### Program overview

Many Ways of Being (MWB) is an innovative gender-transformative adolescent sexual health program for youth of all genders and sexual identities, ages 15-19, specifically designed for Washington, DC, predominantly Black and Latinx youth, in schools and community centers.

MWB takes an asset-based approach in both the program and evaluation, to avoid the promotion of shame and stigma around these topics, and to increase positive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) behaviors.



### Overall program goals:

- Reduce incidence of sexually transmitted infection (STIs)
- Reduce unplanned pregnancy
- relationships among youth

- Gender equity and diversity are a catalyst for empathy and understanding

### Key curriculum components

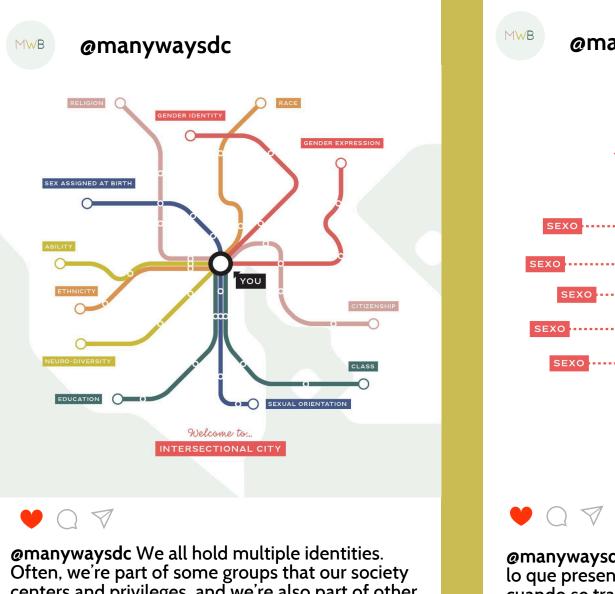
- Diverse representation of genders, sexualities, and relationships, while avoiding
- relationships, and building trust and intimacy by asking/giving consent
- youth's understanding of gender, sex, sexuality, consent, and communication
- the Washington, DC area

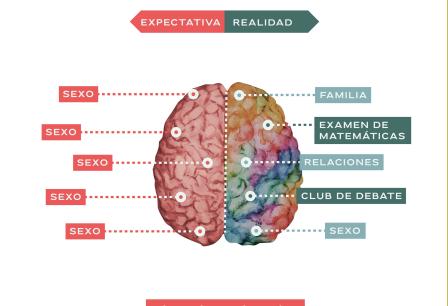
16 hours total, in 2-hr or 1-hr sessions, for school flexibilit

- 5. Sex and Sexuality in Media Today
- 7. Contraceptives and Seeking Services
- 8. The Journey Ahead

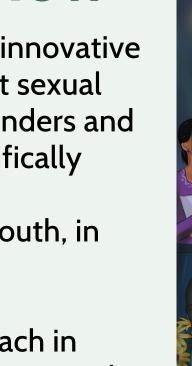
Below are two examples:

### Instagram complementary component





has their own experiences of oppression and It's important to acknowledge that privilege is no given to certain people because they are better than others but because of a broken system that does not value all people equally.



MWB MANY WAYS

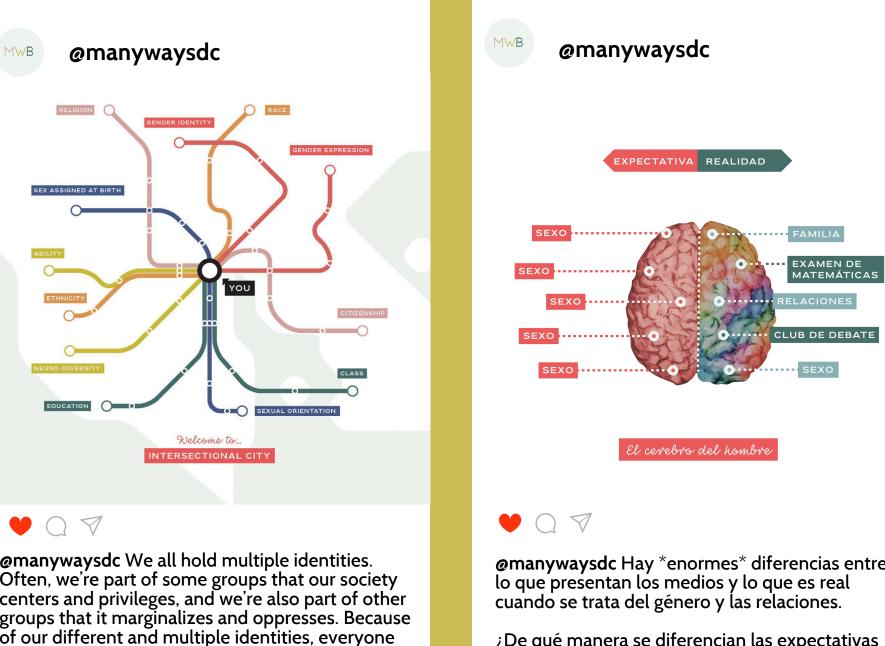
- Promote healthy, consensual, and violence-free

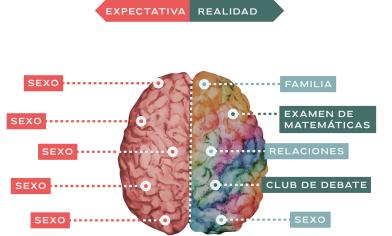
- Intersectional representation is necessary for engagement and learning

- compulsory sexuality and acknowledge the lack of romantic and/or sexual experiences • Pleasure-based approach to emphasize exploring sexuality, understanding healthy
- Critical lens on the digital world to acknowledge the role technology plays in shaping
- Spanish language option to increase accessibility among Spanish-speaking youth in

- 2. Exploring Gender and Identity 3. Understanding and Expressing My Emotions
- 4. Exploring Power and Relationship
- 6. Keeping Yourself and Others Healthy and Safe

## A series of posts to reinforce learning and add positive exposure to online world.





**Evaluation design** 

A Randomized Controlled Trial

(RCT) held from 2023-2026 with

a job readiness control curriculum

use and sexual and reproductive

and self-efficacy.

700 youth, split between MWB and

will focus on sex-positive outcomes,

agency, empowerment, knowledge

De qué manera se diferencian las expectativas

ways. It often leads to against people of all genders, including other men. It can be can lead to many positive and healthier ways of being.

### Why are gender norms important? Gender norms are the accepted and expected characteristics, behaviors, and roles for people based on gender identity

Increased

communication

between partners

### What are gender-transformative approaches?

Interventions that engage all gender identities (especially men and boys) to foster critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics. It is essential to deconstruct gender norms in order to identify unequal power dynamics that can lead to sexual violence.



Citation: Interagency Gender Working Group. (2017). Gender integration continuum. https://www.igwg.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/05/FG\_GendrIntegrContinuum.pdf; Rolleri, L. (2022, January). Shifting gender norms using a gender transformative approach.

# Examples of gender-transformative approach in Many Ways of Being

### Increased healthy, consensual, and violence-free relationships · Decreased STIs · Decreased unplanned pregnancy

Increased knowledge of aender norms, power dynamics, and healthy relationship characteristics

Be small and petite

Submissive, defer to men

Do not express self

**ON-BINARY BOX:** Possible answers

### MAN BOX: Possible answers Do not cry, act tough;

Be big and strong; angry, embarrassed, anxious, Make decisions and take Do not ask for help or

ccommodate others

### Directions: Look at these two charac nd. based on the identities listed abov scuss who might have more power ıd who might have less power in thei

aving sex for the first time and whethe

# example 2

Relationships often have power imbalance related to our gender, sexuality, race, socioeconomic status age, nationality, etc. These imbalances do not always mean a unhealthy, but they do require communication and intentionality to share power together.

# example 2

(man, woman, nonbinary person, etc.) in each community. In

many cases, these norms can influence health outcomes (STI

& HIV risk, mental health & physical health) and relationship

dynamics (discrimination, power imbalance, violence).

How does gender or other

### identities affect power in relationships? How can unequal power lead to violence? What are ways to resolve conflict without the

# example 2

hese two characters are talking abo undaries in their open relationship ationship in which you can date oth

Method: Peer pressure

# These two characters are talking about

Based on our genders, races, and other identity factors, society has different expectations on which emotions we express and which we repress. It is important to feel let ourselves feel all of our emotions. because repressing emotions can negatively impact us, our health, and others. It is critical to find forms of expression that do not cause

Increased prevalence of

 What emotions do we express and what emotions do we hide behind

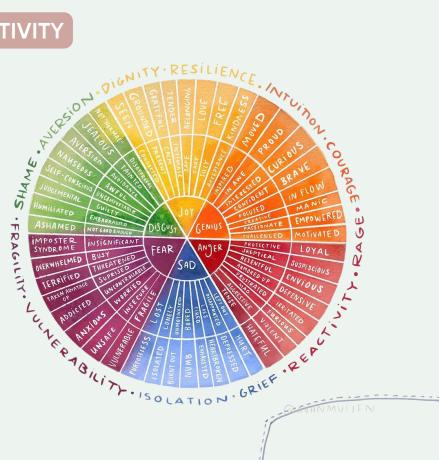
 How has this been influenced by our gender, race, or other

How can expressing feelings more

### openly affect well-being, sexual health, or relationships?

**Emotion masks** 

a mask?



damage to yourselves or to others.

consent in relationships (asking for, providing, and respecting)

### Ways to ask for consent

Are there different expectations, based on gender, about who should vocalize their desires or needs in a sexual experience? How does this relate to asking and giving consent?

### Consent IS NOT:

- ...possible when someone is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol ...only for penetrative sex
- ...automatically given until someone says "no"
- ...automatically given because someone gets ...repeatedly asking someone until a "yes" is

...implied by what clothing someone is or isn't

# Consent IS:

- ...required by all people involved in the sexual
- ...able to be taken back at any time ...necessary even if you're in a committed
- ...only able to be given if all partners are 16 years old or above (DC law)
- ...agreeing to each sexual activity before it ...given freely without pressure

physical harm.

Based on our gender, some of us are expected to always want sex, or to take charge and be dominant, or to comply and submit. Those expectations can impact consent. Asking for consent could be a bit awkward and it takes practice, but it's important to share what you want and need AND listen to and respect the other person's boundaries. Sex without consent is a crime and can cause psychological, emotional, and

### SIRED SKILLS/BEHAVIOR

Inclusive and gender-transformative curricula: Why we need it and how to do it meaningfully

Increased skills and selfefficacy to use contraceptives and condoms

### Communicating about STIs with a partner

What are some double standards, based on gender, about STIs? Why is communicating about STIs so

### STI scenarios

- You just got on birth control. Your partner says that it's great he doesn't have to use condoms anymore. You disagree. How do you bring it up?
- 2 You're hooking up with someone and think you might be about to have some kind of sex soon. They don't say anything about having been tested. How do you bring it
- 3 You just found out you have chlamydia (treatable with antibiotics). How do you bring it up with a partner?

Gendered stereotypes around STIs can affect stigma, shame, seeking care and treatment, and communicating with a partner. It is important to discuss STIs with a partner to feel safe, improve intimacy, use protection, get tested consent to sexual activities, and disclose information.

### ESIRED SKILLS/BEHAVIO

Increased skills and selfefficacy to seek and access SRH services

Do gender norms impact who seeks medical attention? What are some ways that youth could be mistreated in a healthcare setting? What is medical racism is and how that might impact people of color when

### Clinic scenario: Advocating for your rights

Tyrone has started to be sexually active with his partner and decides it's a good idea to have an STI screening and test. In the room, the doctor asks if Tyrone is sexually active, to which he responds, "Yes, but me and my partner always use a condom." The doctor tells Tyrone that he "is not high enough risk for an STI test." Tyrone wants to keep himself and his partner safe and healthy, and he's frustrated by the

Based on our gender, race, and other factors, some of us are more inclined to seek medical attention and treated differently by medical professionals. Youth in general might also be mistreated. It is important to know our rights and how to access adequate SRH

### **Accessing SRH services**

they access healthcare?

doctor's response.

# Measuring outcomes

Measuring gender attitudes and behaviors is important to identify shifts in gender norms (by measuring at baseline and endline) and to evaluate the correlation with SRH indicators, such as use of condoms, other contraceptives, and sexual consent. One useful tool is the Gender-Equitable Men (GEM) Scale, developed by Equimundo, which inquires about prevailing gender norms as well as the effectiveness of a program's influence on them.

MANY WAYS

OF - BEING

equimundo YOUTH

Child TRENDS



Does the MWB program increase positive attitudes around gender equity? One question to measure this in the participant evaluation survey is as follows:

In MWB, the evaluation includes a Secondary Research Question on this topic:

For each statement below, please choose whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with that statement:

- You can tell someone's gender by just looking at them.
- Someone can be a girl or a boy even if that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- A girl who wears sexy clothes should expect to be hit on.
- Sex and sexual pleasure are more important for guys compared to girls. • A guy shouldn't cry in public.
- In a sexual relationship, it is mainly the girl's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.
- Girls often say no to sex when they really mean yes.

The RCT for MWB will conclude in 2026 and the evaluation will include an analysis of gender norm shifts and their impact on SRH outcomes.

### Quotes from MWB participants & facilitators

When youth's lived

in the curriculum.

experiences are reflected,

normalized, and celebrated

When the gender

binary is challenged

and deconstructed.

"The program taught me not only how to be safe and protect myself, but to learn my rights and where I can get help and who I can talk to if I really need someone there. It taught me how to [identify] what's bad in my life now... I might not have seen something as bad before, but I can look at it now and think, 'Maybe I shouldn't keep doing this."

What does gender inclusivity look like?

MWB participant

When "male" and

and expectations.

When all services and

opportunities are open to

all people, regardless of

their gender.

"female" stereotypes do

not define societal roles

"A lot of youth are really frustrated by the things that they see, including harmful gender stereotypes, which might be from parents, siblings, friends. Youth want more equity and the program teaches them that they can challenge harmful stereotypes by giving them some of the tools and the language to be able to do so."

MWB facilitator

"We would use posters...for what people expect from men and women. And also for nonbinary people...Like on the men's side, a stereotype would be how they're not supposed to show their feelings and they're supposed to be powerful and dominant in public. And this could be hurtful...or lead to depression.'

- MWB participant

# Integrating a gender-transformative approach into your program

Even if a program was not designed with a gender-transformative approach, you can still add a gender-transformative lens into facilitation in a few ways:

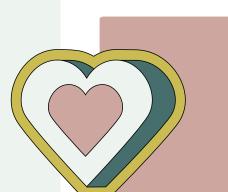
gender, race, and other identities impact our experiences related to each topic Diverse scenarios – adapt the characters referenced in activities to represent more diverse experiences that participants can connect

with or understand how others might have different experiences

Discussion questions – ask about how norms or stereotypes around

 Facilitator identities – diversify the identities of facilitators the program, to allow participants to connect with facilitators of different backgrounds, identities, and perspectives

### We want to hear from you! Take a sticky note and tell us:



What is one way you can include a gendertransformative approach in your

APP Conference: 2024WARD: Building Brighter Futures for Today's Youth Leaders **Dates:** June 25-27, 2024 **FYSB PREIS FAIN: 26-1931968** 

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