with you each individually sometime next week, to touch base and listen to any additional comments or concerns that you may have.
- Check-out/Self-care basket: Final comments. Was the group a success or failure?

NB. After every session the facilitator remained available for the girls to speak with if they had any questions, comments, or concerns. Some of the girls at different times remained in the room visiting with each other, or myself, but no major issues or concerns were raised at this time.

Appendix E

Written Exercises

(To complete the following exercises the girls were given time within the sessions, and provided with pens, as well as paper)

A) Please write down 1) topics/concerns that are of interest to you, 2) questions that you would like addressed during the group sessions, and 3) suggestions you have regarding how the group should be run.

B) Describe your family for me

C) Tell me about yourself

D) The Me Tree:

- What are your values?
- Characteristics you are proud of?
- Traits you would like to change?
- Would you like to have a friend like this? Why?

E) Feedback Form:

Please fill out this opinion form. Your feedback is important and I would like to hear from you. Remember there is no right or wrong answer, write down what you think or feel. These forms are confidential; you are not required to include your name or any identifying information. The recommendations will be summarized and each group member will receive a copy. Thank you for your time and participation.

1. What did you like most about the group?
2. If you ran a group like this, what would you do differently?
3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?
4. What do you think you learned about yourself?
5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

Appendix F

Feedback Form Responses

Person A

1. What did you like most about the group?
 - The way everyone has become more talkative. I've really enjoyed hearing about everyone's ideas!
2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?
 - I would enforce the side conversations a little more.
3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?
 - The ones that were most personal.
4. What do you think you learned about yourself?
 - I didn't exactly learn anything about myself, but I learned that the kids in my class are not as critical as I thought they were.
5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.
 - I think it should have been drawn out more.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- It was great!

Person B

1. What did you like most about the group?
 - That you could trust other people and no one would tell your opinions.
2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?
 - More topics on teenagers being abused, using drugs, sex.
3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?
 - Suicide
4. What do you think you learned about yourself?
 - That I have a higher self-esteem than I thought.
5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- No, I liked it

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- I would like to do it another time.

Person C

1. What did you like most about the group?

- I liked talking about topics that I like and getting a treat at the end.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- Nothing

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- Boys, and what you would do if someone said to you that they wanted to die.

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- I don't know.

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- I don't think it was too long or too short, I think we should do this again because it was pretty fun.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- Thanks for the pizza and everything else!

Person D

1. What did you like most about the group?

- The fact that we can talk about anything.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- Nothing.

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- Suicide, death, boys.

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- That I can be open to discuss my feelings.

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- No, it was just right, but I'd like to do it again.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- I also enjoyed the pizza.

Person E

1. What did you like most about the group?

- The fact that we were all together... I think it helped me become friends with some more kids and I learned that they aren't as bad as I thought. I also liked talking about things other people thought about.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- I would make it last longer because I enjoyed it so much!!

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- I'm really not sure- they were all helpful. I think the ones about our thoughts were great.

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- I learned that I can be friends with the other members, even if I thought I couldn't. I learned to say things I wouldn't elsewhere.

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- The group for me was too short. I think some people who came were just starting to open up and it would have been better if it lasted longer, just because it was great!

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- I wish it wasn't over!! I had lots of fun. Love, peace and chicken grease.

Person F

1. What did you like most about the group?

- I liked the discussions because you can say things that otherwise you couldn't.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- Nothing.

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- All of them.

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- Not much of anything new.

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- It was just fine.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- None at all.

Person G

1. What did you like most about the group?

- You can talk about lot's of interesting stuff, and lot's of my friends are here.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- I don't know!

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- All of them! Suicide one especially!

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- That I can talk about my brace and my mom committing (attempting) suicide without people gasping!

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- Too short! People just started to be more open

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- None at all!

Person H

1. What did you like most about the group?

- I liked all the conversations we shared.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- Nothing. I think it's fun just the way it was.

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- (Blank)

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- Not much.

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- No, I liked staying inside.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- This was fun because we would do different things each time.

Person I

1. What did you like most about the group?

- My friends are here, well most of them.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- I don't know.

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- The one about what would you do if someone said they were going to kill them selves.

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- Not much,

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- A little too long at lunchtime because I like going outside.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- (Blank)

Person J

1. What did you like most about the group?

- I liked the discussions the most.

2. If you ran a group like this, What would you do differently?

- Almost nothing.

3. What discussion(s) were most interesting/helpful to you?

- Boys

4. What do you think you learned about yourself?

- Not to date guys at young ages.

5. Was the group too long? Too short? Explain.

- It was good, because we had just enough time to discuss.

Please include any additional comments that you have:

- (Blank)

Appendix G

Individual Interview Records

NOTE: The interviews were unstructured and set up to ensure the girls had adequate supports in their lives. They were also used to get additional feedback from each group member. Each interview began with a brief introduction about why they were being seen individually.

Person A

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person A (A) – Having an outside person coming in was good.

F – In what way?

A – It made it separate from school, we would not talk to teachers' in the same way. The kids were more open to talk to an outsider rather than a teacher because they didn't worry about what they said.

F- Okay, what else?

A- It should have been held over a longer period of time to get greater lasting impact. Also some of the girls were very reluctant to come at lunch.

F-Have you noticed change in your class or classmates?

A-The class is more a group now the class is more caring now. Several people have noticed a change in Person C.

F-How so?

A-Person C now disagrees with Person X now. Person X can be very overpowering and is mean to other people, Person C is now more into stating her own opinions.

F-That's great!

A-Person D is able to open up more and knows that she has options. People are also more open to being friends and accepting people's individuality. The group stimulated discussion among individuals; we're more trusting now.

F-What about the topics? Would you recommend different ones for future groups?

A-Bigger issues in teens, i.e. the curfew in Portage. Issues that are a bit distant from the person.

F-Okay. Now some of the topics we touched on were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people, do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

A-Yes, my family is very close and my friends too. "There are lot's of people that care about me"

F-That's great. Anything else you'd like to add?

A-No, not really.

F- I made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. Also, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

A- Yes.

Person B

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person B (B)- I liked it.

F-Have you noticed change in your class or classmates?

B-We are nicer to each other and more accepting to different people.

F-What else?

B-I figured out I could do things that I didn't think I could do I have more confidence.

F-That's wonderful! What about the topics? Would you recommend different ones for future groups?

B-More things on teens. I.e. date rape, it happens mostly to teens.

F-Okay. Now some of the topics we touched on were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people, do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

B- Yes, my mom and I are close and also Person D.

F-Good, so you feel you could talk to them about things that bothered you or you had questions about?

B-Yes

F- I made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. Also, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

B- Yes.

Person C

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person C (C)- No not really. Person E said I was nicer now.

F-Is that a good thing?

C-Yeah, I guess.

F-Were you not nice before?

C-I was hanging around Person X lot's and she swears at everybody. Now I don't have to hang out with her as much. I can do my own thing.

F-Good. ! What about the topics? Would you recommend different ones for future groups?

C-No

F-Okay. Well some of the topics we touched on were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people; do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

C-Yes

F-Who is that? Who can you share things with?

C-My mom

F-Even if she's not big on you dating?

C- Yeah, she's better now!

F- I made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. Also, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

C- Yeah.

Person D

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person D (D)- No

F-Okay, I have read through some of the things you wrote and I am concerned about you. You seem to be a lot like I was when I was your age. Even though you know you are good at school and sports, you do not think you're good enough.

D- I don't like myself because I don't know who I am. I hate the way I look; I want to change everything about me.

F- Do you know when you started to feel this way?

D- Not really.

F- Do you think other girls your age feel this way?

D- Maybe. I guess.

F-Do you have somebody you can talk to about your feelings?

D-Yes, Person A and Person B

F- That's good, what about your family? I know you said you're not very close to your father, is there anyone else?

D- No, I can't stand my dad and my sister is a stupid twit.

F-You know it's normal to have these feelings and it's okay to need or want to talk about them. I made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. Also, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

D- Yeah.

F- Do you have any other comments or something else you'd like to talk about?

D- Not really, are you going to do this again next year?

F- Probably not next year, but possibly in future years.

D- you should do it next year, so we can do it again.

Person E

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person E (E)- It should have been more weeks and longer. People were just starting to really talk.

F- Have you noticed change in your class or classmates?

E- Relationships with Person C have changed for the better. We used to think she was really rough, just like Person X. But since the group she's gotten nicer and I guess I finally gave her a chance.

F- What else?

E- It helped me to be more open and say things I wouldn't before. The group was good for support, because individuals didn't have to raise personal issues but the topic was discussed and suggestions were made.

F- That's good. Some of the topics we touched on were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people; do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

E- Yes, my mom and I can talk about stuff. My dad and his girlfriend are good too, but I only get to see them on the weekends.

F- But you feel comfortable raising issues that concern you?

E- Yes

F- I made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. Also, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

E- Yes.

Person F

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person F (PF) – Um, I really liked it, are you running the group next year again?

F – No, probably not. Did you notice any changes in the way you and your classmates interact?

PF – No

F- Did you notice any changes in yourself?

PF- Not really.

F- Okay. Some of the topics we touched on were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people; do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

PF- Yes, my mom. I can talk to her about anything.

F- That's really great, I also made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. As well, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

PF- Yes.

Person G

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person G (G)- Well, it should have been longer, because it's fun to talk about things.

F- What else?

G- The group was good, I think the written work should have been more structured.

F- Okay. What about the topics? Would you suggest other ones?

G- They were good, more on runaways and divorce.

F- Okay. Some of the topics we touched on were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people; do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

G- Yes, friends my mom and my dad about some stuff.

F- That's good, I also made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. As well, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

G- Yup!

Person H

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person H (H) – It was fun. I liked the different things that we talked about.

F- Good. When we talked about suicide, you were anxious to change the topic, have you had personal experience with suicide?

H- No, I just don't like it.

F- So is it the concept of suicide that makes you uncomfortable?

H- Yeah.

F- Some of the topics, like suicide, were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people, do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

H- Yes, my mom and dad, and my older sister. My best friend just came to this school too.

F- So that makes you happy I guess?

H- Yeah!

F- I also made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. As well, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

Person I

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person I (I) – I felt bad for saying my sister was pudgy, because she's not really, she's just built that way.

F- Okay, that's all right. Anything else?

I- School is more fun now, because I got closer to some of the girls. Got to know them better. Also it encouraged me to look for another perspectives, because all people have problems, it doesn't mean you're weird.

F- You wrote that suicide was of interest to you, why?

I- I learned that when you are sad there are a lot of solutions, just look. It was good to hear that people deal in a variety of ways.

F- You're right, that's really good to understand. Also, some of the topics, like suicide, were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people, do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

I- Yes, my mom, and some of my friends from here and my old school.

F- That's good, I also made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. Also, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

I- Yes

Person J

Facilitator (F) – The group ended about two weeks ago, do you have any additional comments or after thoughts?

Person J (J) – I really enjoyed it because we could say things that we don't usually talk about.

F- What else?

J- Individual groups have become more accepting of other groups/kids and my grades have gone up!

F- Why do you think your grades have gone up?

J- Well I guess because I have more confidence now. I am also more confident about my appearance, kid's have stopped teasing me after getting to know me.

F- That must feel good? Some of the topics we touched on were personal and may have brought up feelings or issues for people; do you have good support in your life? Do have people you can talk to?

J- Yes, my mom and my dad and his girlfriend.

F- You feel like you can talk to them if things are bugging you?

J- Yes.

F- That's good, I also made a brief list of good resources that you guys can easily access if you need to. Also, you can call me anytime to talk or simply to share something with. Okay?

J- Yes.

Appendix H

**Thank you for your commitment and participation in
the "Group for Girls" program.**

Some of the topics that were discussed may have left you with unanswered questions or unfinished issues. It is important that you talk to someone that you can trust if you are having trouble dealing with some of these things on your own. Below are people and places you can contact if you need to in the future:

- ❖ Your school guidance counselor
- ❖ Clinic Crisis Line - 24hrs. Ph. 786-8686
- ❖ Teen Clinic - 860 Portage Ave. Walk-in hours: Saturdays noon-4pm
- ❖ Women's Health Clinic- Ph. 942-1517
- ❖ Any adult that you trust
- ❖ Myself; if you need additional resources-Ph.489-1346

**Cherish your visions and your dreams, as they are the children of your soul;
the blueprints of your ultimate achievements.**

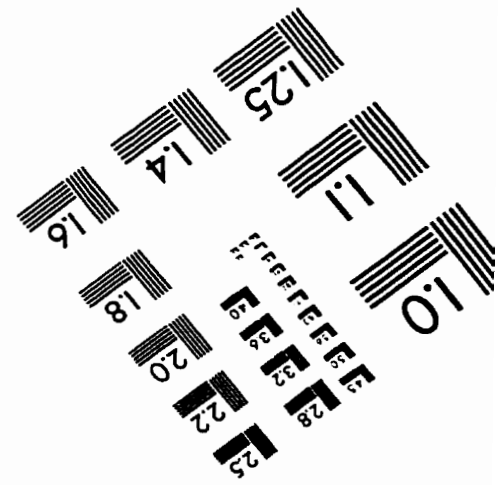
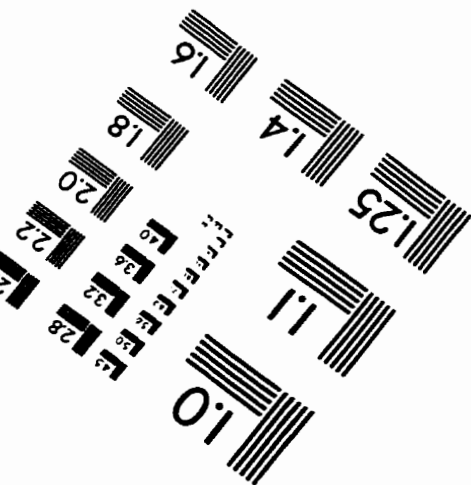
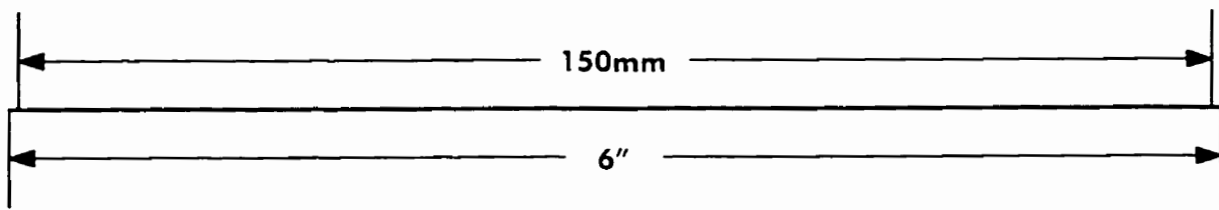
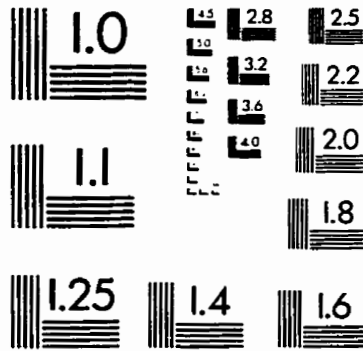
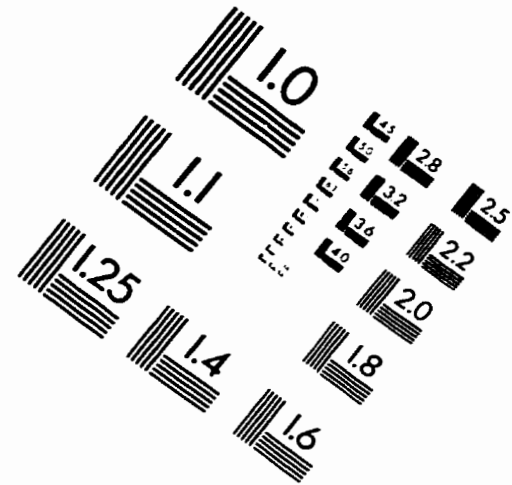
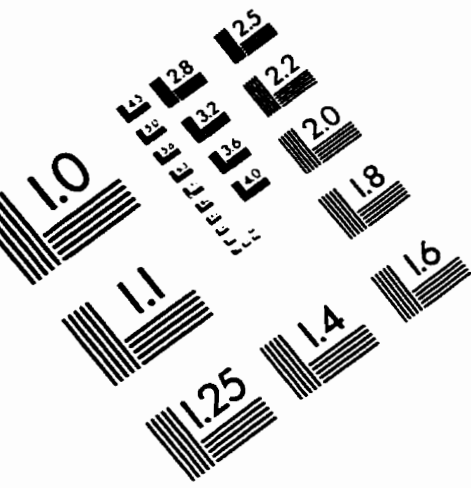
Napolean Hill

**Remember: You are ultimately responsible for the choices you
make, and the choices you make today, will affect the rest of
your life.**

**All of you have very special talents and gifts, thank you for
sharing them.**

Kathy Mc

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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