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ENHANCING CANADIAN GIRLS' RESILIENCE THROUGH GIRLS-ONLY PROGRAMMING

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ENHANCING CANADIAN GIRLS' RESILIENCE THROUGH GIRLS-ONLY

PROGRAMMING

by

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THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

Master of Arts in Community Psychology

Wilfrid Laurier University

Abstract

Canadian girls face a number of complex issues as they transition through girlhood and into adolescence. Despite the barriers they face, girls can be resilient with the development of internal and external assets. Presently, we know that protective factors developed in girls-only programs between the critical ages of 9 and 13 enhance girls' resilience in the short-term (Alcade, Hayward, Loomis, & Hodgson, 2012). This thesis project operationalizes protective factors as confidence, critical thinking skills, connectedness, and parental relationships. Risk factors are operationalized as adversity within environments, depression, negative behaviours, and substance use. A mixed methods approach is used to investigate two research questions: 1) Are resilience outcomes sustained from ages 9 to 13 through to ages 16 to 20?; and 2) What is the relationship between risk behaviours and protective factors? Eighteen program alumni of girls-only programs were recruited to participate in a survey; three were further recruited for semi-structured interviews; and one case study was analyzed. As hypothesized, results for question 1 reveal that these young women sustained their resilience through adolescent years and report higher rates of confidence, critical thinking skills, and connectedness. Question 2 results reveal complex relationships between risk factor and protective factors.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for awarding me the Canada Graduate Masters scholarship for the 2014-2015 year, which helped lessen financial burdens immensely. I am glad to see it as an acknowledgement for girlhood research.

This work would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my thesis advisor, Dr. Colleen Loomis. I am grateful that Colleen ensured that I develop a mastery over learning, research, writing, and communication skills. My master's program and thesis experience over the past two years has been an immense and powerful learning experience.

I am grateful for the opportunity to complete a community-based research project with members of the Canadian Women's Foundation evaluation team, Judit Alcalde and Karen Hayward. All of my well wishes go towards the wonderful girls and young women involved in girls-only programs across Canada!

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to my committee members, Dr. Robb Travers and Dr. Vanessa Oliver. I am grateful for the time and energy they dedicated to this project given the strict time parameters I imposed. It was a pleasure to work with them both. I would also like to thank the external reviewer, Dr. Karen Stote, for her help with making my work better through stronger understandings of women and gender studies research.

My deepest appreciation is saved for my dear friend Charlie Davis. Charlie has become my biggest supporter and source of 24/7 assistance as we lived (literally) in our office together during this 'master's degree' portion of our lives. I am proud to align myself with Charlie and fortunate that we had each other while we gave everything we had (emotionally, mentally, physically, spiritually, and financially) to obtain a Master of Arts in Community Psychology.

Of course, I would not be anywhere in life without my wonderfully supportive mother (always enthusiastic when I visit home) and my three brothers (my burden relievers). Thank you!

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Introduction

In Canada, despite girls being told that they have the right to become whatever they want to be, they are more likely to face barriers to personal growth and education, and young women are more likely to face barriers to higher education and employment (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2014). While 93% of Canadians agree with the belief that girl and boys should have equal rights and privileges, and agree this is a fundamental Canadian value (Girls Action Foundation, 2013), the reality is that gender-based differences between boys and girls do not even out as they grow up and become adults. The fact that Canadian women continue to face gender-based adversities suggests that a focus on girls' needs should be promoted and intensified (Calhoun Research and Development, et al., 2005).

Despite the barriers girls face during girlhood, they are remarkably strong and resilient, and "with access to resources and support, girls are connected, empowered, and better positioned to become agents of change in their own lives and communities" (Girls Action Foundation, 2013, p.32). Resilience is widely defined as the ability of individuals and communities to develop positive adaptive outcomes and processes despite the presence of significant risks and adversities (Hendrick & Young, 2013; Masten, 2001; Thira, 2009; Ungar, 2008). Community programs designed with girls' best interests can play a major role in preventing the accumulation of risk factors and providing girls with resources and opportunities to develop relationships and voice. Research conducted by the Girls Action Foundation (2013) found Canadian girls-only community programs to have had positive outcomes and benefits for participants regardless of program foci. Recent literature adds that girls-only programs create a safe space for girls and contribute to increased protective factors such as self-confidence, empowerment, critical thinking skills, connectedness, and freedom of movement and expression (Deak and Adams, 2010).

The preventative efforts of community programming impact the individual, familial, community, and societal levels within Canadian girls' lives through the development of protective factors that enhance individual, interpersonal, and social skills, as well as community participation (Roa, Irvine, & Cervantez, 2007). Presently, we know that protective factors enhance girls' resilience in the short-term, within one year of participating in girls-only programming (Hayward, Alcalde, Loomis, & Hodgson, 2011). This thesis project conducted research to examine whether girls-only community programming based on best practices sustains girls' positive resilience outcomes several years after their participation as well as to examine the relationship between protective factors and risk factors.

Theoretical Framework

The vulnerability of Canadian girls is a social justice issue caused by gender inequality. This main argument evokes two underpinning theories: critical theory and socialist feminist theory. Inherent within the main argument is an issue of injustice for Canadian girls. Canadian girls face barriers to an enriched quality of life due to oppressive systemic structures which result in negative impacts on their growth and development. Ages 9 to 13 are a critical development stage as girls begin to develop and question their identity (Iglesias & Cormier, 2002). Societal structures and processes like norms, roles and expectations of girls, violence, bullying, sexual harassment, and sexualization of girls in the media impact girls negatively and lead to low self-esteem, low self-worth, and difficulty connecting with family and friends (Stevens, Morash, & Park, 2011). By the time Canadian girls reach adolescence they experience lower mental and emotional well-being due to negative body image, depression, self-destructive behaviour, problem behaviours that affect physical health such as smoking, drinking, drug use, early pregnancy; poverty; restrictive education paths and career aspirations (Girls Action Foundation,

2013). However, it is important to note that all girls do not experience societal structures and

processes in the same way and to the same degree. Researchers that value critical theory

recognize that both the researcher and the subject of research are results of very complex social

processes, and this current research is oriented towards reflecting on the structures from which

our social reality is constructed (Johnson, 1995). Intersectionality is a central component off

people's complex identities and intersectionality aims at identifying how different social

conditions, varying by time, geographical location, and circumstance, work together to

reproduce conditions of inequality (Morris & Bunjun, 2007). This research aims to apply

intersectionality as an analytical tool for understanding how gender intersections with other

identities to create substantively distinct lived experiences filled with oppressions as well as

privileges. In addition, constructionist theories like critical theory are strengths-based and

emphasize critical exploration of the agency and capacity of subjects of research, such as

Canadian girls (Sanders & Munford, 2009).

  The second theory inherent within the main argument is socialist feminist theory. The

vulnerability of Canadian girls is a social justice issue; therefore, addressing the disadvantaged

social circumstances of women and girls is a step in the right direction for challenging the

dominant patriarchal status quo. Patriarchy has been present in Western society long before the

industrial revolution began in the middle of the 18th century. According to Ehrenreich and

English (2005), authority over the family was vested in elder males across the household, village,

church, and nation. Under the rule of 'the father,' women were subordinates who did not make

choices on their own or question this destiny. With the development of modern North American

capitalism in the 19th century, women became helpless and dependent, in addition to subordinate.

Women's skill and work prior to the introduction of capitalism were crucial for survival of each

self-contained household unit. Women's place and function were lost due to the division of life into two distinct spheres: the public sphere governed by Market, and private sphere for intimate relationships. "The lives of women were thrown into confusion because the workplace was "no life for a woman" but the collapse of the [pre-industrial and pre-capitalism epoch] broke the pattern which tied every woman to a single and unquestionable fate" (Ehrenreich & English, 2005, p.16). Presently, patriarchy is a system based on sex and gender, which values things defined as masculine far higher than things defined as feminine and which allows men to dominate women (Morris & Bunjun, 2007; Tyyskä, 2007). Gender inequality continues as a complex by-product of patriarchy, capitalism, and later on, colonialism.

While feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and how it is experienced or not experienced, there is a fundamental connection between women's struggles and class struggles as outlined by socialist feminist theory (Ehrenreich, 1976). According to Barbara Ehrenreich (1976) and Vappu Tyskkä (2007), socialism understands that capitalist societies are characterized by systemic inequality created by the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class, whereas feminism understands that the subjugation of women to male authority, the objectification of women, and the sexual division of labour are persistent forms of gender inequality based on patriarchal values. Both socialists and feminists believe that systems of class and gender inequality rely on forcible exploitation of the marginalized by the dominant. The synthesis of socialism and feminism indicates that the subjugation of women, witnessed through their higher rates of poverty, violence, sexual harassment, and sexualization (Berman & Jiwani, 2002; Williams, 2010), is sustained not only through patriarchal systems but also through social and economic systems. Gender-based labour markets and a gender-based wage gap result in women being ghettoized in low-status and low-pay occupations and higher percentages of

women, particularly mothers, living in poverty (Krahn & Lowe, 2002). Additionally, men benefit from the double day of occupation and domestic labour performed by women (Ehrenreich & English, 2005; Krahn & Lowe, 2002; Morris & Bunjun, 2007; Tyyskä, 2007). Using an intersectional approach to enhance the context to include women of colour and immigrants displays additional layers of gender inequality. Mianda (2004) outlines that gender, class, and racial inequalities are stronger in the lives of African immigrant women who no longer have support from their extended families back home, face class and racial inequalities through being ghettoized in low-income and instable occupations, and struggle with the domestic division of labour at home.

Understanding how class struggles and women's struggles connect in different socio-cultural-historical settings is the first step to critiquing and changing societal structures. Socialist feminists also agree that women's oppression is universal; however, it takes different forms in different cultures, epochs, and geographical regions of the world. Patriarchal systems may express gender inequality through female infanticide (Ehrenreich, 1976) whereas economic systems may express it as sexual division of labour and an evident gender wage gap (Miranda, 2011; Williams, 2010). The dual systems of capitalism and patriarchy lead to the economic and sexual oppression of women which trickles down to affect girls at a critical age when they are developing their identities and self-esteem (Iglesias & Cormier, 2002). When a young girl's body begins to change at the same time as she becomes aware of the larger society, "it is seemingly at this point that a girl begins to realize that society places much less value on girls and women than it does on boys and men – a realization that impacts directly on her self-esteem" (Calhoun Research & Development et al., 2005, p.ii). In addition, there is a plethora of evidence that harmful societal processes that negatively impact girls' development are carried forward into

adolescence and significantly decrease teens' well-being and women's advancement (Sen, 2001;

Stevens, et al., 2011).

Canadian Context

An overview of Canadian culture is necessary to understand the context in which this

research will occur. The following quote by the Canadian Women's Foundation clearly

illustrates that gender inequality continues to exist in Canada in this day and age:

> "In our society, gender inequality is visible in many areas, including politics, religion,
>
> media, cultural norms, and the workplace. Both men and women receive many messages
>
> – both overt and covert – that it is natural for men to have more social power than
>
> women. In this context, it becomes easier to believe that men have a right to control
>
> women" (2013a, p.3).

In Canada, systemic factors contribute to the disproportionate adversity that faces women over

men. Systemic processes that promote gender inequality result in women spending more time

doing unpaid, domestic work, which leaves less time for paid work, as well as wage

discrimination (Miranda, 2011). While in the workplace, Canadian women earn 65% of what

Canadian men earn through the duration of their lives (Klasen, 2002; Williams, 2010). These

figures are lower when one focuses on racialized women who are aggregated into low-paying

sectors and occupations with part-time hours and little or no benefits (Wallis & Kwok, 2008).

Punam Khosla (2003) adds that recorded poverty rates for single mothers of Ethiopian,

Ghanaian, Somali, Tamil, Vietnamese, and Central American ethnicity are well above eighty

percent which indicate a crisis. Impoverished people in Toronto are dominantly determined by

gender and ethnicity, but women of colour are most likely to find themselves isolated into

communities of poor and racialized people.

Research compiled by the Canadian Women's Foundation (2014) finds that Canadian

women also experience higher rates of domestic and sexual violence than Canadian men. Eighty-

three percent of reported domestic assaults across the provinces and territories are against

women. Research from the past 30 years in Canada shows that women are 3 to 4 times more

likely to be killed by their spouse; spousal violence incidents find women three times as likely to

experience severe violence and sexual violence; 80% of reported dating violence victims are

female; and, finally, 82% of sexual assault victims under the age of 18 are female. Children are

also affected by domestic violence occurring within a home as they are likely to grow up to be

victims of physical abuse or abusers themselves; have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders; and

exposure to violence can also lead to behavioural and emotional disorders (Canadian Women's

Foundation, 2014). Lower earning power for women with children increases their risk of falling

into poverty if they become separated, divorced, or widowed, forcing women to stay in

dangerous and abusive relationships because they are financially dependent on their partner.

Women of colour may also find themselves in situations where they fear for their safety as

women and their well-founded distrust of the policy and other services (Khosla, 2003).

Canadian domestic violence has appeared to decline over the years for a specific

population of women, the decline is partially a contribution of increased financial stability for

these women – despite the fact that 70% of employees working part-time jobs and at minimum

wage are women (YWCA Canada, 2009). This finding shows an evidence-based link between

improving women's economic struggles and reducing gender-based violence. Helping poor

women also helps poor children as Canadian statistics show that 80% of single-parent families

are headed by single mothers with an average net worth of $17,000 (Williams, 2010). Gender

also interacts with ethnicity, language, country of origin, disability, age, and other factors to limit

the access of certain populations of women to economic equality. Statistics Canada census data from 2001 shows that compared to Canadian men's average income, Canadian women earn 62% of what men earn; however, women of colour earn 54% of what Canadian men earn, and Aboriginal women's average income is only 44% of that of Canadian men (Morris and Bunjun, 2007). The connection between gender-based violence and gender-based economic adversity is evident in Canada, which suggests that systemic forces maintaining the many faces of inequality must be investigated at all ecological levels.

Research involving 19 countries shows that higher sexism scores from men are strongly related to higher scores of gender inequality in a country, which makes sense as men are the dominant group (Glick & Fiske, 2001). However, there are two kinds of sexism and a distinction is important. Hostile sexism involves direct antipathy for women and the perception that women and feminists are seeking to control men while benevolent sexism involves cherishing women as pure and loving creatures that ought to be protected (Glick & Fiske, 2001). "Benevolent sexism is disarming. Not only is it subjectively favourable in its characterization of women, but it promises that men's power will be used to women's advantage…" (Glick & Fiske, 2001, pp. 111). Given this distinction, higher hostile sexism scores from men are predictive of increased gender inequality, as well as higher benevolent sexism scores from both men and women. Believing in benevolent sexism as a positive gesture from men pacifies women's resistance to gender inequality as they fail to realize that gender differentiation paints a picture of women as a valuable resource for men that bears and nurtures their children, keeps their homes well-kept, and fulfills sexual and intimacy needs as required. Women that endorse benevolent sexism are more likely to justify benevolent discrimination from non-intimate men, for example sexual

harassment from a boss, as well as hostile discrimination from male partners, such as re-interpreting abuse as a sign of passionate attachment.

Literature Review

Definitions.

There are numerous rationalizations for the usage of terms like race, ethnicity, ethnic minority, and person of colour. This research applies an intersectional lens and favours the label ethnicity over race. The term race refers to individuals' genetic and biological traits that are unalterable. Hereditary assumptions about behaviours and actions are made about individuals when they are seen through the lens of race (Wyatt, 1991). Racial distinctions can often cause confusion for people of colour that attempt to categorize themselves according to hegemonic categories. For example, Latino is sometimes included as a racial categorization but is not connected to genetics or biological make-up for this group of people. The term Latino aims to group together people of Latin American origin or descent and carries political connotations. Excluded from the Latino group are people of Spanish origin outside of the hemisphere. The racial category of Asian is another source of conflict for millions of people that identify as Asian but may tie their origins to Russia, China, Japan, or other countries along the Pacific rim (Wyatt, 1991). These groups do not share similar cultures, values, histories, or spiritual beliefs; however, are forced to check off the 'Asian' box when providing demographic information in the west.

People of colour share experiences of exclusion, if little else. White people are not considered people of colour because they do not share – to the same extent – disadvantages and societal exclusion on the basis of their skin colour (Dhruvarajan, 2000; Morris and Bunjun, 2007). According to Dhruvarajan (2000), people of colour are unified in their experiences of "devaluation, distortion, and stigmatization" while the processes and degrees are varied for each

group (p. 167). Ethnicity can describe your feeling of belonging and attachment to a distinct

group of a larger population that shares your ancestry, skin colour, language, or religion. This

research aims to highlight the narratives of girls of colour that have participated in this research

and give voice to their lived experiences. As Marika Morris and Bénita Bunjun state in their

article developed for the Canadian Research institute for the Advancement of Women, "gender is

never the only issue, sometimes it is not even the major issue in women's experiences and lives.

To fully understand the complexities of women's lives we must look at women's lives

holistically" (2007, p.25)

  Approach.

  A methodologically inclusive research synthesis was used to conduct the literature review

due to the high degree of context that requires framing before identifying the research goals,

objective, and questions. For the purpose of this literature review, research on the issues of

gender inequality and resilience is meant to provide context from which to understand why girls

programming is ideal for the enhancement of girls' resilience. The considerations of a

methodologically inclusive research synthesis include: 1) drawing from relevant philosophical

and theoretical discussions to provide context, such as drawing connections between gender

inequality and girls-only programming; 2) identifying a purpose for review, which is to see what

evidence is out there for and against girls-only programming; 3) searching for relevant evidence,

such as using keywords to search through electronic databases; 4) purposeful selection of

evidence through purposefully informed selective inclusivity; 5) constructing understandings

through the connection of contextual explanations and the rationale for research; and 6)

communicating these understandings with an audience in a transparent fashion (Suri & Clarke,

2009).

Terms such as *girls*, *girl child*, *girlhood*, *development*, *resilience*, *protective factors*, *girls-only*, *programs*, *programming*, *clubs*, and *extracurricular* were included in the search. I paired words together and conducted advanced searches targeting keywords, abstracts, and titles. I looked through databases such as *Women and Gender Studies @ ProQuest*, *Psychology @ ProQuest*, and *PsycInfo*. The journal articles that I found focused predominantly on adolescent-aged girls and their educational issue. Examples include research on girls' lack of interest in mathematics and their emotional and behavioural problems in adolescence. Several contacts at the Canadian Women's Foundation in Toronto provided additional reference sources on the status of women and girls in Canada that they have not currently posted online. Most research on the Canadian girls' experiences lacked a section on girlhood, and skipped from childhood to adolescence. In addition, my inability to find journal articles with up-to-date research syntheses led me to select articles from all time frames and apply purposeful inclusivity.

Resilience Theory

Originating from social psychology, the concept of resilience was indirectly identified in 1943 by Kurt Lewin, a German-American social psychologist. Lewin introduced the theory of understanding behaviour as a function of a person and their environment (Ungar, 2008). This person-in-environment framework posits that a person's behaviours cannot be adequately understood without first understanding their social, political, historical, familial, temporal, spiritual, economic, and physical environment. The very nature of resilience theory and research places individuals and communities in their environmental context in order to understand positive adaptations as well as risks. However, this ecological understanding has not been as dominant in resilience research as it is now. Supported by constructionist and critical theory ideologies, contemporary resilience theory emphasizes an ecological approach to interventions;

strengths-based research of individuals and communities; multifinality (a diverse set of outcome possibilities); as well as valuing the role of social justice, culture, and context in research endeavours (Ungar, 2008).

The body of literature on resilience theory has grown as researchers give more importance to understanding the experience of health despite stressors and adversity, and the value in identifying the strengths of adapting individuals and communities in order to replicate successful coping techniques with populations that are equally vulnerable. Leibenberg and Ungar (2009) outline the distinctive growth in resilience theory and research in North America in the past few decades. The first wave of research in the 1950's was initially focused on studying people who beat the odds of specific types of adversity and who were able to survive. The second wave consisted of research into internal and environmental mechanisms and processes that protected individuals from adversity. It was at this time that the person-in-environment framework, posited by Lewin, was seen as a natural fit for resilience research. The third wave consisted of researchers' interests in the assets of children and youth populations and the understanding that resilience is not simply an innate human motivational force; instead, resilience is present in those individuals and communities that have both internal and external resources.

Anne Masten's (2001) article on resilience as ordinary magic is one of the foundational efforts to disprove the understanding of resilience as belonging to extraordinary individuals with extraordinary qualities. Goldstein and Brooks (2005) elaborate that resilience is much more ordinary for children and youth, and can be seen as "the capacity of children to deal effectively with stress and pressure to cope with everyday challenges, to rebound from disappointment, mistake, trauma and adversity, to develop clear and realistic goals, to solve problems, to interact

comfortably with others and to treat oneself and others with respect and dignity" (p. 3).

According to Anne Masten (2001) and Maria Richaud (2013), internal strengths that contribute

and promote resilience include proper cognitive and self-regulation skills, a positive view of self,

and motivation to learn and engage effectively with the environment. External influences include

competent and caring adults in the family and community, a social support network, and

effective education. Throughout the third wave, resilience research turned towards utilizing

multilevel, ecological approaches to assess beyond individuals (Este, Sitter, & Maclaurin, 2009).

The fourth and most current wave of resilience research has been focusing on the controversy of

who gets to define resilience and set the benchmark for successful and positive adaptation. The

popular opinion among constructionist researchers is that our understanding of resilience is

influenced by our culture and context. The constructionist standpoint maintains that measuring

and designing resilience research in meaningful ways cannot be unbiased efforts (Leibenberg &

Ungar, 2009).

Darien Thira (2009) identifies additional differences in the way researchers can define

resilience. Cultural views of resilience create differences in whether researchers identify with an

individualistic or collectivist definition of resilience. According to Thira (2009), individualistic

views of resilience can be broken down into three models: A) resilience as a quality in which

compensatory personal and social assets help mitigate the effects of complex and multiple risk

factors; B) resilience as a process wherein a resilient goal and a resilient behaviour lead to the

encouragement of promotional factors; and C) resilience as an innate capacity. The collectivist

view of resilience takes the four ecological levels of (individuals, family, community, and

society) into consideration. Resilience is defined as the capacity of individuals, communities, and

organizations to draw on their competencies across ecological levels in order to maintain

relationships and manage challenges and changes, despite the presence of significant

disturbances (Paton, Violante & Smith, 2003). The collectivist view of resilience has a valuable

perspective because it incorporates multilevel factors that can impact individuals' ability to cope

with stressors and adversity; such as individual development, wellbeing, spirituality,

interpersonal relationships, relationships with community and nature, and issues of structure and

function (Thira, 2009).

     Studying resilience must be a reflexive process according to the fourth wave of resilience

research. In identifying how individuals interact with and triumph over adversities located within

their physical and social ecologies, Michael Ungar (2008) claims that resilience can be defined

as a function of three capacities: 1) the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to resources

that sustain wellbeing; 2) the capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide

these resources; and 3) the capacity of individuals and their families and communities to

negotiate culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared. Researching these capacities at

the ecological levels of individual, family, community, and society helps provide deeper

understandings of characteristics and processes that are associated with successful development

based on cultural and contextual judgements of success and development.

     In order to understand the processes behind resilience in individuals and their

environments, researchers can focus on three areas: how individuals develop characteristics that

help them deal with adversity, how to change high-risk environments, and the development of

solutions for interactions between individuals and environments that hinder protective factors.

Conducting research on resilience also involves understanding risks and areas of vulnerability. In

the study of resilience in socially vulnerable children, Maria Richaud (2013) identifies social

vulnerability as a combination of traits, processes, and social determinants that promote risks and

adversities which hinder the development of internal and external resources that act as protective

factors. Environmental factors can increase social vulnerability in an individual's physical

ecology (through lack of housing, lack of safety, poor quality or availability of water and food,

and high level of air pollutants) and social ecology (through poor personal attachments, lack of

opportunities to rites of passage, lack of culturally-determined structural supports like schooling,

transportation, and medical care). All too often, children dealing with adversities in their

environment do not have the protection of basic resources or internal and external resources that

would nurture positive adaptation (Masten, 2001). In addition, risk factors tend to cluster and

children that are high on two or three risk factors are more likely to be high on other unobserved

risk factors (Fraser, Kirby, & Smokowski, 2004). This phenomenon of cumulative effects of

risks, also known as bundling by Fraser, et al., (2004), enhances the complexity of an already

multileveled field of research, and the study of resilience often requires understanding a risk and

resilience framework.

The cumulative-risk model, developed by Rutter (1979) can help us understand how to

promote the well-being of girls (and boys). This hypothesis proposes that risk factors do not act

in isolation of each other; instead, they can accumulate and increase the chances of adverse

outcomes such as emotional and behavioural disorders (Atzaba-Poria, Pike & Deater-Deckard,

2004; Fraser, et al. 2004). Risk factors must be reduced or eliminated in order to promote

resiliency, which is the ability to cope with stressors and adversity, and experience healthy

development through developmental assets. Developmental assets, also known as protective

factors, are internal and external factors within a child's life such as: positive identity and

personality; supportive relationships with parents and teachers; and school, neighbourhood, and

community involvement opportunities that promote the child's healthy development (Masten,

2001; Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wansdersman, Elias, and Dalton, 2012).

George Albee (1982) suggests that preventing incidences of emotional and behavioural

disorders in children involves a formula for increasing their intrapersonal and interpersonal

protective factors, such as self-esteem, coping and social interaction skills, and decreasing

environmental and physical risks as well as stress. Albee's prevention equation formulates risk

over resilience as a ratio:

$$\text{Incidence of disorders} = \frac{\text{Physical vulnerability} + \text{stress}}{\text{Coping skills} + \text{social support} + \text{self-esteem}} = \frac{\text{risk}}{\text{resilience}}$$

The equation indicates that risk is increased due to physical vulnerability (such as environmental

and biological risk factors) and stress levels, and the enhancement of protective factors like

coping skills, social support, and self-esteem can ensure that the ratio of risk is not higher than

the ratio of protective factors (Albee, 1982; Kloos, et al., 2012). Taken together, the cumulative-

risk model and Albee's (1982) prevention equation indicate the need to look at the broader

picture of intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, communal, and social forces that impact

children's development and create risk or resilience (Albee, 1982; Atzaba-Poria, et al.,

2004;Fraser, et al., 2004; Leibenberg & Ungar, 2008).

The cumulative-risk model is crucial for research involving children because of the

greater possibility of making a positive difference in their healthy development at a critical time.

There is substantial empirical support for the cumulative-risk model which states that "the more

accumulated risk children experience, the higher levels of total problem behaviour, externalizing,

and internalizing problems that they displayed" (Atzaba-Poria, et al., 2012, pp.714). Research by

Atzaba-Poria and colleagues (2012) looked at whether intersectionality and ecological

perspectives could be applied to the cumulative-risk model. Risk factors for children's problem

behaviours are present at each ecological level. At the individual level, risk factors include

temperament, gender, intelligence quotient, and self-worth. At a microsystem level, factors

associated with problem behaviours are friendship, the sibling relationship, parenting style and

use of harsh discipline, parent-child relationship, and family style. Within the exosystem,

parental marital relationship, social support, socioeconomic status, and parental work experience

influence children's problem behaviours. Finally, macrosystem risk factors did not yield

consistent results for ethnic minority groups. Through the use of these risk factors identified as

relevant to each of these ecological levels, the researchers posed questionnaires to 125 English

and Indian children as well as their parents.

Atzaba-Poria and colleagues (2012) asked three questions: 1) Do risk factors operate in a

cumulative fashion?; 2) Will cumulative risk variables at the different ecological levels

(individual, microsystem, and exosystem levels) predict different problem behaviours

(externalizing, internalizing, and total problem behaviours)?; and 3) Do cumulative risks

influence ethnic minority and White children in the same way? Results concluded that a higher

quantity of risk experienced by children correlates with more problem behaviours, regardless of

the specific type of risk. An ecological lens is applicable to this model because microsystem

level risk factors were significant predictors of externalizing problem behaviours such as

delinquent and aggressive behaviours, and individual and exosystem level risk factors were able

to predict internalizing problems such as anxiety and depressive symptoms (Atzaba-Poria, et al.,

2012). Results for ethnic difference in risk accumulation found that Indian and English children

appeared to experience and exhibit the same vulnerabilities to risk factors at different ecological levels.

Critique of resilience.

Researchers in the field have developed some scientific concerns and challenges to the construct of resilience, specifically due to the lack of consistency with definitions and terminology (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker, 2000). The cumulative nature of risk and resilience factors means that some research identifies them as single life events or as aggregates of multiple negative or positive events. However, the development of definitions, operationalizations, and diverse instruments and tools with which to measure this construct do not diminish the work done in this field. Instead, these developments enhance the work and allow researchers to find themes and evidence across multiple factors. The robustness of resilience research can also be called into question due to uncertainties in risk measurement (Luthar, et al., 2000): how do researchers interpret the impact or even the positivity or negativity of events in the lives of other people? One final critique of resilience focuses on applying an ecological and holistic view of risk and resilience factors when researching individuals.

Risk and resilience in girls' lives.

In order to understand the development of vulnerabilities at a particular age for girls, a risk and resilience framework is useful because it provides a theory based perspective on how some experiences can lead to vulnerability and some to healthy development (Anderson-Butcher & Cash, 2010; Chaplin, et al., 2006). Norman Garmezy and Emmy Werner were some of the first researchers to talk about children's competence in the face of risk. In the 1940s and 1950s, Garmezy was intrigued when he saw that some children deemed at risk for psychopathology were developing well anyway. This observation initiated cross-discipline collaborations on

understanding how problems develop during childhood and might be subsequently prevented

(Masten & Powell, 2003). Emmy Werner conducted a remarkable 40-year longitudinal study of

the entire 1955 birth cohort in Kauai, Hawaii by following 698 infants from birth to age 40

(Kloos, et al., 2012). One important finding was that 70% of children with high accumulation of

risk factors between birth and age two ended up developing mental or physical disabilities,

behavioural problems, or delinquency by adulthood. This finding supports the cumulative-risk

model because children can handle one or two risk factors in their lives but more than four risk

factors exponentially increase negative outcomes (Kloos, et al., 2012). A second important

finding looks at the 30% of children that did not develop behaviour or learning problems despite

having four or more risk factors in their lives. Werner concluded that resiliency played a major

role in helping these children overcome adversity (Kloos, et al., 2012).

Table 1 presents individual and context based attributes that contribute to resilience that

have been identified by Garmezy and Rutter (Masten & Powell, 2003).

Table 1

Attributes associated with resilience

Individual differences	• Cognitive abilities (IQ scores, attentional skills, executive functioning skills)
	• Self-perceptions of competence, worth, confidence (self-efficacy, self-esteem)
	• Temperament and personality (adaptability, sociability)
	• Self-regulation skills (impulse control, affect, and arousal regulation)
	• Positive outlook on life (hopefulness, belief that life has meaning, faith)
Relationships	• Parenting quality (including warmth, structure and monitoring, expectations)
	• Close relationships with competent adults (parents, relatives, mentors)
	• Connections to prosocial and rule-abiding peers (among older children)
Community resources &	• Good schools
	• Connections to prosocial organizations (clubs, religious groups)

opportunities	• Neighbourhood quality (public safety, collective supervision, libraries, recreation centres)
	• Quality of social services and health care

These attributes can be seen as protective factors within a child's life that can reduce risk in the face of adversity and promote resilience. Protective factors are attributes or conditions that decrease the prevalence of problem behaviours and reduce the effects of risk on healthy development (Anderson-Butcher & Cash, 2010). The development of children's well-being has advanced through prevention efforts that focus on risk reduction as well as enhancement of protective factors. These preventative efforts can be conceptualized through the risk-over-resilience ratio, seen through Albee's (1982) prevention equation. "Protective factors such as self-esteem, feelings of belonging, and the availability and rewards for prosocial activities can alter or nullify youth's responses to risks that predispose them to problem behaviours" (Anderson-Butcher & Cash, 2010, p.672).

Girls' Critical Development Period

Gender is a socially constructed concept of social expectations based on different cultures' perceptions of differences in people based on their sex, and gender expectations are transmitted from the moment of a child's birth (Tyskkä, 2007). In most - but not all - cultures around the world, economic, social, and political roles of people are culturally assigned to one of two genders which became central to our development and personalities. According to Magnusson and Marecek (2012), a child's sex/gender categorization plays a decisive role in their life and the ensuing gender-based privilege or oppression is pervasive in cultural ideologies that link psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual skills and abilities to the two sex

categories. These socially constructed concepts for masculine and feminine are s pervasive that they are believed to be intrinsic and permanent.

Tipper's (1997) literature review on Canadian girlhood finds that gender socialization in childhood affects how children play when they are older. Gender-based socialization is how girls learn to be girls and boys learn to be boys from a very early age. "In many cultures, though not universally, there is a tendency toward socializing girls to adopt nurturing, care-giving roles, and for boys to adopt protector roles. This notion is conveyed through the family, peers, schools, the community, the media and virtually every social institution" (Berman & Jiwani, 2002, pp.2). Boys are socialized to be independent, aggressive, and competitive, while girls are encouraged to be compliant, nurturing, and sensitive. Due to gender-based socialization from birth, girls and boys play with sex-specific roles in order to reproduce their gender roles and identities (Tipper, 1997) – for example, girls' pretend play involves pretending to be a mother, nurse, teacher, fairy, or princess. By giving girls' toys such as vanity sets, kitchen sets, dolls, strollers, and stuffed animals, we are telling them to develop feminine qualities such as cleanliness, care-taking, and communication.

Gender differences are also evident in the emotional and problem behaviours developed by boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 11. According to the Canadian Institute of Child Health (2000), research from the 1994-1995 cycle of National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth indicates that 24% of boys and 17% of girls have one or more emotional or behavioural problem. Boys were more likely to engage in direct aggression through bullying and externalizing problems, while girls were more likely to engage in indirect aggression such as social exclusion. In addition, while boys and girls had similar prevalence of emotional disorders such as anxiety, gender differences were seen through boys' increased rates of conduct disorders

and hyperactivity (CICH, 2000). A search for more recent empirical evidence of Canadian children's experiences within the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth shows that age cohorts of eight through 13 were not surveyed in the most recent survey cycle in 2008-2009. The lack of current research on Canadian children of ages eight through 13 indicates that the important of this critical development stage may not be clear to researchers in Canada.

One in-depth literature and statistical review on the experiences of Canadian girls was conducted by Calhoun Research and Development in 2005. Their goals were to understand what Canadian girls are experiencing and what is needed to help girls reach their optimal potential and competency. Through a synthesis of the literature, the report found that girlhood (anywhere from age 5 to age 12) is lost between the developmental periods of childhood and adolescence, and is vastly underrepresented in girls' research. Existing research tends to focus on children's identity development through school, play, and problem behaviours. This is troubling because girlhood is a time of transition and development of gender identity and there is a greater possibility of making a positive difference in healthy development (Tipper, 1997). A 1997 literature review conducted by the Canadian Institute of Child Health yields only one page on girlhood, while the areas of childhood and adolescence have eight and twelve pages of research, respectively. The lack of quantitative and qualitative research on Canadian girlhood is troubling for research on preventative interventions for pre-adolescents and adolescents.

Brown and Gilligan (1992) conducted qualitative interviews with approximately 25 girls between the ages of seven and 18, over a period of five years. This American study involved socioeconomically privileged Caucasian girls in a private school setting. Their findings add to limited literature on girls' identity development during the critical development period of girlhood.

> … Between the ages of 9 and 13, these latency-age girls were not for sale. They
>
> spoke openly and truthfully. They clearly articulated things about themselves,
>
> what they felt, thought, and desired. They had a very strong sense of personal
>
> authority and considerable trust in themselves. However, by about age 15, if they
>
> chose to speak up and be true to themselves, they ran the risk of not fitting in, of
>
> not belonging. … These 15-year-old girls simply shut down (Iglesias & Cormier,
>
> 2002).

Additional literature adds that the ages of 9 through 13 are an important turning point for girls as they begin to question and form their identity and understand the societal expectations of what a girl should be like (Kaplan & Cole, 2003). More recently in 2007, the Public Health Agency of Canada carried out the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey for young Canadians aged 11 through 15. The survey sample consisted of 9,670 students from Grade six through 10 across Canada. Emotional health and well-being shows a marked decline for girls at the critical time of Grade seven and eight, as seen through their increased feelings of depression and sadness, decreased self-confidence, and increased desire to be someone else from Grade six through nine. Figure 1 shows results from this survey show some significant gender-based differences in vulnerabilities that develop for children during the ages of 11 through 13, known as the transitional period of pre-adolescence.

Protective Factors through Community Programming

Research on the outcomes of school and community programming for children and girls exists but the majority is based in an American context. John Payton and his colleagues (2008) created a technical report summarizing three scientific reviews of research regarding the outcomes of social and emotional learning (SEL) programming in Kindergarten through Grade 8.

Figure 1

Emotional health and well-being results
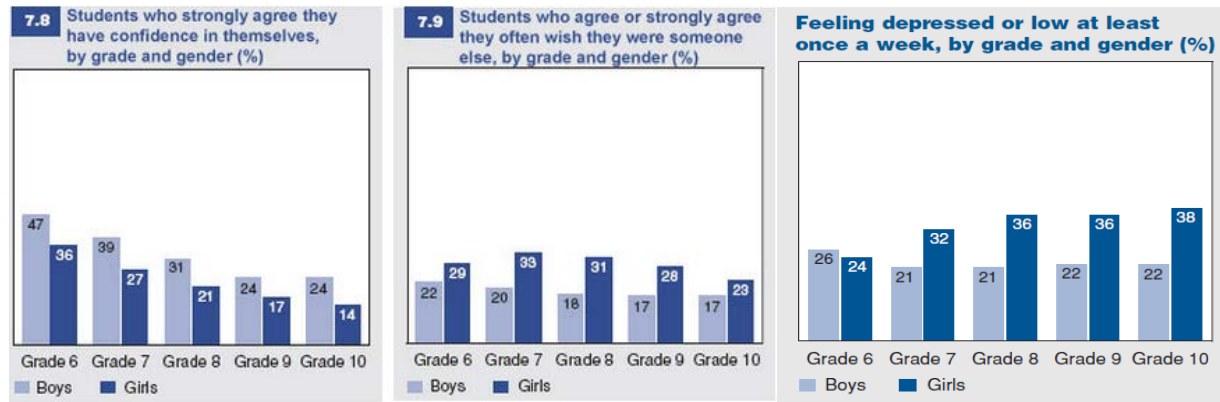
SEL programs focus on teaching children critical social-emotional competencies such as the skills to initiate positive relationships, resolve conflicts and control anger, make responsible decisions, and contribute constructively in various settings (Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, & Pachan, 2008). These school-based programs address five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision making. "Research conducted during the past few decades indicates that social and emotional learning programming for elementary- and middle-school students is a very promising approach to reducing problem behaviours, promoting positive adjustment, and enhancing academic performance" (Payton, et al., 2008, p.5). In addition, SEL programs were found to be effective in ethnically, socio-economically, and geographically diverse populations of children. Outcomes of this programming including an increase in students' academic performance, a decrease in emotional and behavioural problems, and improved social and academic adjustment for students (Payton, et al., 2008).

A meta-analysis of after-school programs by Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan (2010) found similar results. School-based programs that seek to enhance intrapersonal and personal attributes and protective factors had significant positive outcomes on children's self-perceptions, feelings of belonging at school, positive relationship development, and increase academic grades. Halpern (2000) agrees that after-school programming can be a critical developmental resource in the lives of children, especially those who live in low-income households. At the very least, programming can provide children with relationships and activities that are different from or complementary to those provided by school and families. Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, and Martin-Glenn (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of research on out-of-school-time programming (such as after-school programs and summer school) and made conclusions that support the literature thus far. The authors found that out-of-school-time programming can have positive outcomes for at-risk students' reading and math scores, with reading improvements at elementary and secondary school levels, and math improvements mainly for secondary school students.

Both Durlak, et al. (2010) and Halpern (2000) find that programming structure and quality are important considerations, and future research and development of programming should focus on "deliberately [designed] developmental settings that balance safety, a measure of guidance, enrichment, and spaces that children especially those eight or nine and up, can feel they own" (Halpern, 2000, p.203). Qualitative research by Halpern, Barker, and Mollard (2000) on youth programs in Chicago finds that programs that are inclusive and welcoming to a diversity of youth create "an alternative place to be" for youth to spend some time and be themselves outside of school and family. Halpern (2000) and Anderson-Butcher and Cash (2010) also find that programming reduces risk by providing support, space, safety, and supervision.

Evidence exists for the effectiveness of programs that are able to promote positive relationships between youth and adults; cultivate cognitive, emotional, behavioural, moral, and social competence; increase self-efficacy; offer prosocial support groups and environments; and offer opportunities for constructive contributions (Anderson-Butcher & Cash, 2010; Ball, Kerig, and Rosenbluth, 2009; Halpern, 2000; Halpern, Barker, & Mollard, 2000).

Girls-only Programming

Very few evaluations have focused on Canadian girls-only programming, but existing and current research from different countries paints a promising picture of the positive outcomes of programming on girls' resilience (Chaplin, et al., 2006; Roa, et al., 2007). School-based and community programming developed specifically for girls can play a major role in providing opportunities for the development of protective factors that enhance resilience, such as coping strategies; positive self-perceptions and outlooks of life; supportive relationships with family, peers, and mentors; and most importantly, space that is physically safe and separate from boys (Girls Action Foundation, 2013; Roa, et al., 2007). The Canadian Women's Foundation is a committed funder of girls-only programming across Canada and finds that these programs can contribute to increased self-confidence, individual empowerment, increased critical thinking skills; increased connectedness with peers, strategies for creating change; and freedom of expression and movement (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2014; Chaplin, et al., 2006).

A team of evaluation consultants conducted research of twelve girls-only community programs across Canada on behalf of the Canadian Women's Foundation. This team of researchers identifies three main protective factors that are developed for girls through girls-only programming: 1) self-confidence, 2) connectedness, and 3) critical thinking skills (Alcalde, Hayward, Loomis, & Hodgson, 2012). Additional protective factors were also developed, such

as increased focus on personal strengths and skills, community skills, problem-solving skills, enhanced ability to maintain friendships, feeling better about being a girl, increased support from adults and mentors, feeling better about school, and increased knowledge and ability to seek resources when needed.

This team also found a mandatory and critical aspect of girls-only programming that is supported within the literature. In addition to being girls-only, programming should be developed based on best practices (Alcalde, et al. 2012; Calhoun Research and Development et al., 2005; Canadian Women's Foundation, 2014). Two research reports on the experiences of Canadian girls include the following comprehensive list of best practices:

- Specifically developed for girls

- Strengths and asset-based that builds skills and focuses on girls' strengths

- Participatory and involves girls in program design and facilitation

- Develop a safe and girl-friendly space

- Age-appropriate programming developed for different phases of growth and maturation

- Culturally relevant programming that respects and integrates diversity based on location, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and girls' multiple roles

- Accessible with regards to fees, time and location, physical ability, and accommodating of childcare or transportation

- Incorporates critical thinking, skills development and training, and educational aspects

- Encouraging leadership and intergenerational mentoring roles

- Creative and interacting programming (balancing talk and activity)

- Parental support, connection, and involvement built in to the program

- Sufficient support, funding, and involvement at community, regional, or national levels

- Provide an opportunity to make a difference in the community through service and action

  (Calhoun Research and Development et al., 2005; Girls Action Foundation, 2013).

   In her work on the promotion of resilience in socially vulnerable children, Maria Richaud

(2013) finds evidence for intensive interventions which have lasting effects on the cognitive,

emotional, and social development of children. There is also evidence that external, sporadic,

and discontinuous intervention programs produce results but they can be lost over time. Intensive

interventions should be continued over time because the protective factors gained tend to

diminish when interruptions occur. There is a need to examine whether the positive outcomes

from best practices-based programming are sustained over time for girls during a critical period

of girlhood, ages 9 to 13. Additional evidence for this need is seen through evaluations of girls-

only programming funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation. These evaluations asked girls

involved in community programming, their parents, and programming staff to complete

interviews which asked about the development of protective factors and the best practices

utilized by the program (Alcalde, et al., 2012). Furthermore, these interviews were conducted

every year for three years with three different cohorts of girls. The study ran correlations

between girls' ratings of three protective factors (confidence, critical thinking skills, and

connectedness) developed through programming and their ratings of best practices used in the

programs. Results revealed positive correlations between girls' perception of the programs best

practices and their own development of self-confidence, connectedness, and critical thinking

skills. This finding shows evidence for positive impacts on girls' resilience through the

development of protective factors by girls-only programming. However, this finding can only be

interpreted as short-term success as these participants were reflecting on one year of

participation.

A longitudinal evaluation can inform us about the sustainability of programming impacts as a prevention effort that focuses on risk reduction and the enhancement of protective factors for girls. Findings from this longitudinal research can inform future program development, and assess whether programming at the critical girlhood ages of nine through thirteen is enough to maintain the resilience of girls as they journey through adolescence, a phase of life known to reduce girls' self-esteem (Iglesias & Cormier, 2002), and emotional and physical well-being (PHAC, 2007).

Methodological Framework

The methodological framework, in other words beliefs about how to access knowledge as a researcher, will also rely on a feminist framework. Agenda, epistemology, and methods are three main aspects of a methodological framework, and this section will look at the feminist agenda and epistemology. Linda Thompson (1992) proposes that a feminist methodological agenda differentiates between research *on* women and research *for* women. Research o*n* women aims to provide knowledge about women's concerns and issues, in the hopes of sensitizing people to the reality of gender inequality at individual and societal levels. On the other hand, research *for* women is more action-oriented and aims to assist in the emancipation of women and the enhancement of their lives. Research *for* women is a methodological stance that is influenced by a critical emancipatory research paradigm.

Thompson (1992) outlines five key implications of this feminist agenda on research methods: 1) feminist research methods should help women place their personal experiences within sociopolitical contexts. Examples include research on wife battering that examines broader national contexts for marital violence, in order to find that wife battering is higher in wife-dominant marriages when living in locations where the status of women is low. 2) Feminist

research should portray women as active change agents within family settings. For example, research on marital power has found that women struggle to share domestic labour with their husbands but also justify their husbands' behaviours at the expense of gender-based equality. 3) Feminist research should provide insights into alternative domestic arrangements that are non-oppressive. For example, one research study simulated marital equality and observed marital interactions under the ideal settings. Results from this research provide desirable visions for a non-oppressive future. 4) Feminist research should embrace intersectionality and find appropriate and sensitive conditions for justifying their use of quantitative and qualitative research methods. 5) Feminist researchers are encouraged to think outside of the dominant dualisms such as man/woman, private/public, straight/gay, etc. These strategies for incorporating the feminist agenda into research methods can be both qualitative and quantitative. Thompson concludes by stating that "what is needed is not a feminist science without quantification, but a questioning of the authority and glorification of quantification" (Thompson, 1992, p.8).

There is no single feminist epistemology; instead, there are principles that guide our position on what we know and how we know it (Thompson, 1992). The primary principle states that feminists reject the notion of person and research untainted by socio-cultural-historical-political context. Research becomes biased with the selection of problems as well as discovery of solutions. Secondly, knowledge is constructed from personal experience and storytelling, and transparency about intent and interpretations are important for feminist researchers. Thirdly, lived experiences shape ones' understanding of reality and provide epistemic privilege to the speaker. Those occupying dominant positions in society are vested in sustaining the dominant perspective and maintaining their singular understanding of reality. By not acknowledging the reality held by those that are marginalized and focusing on the current 'taken-for-granted'

meanings, dominant groups can protect their privileges. Aligned with the assumptions of a critical emancipatory paradigm is the principle that people that are disadvantaged and marginalized have perceptions of reality that are sensitive to both dominant and minority perspectives. The final epistemological principle adds that holding the stance that there is no absolute truth also means that women's experiences are just one account of reality, which translates to difficulty in choosing qualitative or quantitative research methods.

For many feminist researchers, reconciliation needs to occur between politicized research and positivism (Thompson, 1992). All feminist research involves personal beliefs and a desire for social change, and feminists aim to be transparent about how these values shape their research. However, the dominant positivist ideology does not allow for researchers' values to mingle with practice. In response to this dissonance, feminist empiricists strive to utilize the useful aspects of positivism and reject the offending notion that social reality is untouched by personal concerns and sociopolitical contexts (Thompson, 1992). The useful aspects of positivism would be scientific training and the use of data and observation to find and make knowledge. The research questions, hypothesis, and design follow rules set out by positivism; however, the notion that research should be removed from values is rejected from this thesis project. Our understanding of feminist epistemology is that it is not inherently anti-positivist, as seen by the existence of feminist empiricists. This research is aligned with this feminist agenda and epistemology as we aim to produce research *for* women (and girls) that promotes action at a communal level as schools and communities become better equipped to establish sustainable girls-only programming that enhance girls' resilience.

In their chapter on feminist research, Doucet and Mauthner (2003), agree with Thompson's (1992) differentiation between research *on* women and research *for* women, and

confirm that "current feminist research is characterized by the use of multiple and mixed methods and approaches" (pp.329). Feminist empiricists reject the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy and agree that quantitative and qualitative methods are equally feminist (Thompson, 1992). The application of mixed methods is valuable because feminist research does not need to entirely separate from quantification. Instead, both qualitative and quantitative methods can be tuned to feminist concerns and have value based on the target audience. The target audience for this research will be acknowledged in the knowledge transfer section of this paper.

This research applies a transformative mixed methods framework which contains the following themes: 1) assumptions that rely on ethical stances against the dominant status quo, 2) entering communities with designs that build trust and goals that are transparent, and 3) knowledge transfer processes that can encourage social action, social justice, and transformative change (Creswell, 2014). These themes align with the assumptions made by critical emancipatory paradigm and can be applied best to marginalized groups who experience discrimination and oppression due to gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and immigrant status (Mertens, 2010). Within this framework, establishing partnerships between researcher and community is an important first step, followed by the collection of qualitative data that focuses on establishing trust and learning more about a community and supplementation with quantitative data that adds contextual understanding (Mertens, 2012).

Research Paradigm

The overarching goal for this proposed research is to contribute to the development of girls' resilience through the enhancement of girls-only programming based on best practices. The research objectives, questions, and methods are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Research Objectives, Questions, and Methods

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Research Methods
1. Investigate whether resilience outcomes are sustained over time	Are the resilience outcomes developed through girls-only programming at ages 9 through 13 sustained in to adolescence, specifically to ages 16 to 20?	Secondary analysis, survey, and semi-structured interviews
2. Contribute to a practical understanding of the impacts of protective and risk factors for girls-only programming alumni	What is the relationship between protective factors and risk factors for 16 to 20 year old women who have participated in girls-only programming?	Survey and semi-structured interviews

The hypothesis for the first research question is that girls' protective factors will have been sustained over time, in other words not decreased in spite of challenges faced in adolescent development. The hypothesis for the second research question is that a relationship between protective and risk factors will be negatively correlated, with a higher presence of protective factors indicating lower presence of risk factors. The research questions and their operationalizations are presented in greater detail in the method section of this paper. The following section discusses the research paradigm of choice and how it applies to gender inequality and girls-only programming.

This research is informed by a critical feminist paradigm. This paradigm was chosen due to its vantage point in merging critical theory and feminist theory. Critical theory is utilized when the researchers' primary task is to comprehend the reality of a social problem and adapt or reject internal and external assumptions through critical reflection (Castro-Gómez, 2001; Cox, 1981).

According to Cox (1981), theory has a problem-solving function and a critical function. The

problem-solving function of theory understands reality as it is presented and finds an

ameliorative solution. Critical theory looks beyond the presented reality and asks how that reality

came to be. Solutions generated through critical theory are directed at creating changes within

social and political contexts in order to fix the presenting problem (Castro-Gómez, 2001; Cox,

1981). Traditional problem-solving theory considers that the researcher and their object of

research are separate entities that, with enough scientific rigour, are capable of not interfering

with each other throughout the research process (Castro-Gómez, 2001). Critical theorists, on the

other hand, acknowledge that researchers are not just observers of the object of research, but

both researchers and objects of research are complex social processes and one must critically

reflect on the structures of social reality and the theories that seek to explain it (Castro-Gómez,

2001).

The epistemological stance of a critical theorist would likely state that systems of

knowledge are socially constructed by humans and are immersed in context (Castro-Gómez,

2001; Hoffman, 1987). The processes that occur between the object of research and societal

structures are important for critical theory. I chose this theoretical framework in order to connect

girls and their resiliency through programming with broader societal systems of oppression such

as class and women's struggles.

Critical theory and feminist theory share characteristics with Marxism. Critical theory

embraces Marx's concept of critique and his view that emancipation from systems that sustain

the dominant status quo is a prerequisite to social change (Hoffman, 1987). Feminists connect

with Marxism through the development of socialist feminist theory which maintains that there is

a fundamental connection between economic inequality and gender inequality in contemporary society (Ehrenreich, 1976).

The critical emancipatory paradigm encompasses a critical feminist perspective and operates with the assumption that people and groups, oppressed through systemic forces, can achieve emancipation through individual or collective action (Humble and Morgraine, 2002). Humble and Morgraine (2002) outline four additional critical emancipatory paradigm assumptions: people's self and social perceptions are influenced by their ontological stance; which lead to oppressed people's potential for having a distorted understanding of reality that may contribute to the perpetuation of their situation; however, people are able to critically reflect on oppressive systems in their lives; and they may be liberated from their oppression through empowerment and social action. A critical feminist paradigm would understand knowledge as socially constructed, and that when presented with a social problem, a critical feminist researcher analyzes where issues of injustice are presented and is required to critically reflect on societal systems of oppression, resulting in taking steps toward emancipatory action.

The systemic forces that normalize and entrench gender inequality in our everyday lives have negative impacts on girls' physical and identity development (Iglesias & Cormier, 2002). Sen (2001) finds that oppressed women are not immune to the distorted norms presented to them in patriarchal sociopolitical contexts. In order for critical reflection and emancipatory action to occur, our focus on the liberation of women should be adapted and enhanced to include the promotion of girls' resilience through programming that focuses on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and communal resilience factors. This research is aligned with a critical feminist paradigm because the author understands that gender inequality is inherent within the seemingly minor issue of enhancing girlhood programming. It is hoped that this research can actively support the

growth of programming that enhances girls' resilience and engenders a generation of strong and critical girls.

Method

Design

Research methods for this project were designed with two research questions in mind: 1) Are the resilience outcomes developed through girls-only programming at ages 9 through 13 sustained into adolescence, specifically to ages 16 through 20? 2) What is the relationship between protective factors and risk factors for 16 to 20 year old women who have participated in girls-only programming? The hypotheses of these questions are: 1) Girls' protective factors will have been sustained over time, in other words not decreased in spite of challenges faced in adolescent development, and 2) The relationship between protective and risk factors is negatively correlated, with a higher presence of protective factors indicating lower presence of risk factors. According to John Creswell (2014), a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods can help offset the shortcomings of each other and create robust research.

This research project is designed to collect quantitative data from content analysis of archival data from the Phase 2 Summary report (Alcalde, et al., 2012) which evaluated girls and girls-only programs from 2009 to 2012. Quantitative data is also collected from a survey administered to a sample of the population represented in the Phase 2 Summary report. Qualitative data gathered from narrative interviews will provide additional context and meaning. Interviews play an important function in collecting and co-constructing data, storytelling, and meaning-making (Doucet & Mauthner, 2003). Narrative interviews meant to follow a storyline allow girls' experiences to unfold through storytelling that provides context and enhances meaning (Riessman, 1993).

Triangulation of these three sources of data enhances research validity and enhances the breadth and depth of research. Data collected through these three sources can be used to create an explanatory framework as well as to observe agreement or disagreement between them. Research that relies solely on the researchers' interpretation of data can be criticized as an inaccurate representation of the communities involved and the ethical soundness of this research may also be questioned (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). Using these three methods to gather data, as well as member checks performed during the interview process, this research project can report on results with increased confidence.

Setting.

The research objectives are part of a larger evaluation funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation to evaluate the best practices and the development of protective factors for girls aged 9 to 13 within girls-only community programs. Previous phases of evaluation research have occurred in the form of Phase 1/Pilot in 2006 – 2009 and Phase 2 from 2009 – 2012. The evaluation research team consists of academics from Wilfrid Laurier University, community research consultants, and community programming staff across Canada who network and communicate over formal and informal avenues (annual general meetings and Facebook groups) about ongoing research work. Research questions were approved by the evaluation research team as useful and productive, and will be part of Phase 3 evaluation research for the Canadian Women's Foundation which continues from 2012 - 2016. Due to the Phase 2 data collected from girls, their parents, and programming staff, completing a longitudinal study involving girls who were aged 9 to 13 in 2009 was very feasible with the use of the Phase 2 (2009 – 2012) data.

Sampling & Sample

Survey.

A convenience sampling method was used to recruit girls-only programming alumni aged 16 to 20 who had participated in programming when they were between 9 and 13 years old. See Appendix A for a list of five community programs that participated in this research and Appendix B for a template of the recruitment flyer sent to community program sites.

The sample was comprised of 18 young women; ages of participants ranged from 16 to 20 (M_{age} = 17.36, N = 18). Participants were recruited from five Canadian community program sites that have been running girls-only community programs since Phase 1 (2006 – 2009) of the funding cycle of the Canadian Women's Foundation. Participant reach was estimated to be 100 young women. Most participants were from the Southern Ontario cities of Toronto, Scarborough, and Hamilton (n = 8), a few from Nova Scotia (n = 3), and one from the province of British Columbia; location data were not collected for the first five respondents due to an error in the survey.

Narrative Interviews.

In total, four participants volunteered for further participation through interviews. Participants were recruited at the end of the survey with an invitation to participate in interviews in which they would share more about their stories and experiences of being a girl. Ages of participants ranged from 16 to 20 (M = 17.3, N = 3). One participant was excluded because of her Indigenous cultural identification; engagement with Indigenous participants was not approved by the Research Ethics Board for this project.

Narrative interviewing aimed to provide a contextually-rich and meaningful look into the lives of girls as they grow up and come across adversity and develop resilience. Time constrictions and availability of program alumni were limitations for the data collection period, resulting in three completed interviews instead of the proposed 15 interviews. Ideal participant

recruitment for interviews was meant to involve purposeful inclusivity in order to apply an

intersectionality lens and recruit a diverse sample of participants. In this case, purposeful

inclusivity strategies were not employed and all interested participants were contacted for

interviews, excluding the participant that identified as Indigenous. All three participants

belonged to marginalized ethnicity groups such as South Asian (*n* = 1) and Black (*n* = 2), and

live in Southern Ontario.

Instruments

One survey (see Appendix C) and one semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix D)

were prepared for this project. All participants completed the survey online and all interviews

were conducted over the phone.

Survey.

The survey consisted of seven sections: 1) About Me; 2) Feelings and Behaviours; 3)

Smoking, Drinking, and Drugs; 4) Health; 5) Friends and Family; 6) My Relationships; and 7)

Participation in Girls-Only Programming. Questions were close-ended and related to the

presence of protective factors (such as confidence, critical thinking skills, connectedness, health

behaviours, parental relationships, and positive identity) and risk factors (such as violence,

sexualization, substance usage, negative behaviours and influences) in the girls' lives at multiple

ecological levels. In addition, some questions related to the social determinants of health such as

sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, parents' marital status, and parents' education levels.

Close-ended questions utilized a variety of Likert-type scales with responses that range from '0'

(False/Never) to '4' (True/Always), or other variations. The following instruments were used to

develop the survey.

National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth (NLSCY).

The NLSCY is a Canadian survey that follows children from their birth to early adulthood and is designed with five objectives: 1) determine the prevalence of risk and protective factors, 2) understand how risk factors and life events influence children's development, 3) increase access of knowledge to policy and program developers that have the best interests of children and youth, 4) collect information on biological, social, and economic topics, and 5) collect information about children's environment at multiple ecological levels like family, peers, school, community (Statistics Canada, 2010a). Booklet 23 from the NLSCY Cycle 8 Survey Instruments which was developed for youth aged 16 and 17 was used as a reference point for the survey. Sections from this booklet include: A) Friends and Family, B) About Me, C) Feelings and Behaviours, D) Smoking, Drinking, Drugs, E) Health, F) My Relationships, and G) My Parents. These sections were used almost wholly included in the survey. Questions that were excluded addressed the topics of substance usage of hard drugs, bodily signs of puberty, and suicidality of the participant and exposure to suicidality within their environment. It was felt that these questions were unnecessarily sensitive and upsetting for participants who were invited to share their life experiences in the context of being a girl and girls-only programming. One shortcoming of the NLSCY is the exclusion of LGBTQ populations through the language used, which was modified in the survey to be more inclusive towards marginalized sexual orientations and identities. Additionally, the NSLCY is not attuned to different intersections in the lives of children and youth, such as their ability, ethnic identity, or newcomer status. These intersecting factors may result in youth having different lived experiences and responding in different ways to the concepts covered in the survey such as health, sexuality, and others. Low overall scores on the NLSCY indicate positive outcomes, for example: low scores on questions about depression

indicated less symptoms of depression for youth. The following instruments were all part of the

NLSCY.

Self-Description Questionnaire III (SDQ III).

Two subscales were utilized from H. W. Marsh's Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ

III) which was developed in 1980. The SDQ III was designed specifically to measure 13 factors

of self-concept for adolescents and young adults through 137 items. These 13 self-concept

factors include mathematics, verbal, academic, problem-solving, physical abilities, physical

appearance, relationships with same sex peers, opposite sex peers, and parents, religion,

honesty/reliability, emotional stability, and general self-concept.

A General Self-image scale was created with four of the general self-concept items such

as "In general, I like the way I am" and "A lot of things about me are good" and scored on a 5-

point scale from '0' (False) to '5' (True). Cronbach's alphas for the General Self-image scale are

very strong ($r = 0.817$) (Statistics Canada, 2010b).

Eight items on peer relations from the SDQ III were used to create a Friends scale within

the NLSCY. These items asked questions such as "I get along easily with others my age" and "I

have many friends," and were scored on a 5-point scale from '0' (False) to '5' (True).

Cronbach's alphas for questions on peer relations for the Social Support scale are very strong (r

$= 0.865$) (Statistics Canada, 2010b).

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE).

The GSE scale was developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem (1992) to

assess an optimistic self-belief, which is the belief that one can cope with adversity in various

environments and moments. Ten items such as "I can always manage to solve difficult problems

if I try hard enough" and "I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my

coping abilities" are presented with a 4-point response format ranging from a variation of '0' (Not at all true) to '3' (Exactly true). This scale was added to Section 1: About Me within the survey. Cronbach's alphas for this scale in over 23 countries have ranged from .76 to .90.

Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i).

The EQ-i was included within the NLSCY Cycle 8 Survey Instruments for Youth aged 16 and 17 years old and measures the emotionally and socially intelligent behaviour of youth through 133 short and simple questions. There are five dimensions measured through 15 questions for the purposes of the NLSCY for youth aged 16 and 17. 1) Intrapersonal competencies which are measured through self-awareness and self-expression through items such as "It is easy to tell people how I feel." 2) Interpersonal competencies measured through social awareness and interpersonal relationships involve items such as "I like doing things for others." 3) Adaptability was measured through 3 items on flexibility and problem-solving such as "I come up with many ways of answering a hard question when I want to." 4) Stress management competencies were measured through 3 items on stress tolerance and impulse control, i.e. "When I get angry, I act without thinking." 5) General mood and self-motivation are measured through concepts of happiness and optimism, with 3 items such as "I enjoy the things I do," and "I hope for the best." These 15 items were scored on a 4-point scale ranging from '0' (Very often true of me) to '3' (Rarely true of me). This emotional quotient construct within the NLSCY has a strong Cronbach's alpha reliability ($r = 0.78$) (Statistics Canada, 2010b).

Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC).

This 20-item self-report depression inventory was reduced to 12 items within the NLSCY. With a focus on feelings and behaviours within the week prior to completing the survey, the CES-DC was developed for children aged six to 17 (Weissman, Orvaschel, & Padian,

1980). Items are brief statements which were modified slightly from the original versions such as "I felt like I was too tired to do things" to "I felt that everything I did was an effort." Items were scored on a 4-point scale ranging from '0' (Not at all) to '3' (A lot). Even with the exclusion of 8 items, the reported Cronbach's alpha for the Depression scale was strong ($r = 0.833$) for the purposes of the NLSCY (Statistics Canada, 2010b).

Narrative Interviews.

Interview guides were developed for two 30-minute semi-structured interviews conducted one week apart. Phase 2 (2009 – 2012) of evaluation research with these community programs consisted of interviews completed with girls 9 to 13 and the interview guides used in this earlier phase were referenced while developing a more thorough semi-structured interview process. Specifically, the 2009 interview guide asked 3 items each on the constructs of confidence, critical thinking, and connectedness, and 4 items on the impacts of girls-only programming. Similar questions were created for the current interview guides, for example, question six in the 2009 interview guide asks "What do you think it is about the program that helped you feel [confident/critical/connected]?" and in 2015 we ensured a follow-up question phrased in the following way: "Do you think you learned [confidence/critical thinking/confidence] from the program?" and "Do you think the program impacts the way you are today?"

The main purpose of the narrative interviews was to provide a supplementary qualitative look at the constructs of confidence, critical thinking skills, and connectedness in the lives of participants. The first interview was designed to be introductory and asked about participants' childhoods, likes and dislikes, their current school experiences and future goals. The second interview was designed to ask more in-depth questions about participants' relationships with

parents, siblings, and mentors, as well as their experiences related to their cultural identification.

Finally, participants were asked about their experiences in the girls-only program when they

were younger and whether effects of programming remain within their lives.

Measures

      Survey.

      The NLSCY contains numerous scales which were included within the survey for this

project, along with additional questions about girls programming. Through merging of constructs

and items from these scales, eight quantitative measures were created to identify constructs of

analytical interest for this project, divided into the two categories of Protective factors and Risk

factors. All eight measures were scored on a spectrum with low scores indicating positive

outcomes such as increased presence of protective factors and decreased presence of risk factors.

Higher scores represent negative outcomes for participants, such as decreased protective factors

and increased risk factors.

      Protective Factors.

      1) Confidence.

Confidence is the overall feeling of competence, worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. This

measure consists of seven items asking participants about their perceptions of themselves and

their abilities. These items include: 1) In general, I like the way I am; 2) Overall I have a lot to be

proud of; 3) A lot of things about me are good; 4) When I do something, I do it well; 5) I like the

way I look; 6) I forgive myself when I make a mistake, and 7) I am proud to be a girl/young

woman. Items are scores on a 5-point scale ranging from '0' (True) to '4' (False). Cronbach's

alpha for this measure is very strong ($r = 0.89$).

      2) Critical Thinking.

This measure consists of eight items asking participants about their self-reported self-awareness and problem-solving abilities. These items include: 1) It is easy to tell people how I feel; 2) I can easily talk about my feelings; 3) I can easily describe my feelings; 4) When answering hard questions, I try to think of many solutions; 5) I try to see beyond girls' reputations; 6) I use my words to express my feelings; 7) I try to take care of my emotions and body; and 8) I make my own decisions about if or when to drink or use drugs. These eight items are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from '0' (True) to '4' (False). Cronbach's alpha for this measure is very strong ($r = 0.81$).

   3) Connectedness.

This measure is defined as an overall competency with initiating and maintaining positive relationships and seeking mentors and adults as sources of support. Duration and quality of these relationships is also a component of connectedness. This research identifies connectedness with peers, friends, and adults that are mentors. This measure consists of 16 items, which are 1) It is easy to tell people how I feel; 2) I like doing things for others; 3) I feel bad when people have their feelings hurt; 4) I know when people are upset, even when they say nothing; 5) I get along easily with others my age; 6) Others my age want me to be their friend; 7) I try to see beyond girls' reputations; 8) When I meet a new person, I find things that we have in common; 9) I use my words to express my feelings; 10) I tell adults what I need; 11) I tell people how much they mean to me; 12) I treat girls who are not my friends with respect; 13) I feel my close friends really know who I am; 14) My close friends push me to succeed and to do interesting things I would not do by myself; 15) When I make a decision, I think about all my options; and

16) My close friends push me to do foolish or stupid things. Item 16 is reverse coded. These 16 items are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from '0' (True) to '4' (False). Cronbach's alpha for this measure is very strong ($r = 0.83$).

    4) Parental Relationships.

Relationships with parents are separated from the construct of connectedness due to the in-depth data gathered on participants' relationships with their parents. This measure consists of eight items scored on a 5-point scale ranging from '0' (True) to '4' (False). These items include: 1) How well does your mother understand you?; 2) How fairly does your mother treat you?; 3) How much affection does your mother give you?; 4) How would you describe your relationship with your mom?; 5) How well does your father understand you?; 6) How fairly does your father treat you?; 7) How much affection does your father give you?; and 8) How would you describe your relationship with your father? Cronbach's alpha for this measure is very strong ($r = 0.88$).

    Risk Factors.

    5) Adversity.

The adversity measure is composed of events, people, influences, and environments that would be seen as less than ideal. This measure consists of 18 items including four items on painful recent events such as 1) A painful break-up with a partner; 2) A serious problem in school or at work; 3) The death of someone close to you; and/or the 4) The divorce or separation of your parents. Food insecurity was also considered an adverse experience and was included as item 5) Have you ever experienced being hungry because there was no food in the house or money to buy food? These five items were scores on 2-point scale ranging from '0' (No) or '1' (Yes) because they either occurred or did not occur. The remaining items are scored on a 4-point scale ranging from '0' (Never) to '3' (Many times or Often). These items are: 6) Say something about

you that made you feel extremely uncomfortable?; 7) Threaten to hurt you but not actually hurt you?; 8) How often do you see adults in your house physically fighting, hitting, or otherwise trying to hurt each other?; 9) How many times have you been a passenger in a vehicle when the driver has been drinking/doing drugs?; 10) How many of your friends smoke cigarettes?; 11) How many of your friends drink alcohol?; 12) Have you recently been involved in breaking the law by stealing, hurting someone, or damaging property?; 13) How many of your friends have tried marijuana?; 14) How many of your friends have tried drugs other than marijuana?; 15) How many of your friends have a paying job?; 16) How many of your friends have cut or skipped a day of school without permission?; 17) How many of your friends have been suspended from school?; 18) How many of your friends have dropped out of school for more than a week? Item 15 is reverse coded. The possible minimum and maximum ranges of all 18 items were combined. Cronbach's alpha for this measure is very strong ($r = 0.86$).

6) Depression.

Depressive symptoms were measured for all participants using the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC); however, 7 additional items were excluded which reduces the 20-item original inventory to eight items used within this research. The items were: 1) I did not feel like eating/my appetite was poor; 2) I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing; 3) I felt depressed; 4) I felt hopeful about the future; 5) I was happy; 6) I felt lonely; 7) I enjoyed life; 8) I felt people disliked me. Items 4, 5, and 7 were reverse coded, and all items were scored on a 4-point scale ranging from '0' (Never) to '3' (Most or all of the time). Cronbach's alpha for this measure is very strong ($r = 0.84$).

7) Negative Behaviours.

This measure consists of participants' self-reported frequency and extremity of negative

behaviours such as assault, damage to property, or more minor examples such as staying out

without permission. This measure consists of 11 items: 1) How often do you watch media with a

lot of violence?; 2) Have you stayed out all night without permission?; 3) Were you questioned

by the police about anything you did?; 4) Have you run away from home?; 5) Have you stolen

anything from a store or school?; 6) Have you intentionally damaged or destroyed anything that

did not belong to you?; 7) Have you fought with someone to the point of them needing care for

their injuries?; 8) Have you attacked someone with the intention of seriously hurting him/her?; 9)

Have you carried a weapon for the purpose of defending yourself or using it in a fight?; 10) Have

you sold any drugs?, and 11) Have you attempted to touch anyone in any sexual way knowing

that they would probably object to this? All 11 items were scored on a 4-point scale ranging from

'0' (Never) to '3' (Many times or A lot), and Cronbach's alpha for negative behaviour was very

strong ($r = 0.93$).

     8) Substance Usage.

The final quantitative measure asked participants to report the frequency of any smoking,

drinking, or marijuana usage habits. This measure consists of three items which ask participants

to 1) Describe their experience with cigarettes; 2) Alcohol, and 3) Marijuana or cannabis

products. A 6-point scale was assigned for scoring, ranging from '0' (I have never

smoked/drank/used marijuana or I have stopped) '1' (I have tried smoking/drinking/marijuana

once or twice), '2' (I smoke/drink/use marijuana a few times a year or), '3' (I smoke/drink/use

marijuana once or twice a month), '4' (I smoke/drink/use marijuana 1-2 days a week), '5' (I

smoke/drink/use marijuana 3-5 days a week), to '6' (I smoke/drink/use marijuana 6-7 days a

week).

9) Girls' programs.

This qualitative measure consisted of three open-ended questions and were coded and analyzed with qualitative data from the interviews. These three items were: 1) What have you learned about yourself since participation in programming? 2) What have you learned about other girls that were in programming with you?; and 3) What have you learned about relationships from your participation in programming?

Procedure

Survey.

The recruitment flyer was sent to program managers of the five community program sites that were available and interested in being a part of this project. Program managers were also e-mailed a brief description of our purpose, desired number of participants, and timeline. Program managers dispersed the recruitment flyer by e-mail and on location to young women who were program alumni. Interested participants followed the link on the recruitment flyer which led them to the information letter and consent form for the survey. Completion of the consent form allowed participants to retrieve an anonymized link to the survey that was disconnected from the consent form. This allowed the participants to feel secure about providing sensitive and confidential information without affiliating their name or leaving traces through an IP address.

After completion of the seven sections of the survey, there were three additional sections: Compensation, Invitation for Interview, and Local Resources. The compensation section provided a link to a separate and confidential form requesting name and mailing addresses of participants for the purpose of sending a $15 gift card of their choice to show our appreciation for their time. The gift card choices were Tim Hortons for coffee lovers, Indigo Chapters for readers, and Cineplex Odeon for movie fans. The invitation section provided a link to a

recruitment form for participants interested in sharing more with us about being a girl and their

experiences through girls-only programming. This recruitment form collected demographic

information such as current age, age of participation, ethnicity, and program. The final section

provided a list of local resources for the five geographical areas from which data was being

collected as well as a message of thanks. The average completion time of the survey was 55

minutes. Due to the long distance nature of this research, only young women with access to a

computer at home or at their program site were able to participate in this survey.

Narrative Interviews.

In order to gather more contextual understandings of the lives of girls and the potentially

sustained impacts of program participation, two 30-minute interviews were conducted with

young women from five program sites. These interviews are broken down into two 30-minute

segments over the course of two weeks, in order to help the interviewer build a foundational

relationship with the young women. Initiating with easy questions in Interview 1 and developing

a chance to ask more personal questions by Interview 2 was a strategic way to develop a

relationship and obtain deep and meaningful responses to the personal questions about the

women's lives (Mertens, 2010).

Young women with previous program participation experience were recruited at the end

of the survey and asked if they would like to participate in an interview conducted via phone.

After completing a recruitment form in which they provide basic demographic information and

their email address, participants were emailed a link to an Information letter and Consent form

for the interviews. The initial phone call to participants was used as an introduction and

scheduling opportunity to schedule two 30-minute phone interview times. The two interviews

were conducted over the phone and recorded on an audio device after a pseudonym was chosen.

At the end of the interview, participants were asked if they were interested in a member check process through which they can verify a summarized version of their interviews. None of the participants wanted to proceed with the member check process because they felt that the interview process already included active listening and brief clarification points from the researcher. An additional honorarium of $20 was offered for young women who took the time to participate and they were asked to choose between the three options for a gift card, which was mailed to them along with their gift card for completing the survey. The interviews allowed for connection of girls' experiences from girlhood in 2009 to their adolescent and young adult experiences in 2015, as well as their perception of the larger societal forces that have impacted their lives.

Data Analysis

Three sources of data were analyzed: archival data was culled from the Phase 2 (2009 – 2012) Summary report, primary data collected from the survey ($N = 18$), and semi-structured interviews ($N = 3$). Within the survey, general areas were statistically explored as potential protective factors or risk factors, including: confidence, critical thinking skills, connectedness, parental relationships, adversity within environments, negative behaviours, depression, and substance use. QDA Miner Lite (Provalis Research, 2015) was used to examine the qualitative items on the survey and the interview transcriptions to identify similar themes in addition to the theme of girls-only programming impacts.

    Archival Data.

The Phase 2 Summary report was written by evaluation researchers Judit Alcalde, Karen Hayward, Colleen Loomis, and Pytor Hodgson for the Canadian Women's Foundation at the end of Phase 2 in 2012. The current research is a response to their recommendation for a longitudinal

evaluation of girls' retention of protective factors. Program outcomes within the report emphasized the three main protective factors of confidence, critical thinking skills, and connectedness which were presented through graph, quotes, and discussion. To compensate for the unavailability of raw data and secondary analysis, content analysis was used to determine the values displayed in bar graphs within the report. Means for protective factors were manually calculated and compared to the means of protected factors discovered from the current research. Sample size for this archival data was 401 girls (Time 1) which yielded a possible maximum sample range of 100 young women for the current survey. Data from the Phase 2 Summary report was used to examine the hypothesis for the first research question.

Survey.

The survey included 177 close-ended questions that used Likert scales on agreement ('Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'), frequency ('Never' to 'Always'), importance ('Unimportant' to 'Very important'), and likelihood ('Almost never true' to 'Almost always true'). These scales were 2-point ('Yes' or 'No'), 4-point (Never, A few times, Sometimes, or All the time), 5-point (True, Mostly true, Neutral, Mostly false, or False), or 6-point (specific to 3 items on substance usage). In addition, there were 3 open-ended items in the survey specific to participants' experience in the girls-only program which they attended between the ages of 9 and 13. The survey items and responses were entered into SPSS 20 (IBM Corp., 2011) and given labels and values. Eight measures were developed from items and reliability analyses were conducted to ensure a strong Cronbach's alpha. Only measures with alphas of .80 or higher were accepted and items were included or excluded from each measure. The open-ended questions were entered into QDA Miner Lite (Provalis Research, 2015) and themes were sought based on their relevance to the two categories of protective factors and risk factors. Quantitative data from

the survey will be used to examine hypotheses for both research questions, and the three

qualitative items will be used only for the first research question. The data were entered and

scored in alignment with the scoring system used by Statistics Canada for the NLSCY (2010).

Low scores on the eight measures are indicative of overall positive outcomes in relation to

resilience. For example, scoring a mean percentage of 20% in Confidence would translate to high

presence of Confidence, and a mean percentage of 80% in Confidence would translate to a

negative outcome for that protective factor.

Narrative Interviews.

Six 30-minute audio files from the three interviews were transcribed and thematically

coded using QDA Miner Lite (Provalis Research, 2015). Structural and inductive coding was

used to pull out themes that indicate whether protective factors exist, the presence of risk factors,

and the impacts of girls-only programming. Both forms of coding were applied by creating initial

categories but leaving room to add new categories as they come up. A primary focus was given

to structural coding which was aligned with the research questions and themes included: parental

relationships, confidence, critical thinking, connectedness, depression, adversity, negative

behaviours, and substance use. Inductive coding applies codes derived from the language used

by the participants (Riessman, 2008); however, there were generally consistent terms and phrases

found within the interview language which were relevant to gender inequality and girls'

programming. Inductive coding was added as it was discovered that interviewees shared rich

data about their childhood, school experiences, ambitions, and their culture. Many of these

themes were linked together such as the influence of culture in a young women's girlhood, or

school experiences during childhood. Qualitative data from the interviews was used to examine

the hypothesis for the first research question with a focus on the three main protective factors of

confidence, critical thinking, connectedness, as well as program impacts. The additional themes found through inductive coding of the interviews will also be discussed in the results section. It was decided that the qualitative data will be left in its pure form to be reported and used as quotes to supplement the quantitative data.

Case Study.

Case study research was chosen as an additional data analysis method through which the qualitative data collected through narrative interviews could connect above and beyond the individual level. According to Kohlbacher (2006), case study research is a challenging and powerful strategy for qualitative methods. Neuman (2005) adds that qualitative data are intrinsically meaningful for qualitative researchers, and "immersion [in data] gives the research an intimate familiarity with people's lives and culture" (p. 331). Research must shift focus from positivistic ideas of generalizability and research that is representative of an entire community or population. There is inherent value in being concerned with deeper, richer, and holistic approach to understanding meaning within participants' narratives.

This case study sheds light on resilience outcomes developed through girls-only programming and explores how resilience is sustained into adolescence with an emphasis on the structural factors that may be present in the lives of girls and young women. One of the interviews was chosen as a case study and thematically analyzed with the intention of using a pattern matching analysis strategy. With this strategy, patterns were found between rich narrative data from a young women and the extant literature on protective and risk factors in the lives of girls and young women. In addition, case study research is a qualitative method closely linked with an interpretive paradigm; therefore, critical interpretations of patterns found between one young women and the literature is presented in the Results and Discussion sections.

Results

Research results and the following discussion are categorized by research question. Results for the first research question are from the Phase 2 summary report, survey, and narrative interviews, and the second research assesses data from the survey.

Research Question 1

Archival Data.

The Phase 2 summary (Alcalde, et al., 2012) of girls-only programs funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation conducted interviews with 401 girls that participated in 12 girls-only programs across Canada. Participants from the 12 programs had an age range of 9 to 13 years, with an average age of 12.16 across the three years. Girls reported a diverse range of cultural identification including Canadian, Indigenous, French-Canadian, African, Middle-eastern, European, Caribbean, and others.

Girls-only programs included many protective factor-based outcomes as crucial to their models of best practices. Programs impacting confidence were able to help girls come out of their shell, feel comfortable expressing their opinions, and developing skills that interested the girls. Critical thinking skills were developed by programming through helping girls make better decisions, thinking through and questioning issues, and considering consequences. Connectedness was defined as a sense of belonging within the program and fostering girls' ability to connect with peers, mentors, and adult role models. All programs were able to provide a supportive, friendly, and girls-only environment.

Figure 2 presents girls' self-reported confidence ratings across 3 years, as collected by program coordinators' interviews with girls ($N = 401$). Questions asked girls whether they thought they were feeling more positive about themselves and the things they do as a result of

participating in the program. Overall, the majority of girls (41%) rated that they were feeling 'totally better' about themselves. Girls in Year 3 reported the highest ratings of improvement in confidence due to programming. Without the original raw data or statistical files for data from this report, the coding for this response was interpreted for the purposes of calculating a mean. Responses were coded on a 5-point scale with the response set including '0' (Totally better'), '1' (Somewhat better), '2' (About the same), '3' (A little better), and '4' (Not better). The response range was 0 to 15, and participants' average confidence score was very high ($M = 0.74$).

Figure 3 presents girls' self-reported critical thinking skill ratings across 3 years as collected by program coordinators' interviews with girls ($N = 40$). Girls were asked whether they perceived themselves thinking through issues more, giving more time and thought to decision-making processes, being less impulsive, and considering the consequences to their behaviours and actions as a result of participating in the program. Many girls had difficulty understanding

Figure 2

Girls' Self-Reported Confidence from Phase 2 Summary Report
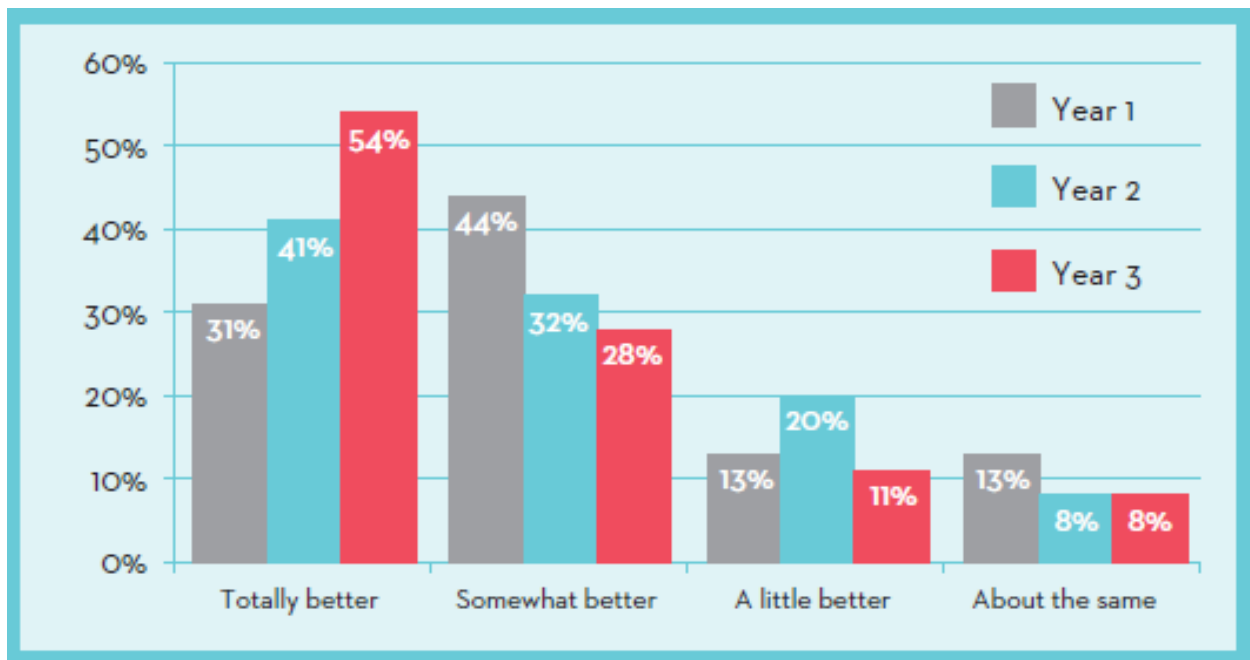
Figure 3

Girls' Self-Reported Critical Thinking Skills from Phase 2 Summary Report
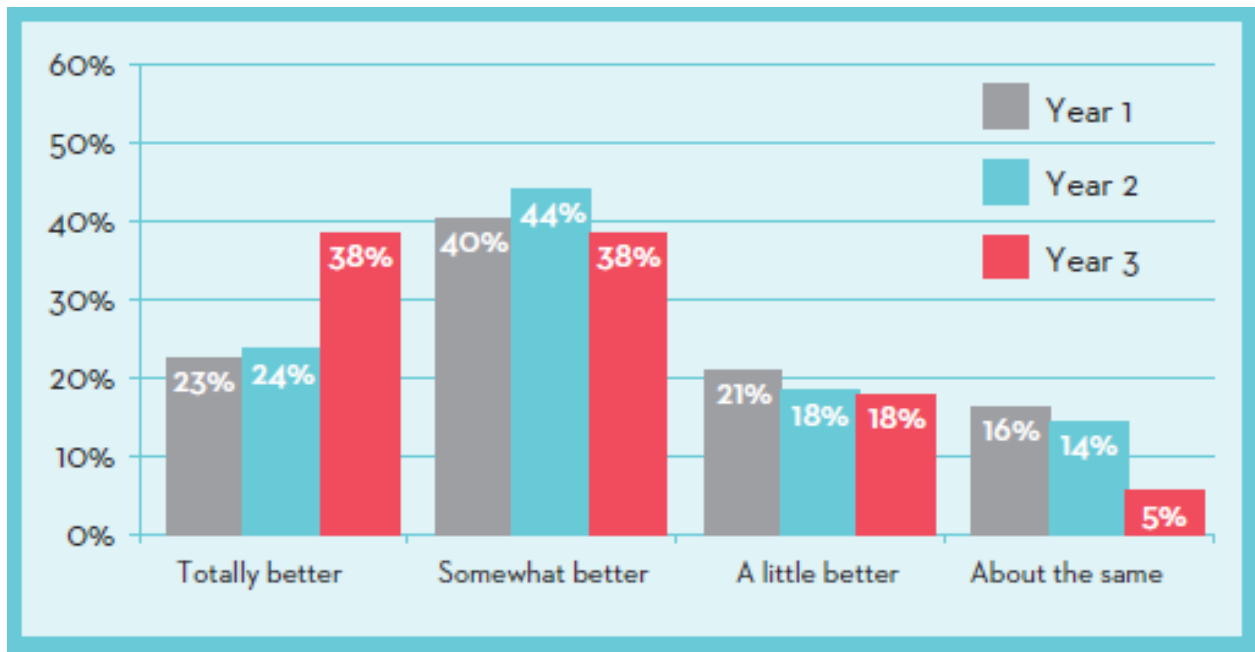
the construct of critical thinking at their young age and the question format was modified each year. Overall, the majority of girls (41%) rated that they were feeling 'somewhat better' about their critical thinking skills. Without the original raw data or statistical files for data from this report, the coding for this response was also interpreted for the purposes of calculating a mean. Responses were coded on a 5-point scale with the response set including '0' (Totally better'), '1' (Somewhat better), '2' (About the same), '3' (A little better), and '4' (Not better). The response range was 0 to 15, and participants' average critical thinking skill score was very high ($M =$ 1.15).

Figure 4 presents girls' self-reported connectedness ratings across 3 years, as collected by program coordinators' interviews with girls ($N = 401$). Questions asked girls whether they thought they were feeling more connected with girls their age and girls at school and in the community as a result of participating in the program. Overall, the majority of girls (42%) rated

that they were feeling 'totally better' about their sense of belonging and connection with others. Examples of connectedness were consistent each year as girls reported making new friends, meeting different types of friends, and strengthening existing friendships. As mentioned previously, without the original raw data or statistical files for data from this report, the coding for this response was interpreted for the purposes of calculating a mean. Responses were coded on a 5-point scale with the response set including '0' (Totally better'), '1' (Somewhat better), '2' (About the same), '3' (A little better), and '4' (Not better). The response range was 0 to 15, and participants' average connectedness score was very high ($M = 0.98$). To summarize, archival data culled from content analysis of Phase 2 evaluation of 401 girls showed that their feelings about their own confidence, connectedness, and critical thinking skills have improved over the course of one year of girls-only programming. There was a slightly higher improvement for

Figure 4

Girls' Self-Reported Connectedness from Phase 2 Summary Report
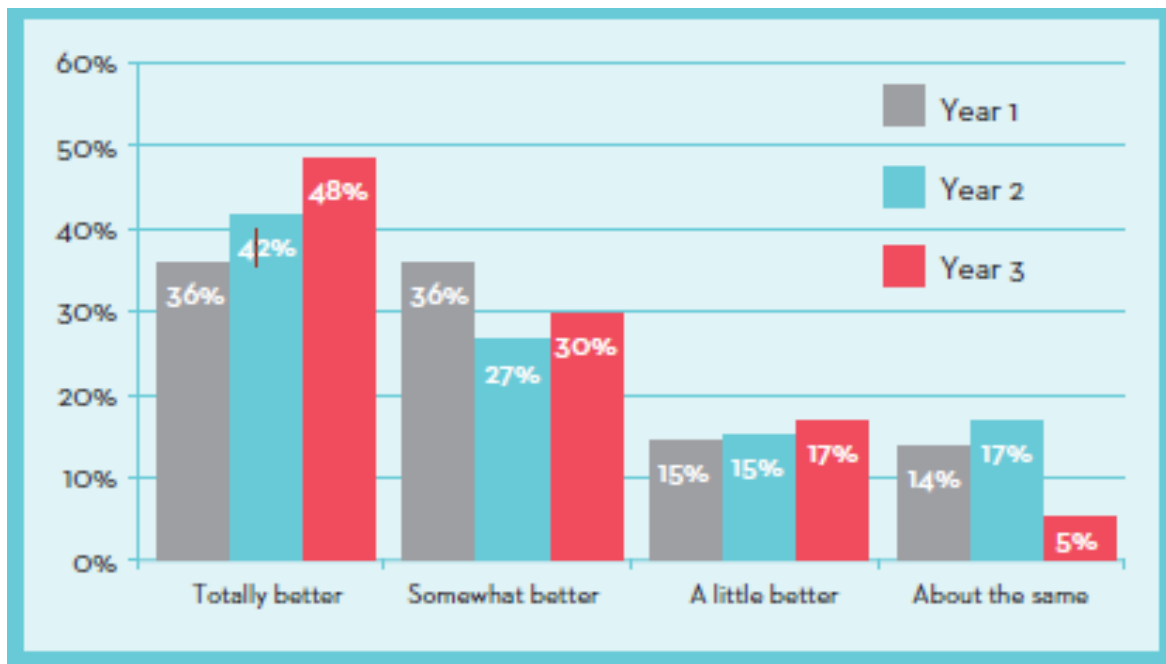
confidence and connectedness, which are more easily operationalized by researchers and understood by young girls.

Survey.

The survey was used as a primary data source to collect data 3 to 6 years after participation in programming. Descriptive information (means, standard deviations, and ranges) for the three protective factor measures created are reported in Table 3. Scoring of the measures was done on a spectrum of low to high presence, with lower mean percentages indicating lower presence than high mean percentages. Participants' average for confidence ($M = 6.94$, $SD = 4.89$), critical thinking ($M = 11.17$, $SD = 5.64$), and connectedness ($M = 17.06$, $SD = 7.83$) were all low, indicating a high presence of these factors in the lives of participants.

Table 3

Description of Eight Measures

	Measure	N	Alpha Reliability	Mean	Mean as %	SD	Response Range	Possible Min & Max
1	Confidence (7 items)	18	.889	6.94	20%	4.893	0 (True) – 4 (False)	0 (high presence of confidence) – 35 (low presence of confidence)
2	Critical Thinking (8 items)	18	.807	11.17	28%	5.639	0 (True) – 4 (False)	0 (high presence of critical thinking skills) – 40 (low critical thinking)
3	Connectedness (16 items)	17	.826	17.06	21%	7.83	0 (True) – 4 (False)	0 (high presence of connected ness) – 80 (low connected ness)
4	Adversity (18 items)	17	.857	13	23%	7.73	0 (No) – 1 (Yes) 0 (Never) – 3 (Many times)	0 (low presence of adversity) – 57 (high adversity)
5	Parental Relationships	15	.872	6.87	43%	4.998	0 (A great deal/ Very	0 (strong relationship) – 16

#		N			%			
	(8 items)						close) – 2 (None/ Not very close)	(weak relationship)
6	Depression (8 items)	18	.838	7.33	23%	4.627	0 (Never or rarely) – 3 (Most or all of the time)	0 (low symptoms of depression) – 32 (high symptoms of depression)
7	Negative Behaviours (11 items)	18	.932	4.67	14%	6.164	0 (Never) – 3 (Many times/ Often/ A lot)	0 (no negative behaviours – 33 (many negative behaviours)
8	Substance Usage (3 items)	17	.844	2.94	16%	3.881	0 (Never used) – 6 (Frequent usage)	0 (low substance usage) – 18 (high usage)

One sample T-tests were conducted to compare the population means of confidence ($M_{Archival} = 0.74$), critical thinking ($M_{Archival} = 1.15$), and connectedness ($M_{Archival} = 0.98$) calculated from the Phase 2 Summary report, with the sample means of confidence ($M = 6.94$), critical thinking ($M = 11.17$), and connectedness ($M = 17.06$) obtained through data analysis of current research. There was a significant effect for confidence, $t(17) = 5.38$, $p < .001$, critical thinking, $t(17) = 7.54$, $p < .001$, and connectedness, $t(17) = 8.47$, $p < .001$ with current participants showing higher presence of these three protective factors than the younger population. This indicates that the sample means for confidence, critical thinking, and connectedness are not due to random chance.

Qualitative items on the survey provide additional data for the hypothesis that girls' resilience will be sustained over time. Participants were asked three open-ended questions: What have you learned about 1) yourself, 2) other girls, and 3) relationships since participation in programming? Numerous statements indicate learnings that continue to impact current confidence. The following quotes were coded under the Confidence theme:

"I have gained confidence about my body and learnt to love who I am." – Miriam

"[I learnt] that [girls] have all their own individual hardships and that they, just like me,

learnt to increase their confidence on a daily basis." – Chantal

"I have learned that I am well equipped to shape my own future – just because something

isn't traditionally directed towards people like me doesn't mean I can't do it, and do it

well." – Kiki

"This program has taught me that I am beautiful, however; it's okay to feel insecure about certain things as long as I do something about it. It has also taught me that being different and being a girl is very tough in this world and that it's not easy but if I keep working hard I can succeed in whatever I do." – Audrey
"I'm more important than I thought and that if I work hard I can achieve my goals [and]

future." – Dina

Many young women felt that they learned a lot about critical thinking during their time in

their programs. The following quotes illustrate how critical thinking was sustained over time:

"I've learned a lot about what it means to be a girl and what it means to me. Being a girl does not depend on your gender but on your sex. I have learned about myself that I am a bit different from other girls and I do not find interest in some things that other girls find interesting like actors/actresses." – Leslie

"I learned about supportive female culture, which is so important in a society that

constantly tears down women and pits them against each other." – Parvati

"I learned that everyone has their own different opinion, and that's okay too." – Keiko

"I've learned that it's useless to try and generalize people; a group of individuals might be completely, wildly different from you, but if they're there for the same reasons you are, there's common ground to be found somewhere, and generally, people are pretty enthusiastic about finding it." – Karen

"I feel like when you're with different people with different personalities you get to learn

more of different people and you also get to see different perspective and different things

that you could be introduced to." – Lewi

"I have learned a lot on how to protect yourself and other information like that; to have

consent; to look past stereotypes and prejudice." – Meng

Connectedness as a protective factor was also addressed in the survey and the following

quotes illustrate learnings about connectedness:

"You're not alone. A lot of people in the world go through things such as bullying, family

loss, fighting with a close friend." – Micaela

"There's something to be said for being strategic when picking teams, and relationships
tend to be the same way. If you don't work well with someone, trying to meet a common
goal can prove to be pretty frustrating, and often doesn't end well. It's important that
everyone in the relationship is contributing equally- you can't just do everything yourself,
and you shouldn't want to- support from like-minded people can make a huge difference in
the end result and the way you end up feeling while getting there." – Emiko

"I've learned that having a strong relationship with someone is important, and needed. You

need someone to be able to talk to and share things with, so that you can express your

feelings and not hold anything in because that can be very unhealthy." – Shawna

"What I have learned about relationships from my other participation in programming is
that in a healthy relationship communication is always key and that when you're upset with
the other person talk to them and use I messages, also stay away from gossip because it
always follows you back, and lastly don't be judgemental and be open-minded." – Hiba

"That building relationship creates a positive effect. I learned that relationships are okay, if

you find the right person. There are loyal friends out there. My relationships with the other

girls have grown into friendships and strong relationships." – Ellie

The survey adds a quantitative look at the self-reported confidence, connectedness and critical

thinking skills of 18 young women that were evaluated in Phase 2. Statistical analysis shows a

significant increase in protective factors over the last 3 to 6 years. Open-ended questions in the

survey showed that young women highly value the development of these protective factors and

their girls-only program experiences.

Narrative Interviews.

Results from the narrative interviews showed participants (N = 3) had retained many

lessons on confidence, critical thinking, and connectedness from their time in the program. All

three participants spoke about their memories of the program and its current impacts:

> "I would describe it as a learning experience. You learned a lot about girls in the media and
> how they're portrayed and how people view girls. […] We learned that girls are viewed in
> a sexual way. It's in commercials and on the internet; we looked at videos where men were
> in place of women in commercials and we saw how stupid it was, and it just looked
> foolish, and something that wasn't equally done and if you put it as a guy." – Lewi

> "I'm really not afraid to talk to anybody, I'm really outgoing, I'm good at making friends,
> I'm good at connecting to people and relating to people and I would say I'm pretty popular,
> like at my school a lot of people know me just because I'm not really afraid to talk to
> anybody." – Rebecca

> "Honestly, it's been really great. [..] Some of the mentees that I had while I was in [the
> program] ended up mentoring afterwards and that was a really beautiful thing for me to
> see. And also overall when I was leading summer camps a few years ago as well, I got to
> make connections with a lot of the youth in my community, like these are girls who if I
> never had the chance to meet and they would have never had the chance to meet me and I
> feel like I was making a difference in their life and they were making a difference in my
> life as well." – Alice

> "[The program] impacted me a lot, it made me open my eyes and really think about what

> I'm watching and what I'm listening to and it taught me how to teach other people about

> what I've learned." – Lewi

In addition to confidence, critical thinking, connectedness, and learnings from the

programs, additional themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews. Just as protective

factors can vary from high to low; the discovered themes were coded as constructs that may vary

on a spectrum from high to low or positive to negative. These themes are parental relationships,

childhood, school environment, mentors, culture, and personal traits. Risk factors were also

found and coded; however, all participants showed positive attitudes immediately after

mentioning risk factors that might be coded as adversity within environment, depression,

negative behaviours and substance use.

In the first interview, participants were asked about their general perception of their

childhood and childhood preferences, followed by their present likes and dislikes. Initially, this

section was meant to introduce the participant into the interview process; however, all three

participants immediately spoke of parental relationships, personal traits, culture, or adversity

within their environment. Examples are provided from two participants:

> "When I came to middle school I was bullied at first, but not that much. The bullying didn't
> really bother me at the time, but most of my friends that I knew were also getting bullied.
> Some stuff came up with my friends, they had been going through stuff like depression and
> we just started to learn about different things and what can affect people." – Lewi

> "Growing up I actually started off when we were immigrating to Canada when I was five
> years old. So I guess that's where I consider the beginning of my childhood […] and I went
> to a school that was filled with other people who were in similar situations as mine but it
> wasn't really the most comfortable environment for me because I felt like even though we
> had all come from the same place I was a little bit different" – Alice

On the topic of immigrating to Canada at the age of 5 and not discovering her favourite activities

until age 12, Alice elaborated:

> "I know that my parents- that my family struggled a lot like, financially at that time. When
> we had sort of come here we actually stayed at a family centre for the first month, but then
> we moved into our own apartment, so […] quite a few years before grade 6, […] my
> family struggled financially and so that was another reason why. For example, my dad
> worked multiple jobs, my mom ran her own business but […] it wouldn't be a normal work
> day, it would be open all day long. But it was from home which was a sort of benefit for
> her. So those are among the things I know from back then." – Alice

> When talking about their relationship with their family members, all three participants

attributed the strength of their relationships to the values instilled by parents. Examples from

each participant are provided here:

> "I would say I get it from my mom, these things that I have learned. I have tried to be open,
> I guess learning different stuff has made me stay more positive, I don't know if that makes

sense. And my mom is just a really friendly, positive person as well, and she tried to make me say things in different ways." – Lewi

"I think my mom has always really emphasized, and my dad has really emphasized, the importance of family and we definitely have grown up with that within us and so I definitely think that we all understand, like we all love each other because of that even more." – Rebecca

"[My parents are] a huge source of support in my life. I would say there are a lot of things that I don't see particularly eye-to-eye with them on because we have grown up in completely different [countries] but we tend to get over things like that and we obviously have a really strong bond so I'd say overall it's healthy, like we have our fights but that's common in any sort of relationship." – Alice

On the topic of current school environments, grades, and future ambitions, all three

participants showed general satisfaction despite difference in school systems and prior

difficulties in school such as bullying, depression, and not fitting in.

"I'm very satisfied with how I'm performing academically and I'm in a program that I really

enjoy and I'm proud of myself actually being able to convince my family members and

even myself to be able to do what I wanted, to get in to university." – Alice

Positive school environments heavily impacted one participant's future ambitions:

"My school had a big base for social justice. We have a big equity council, we have equity assemblies. My school was a very big advocate for social justice and so I got involved with a lot of different initiatives at my school in different areas, and then also through mentoring at the girls' [program] I kind of just wanted to be a… I just liked becoming […] an advocate different people." – Rebecca

Culture was very important to two of the three participants who stated they and their

families follow cultural practices in their daily Canadian lives. All three participants stated they

are proud to be part of their cultural identification and mentioned positive things when asked

how other people perceive their cultures. In addition, all three participants felt that Canadian

societal perceptions of their cultures are neutral, and not good or bad. One quote captures this

sentiment well:

"I think it would be neutral. I think there would definitely be some negative perceptions that like South-Asian people might be cheaper than others or […] have a weird culture to them, but there are also a lot of people who think that our culture is very beautiful, or people who see the beauty and the diversity in it, and then there are people who will think that we're just like everyone else, which is sort of how I see it sometimes." – Alice

All three participants mentioned the program facilitators of their respective girls-only programs as their mentors. These mentors were all described with similar language: friendly; open; easy to talk with; helpful; spent time doing fun things; introduced participants to new things; and, shared values. All participants also stated that there were some things they would talk to their mentors with but not their parents. When probed for an example, they said "boy drama" or "personal things." When asked if their mentor treats them differently than their parents, all three participants agreed. One participant elaborated:

"My parents are open but they also have a certain way of living life, you know what I mean? They were raised a certain way, with certain traditions and certain aspects that won't be changed. Whereas [my mentor], she doesn't come with those cultural or those kinds of, not limitations, but those kind of barriers or whatever. It's purely open; she's not coming into the situation in a certain way." – Rebecca

Overall, mentors from girls-only programming were seen as positive role models with whom mutual respect was established. All three participants have continued their relationships with their mentors and shard similar sentiments about the development of their relationships with their mentors:

"The first week that I started going to the [girls-only program], and this was the summer of grade five, and all the way up till now where I'm in my second year of university, she's still there for me. […] I grew up with her, she's been a great role model to me, and she's very understanding, and we get along extremely well. – Alice

To summarize these results, narrative interviews found strong evidence of the high presence of confidence, critical thinking, and connectedness from the girls' personalities and narratives of their life experiences. Additional themes were also found within the narrative

interviews: young women also shared stories about the impacts of culture, parental relationships,

peers, school, and their program mentors.

Case Study.

Alice shared her lived experiences of being a Canadian girl through two 30-minute

interviews. Alice self-identified as South Asian, and much of the interview conversation used

this term to refer to her experiences as a Bangladeshi girl and woman. This case study research

revealed the strong impact of girls-only programming on Alice's life from age 11 to her current

age of 20, as well as the effects of protective and risk factors introduced into her life during those

years. Data from the survey and narrative interviews have shown results related to an individual

level of analysis of resilience. This case study delves deeper into one participants' narrative to

examine how factors at the structural level of analysis such as school environment, family, peers,

mentors, programming, and culture play a role in girls' development.

Alice and her family emigrated from Bangladesh to the GTA when she was five years

old, due to her parents' decision to improve their family's quality of life. School was difficult for

Alice as a newcomer and she said,

> "I went to a school that was filled with other people who were in similar
> situations as mine but it wasn't really the most comfortable environment for me,
> because I felt like even though we had all come from the same place I was a little
> bit different in terms of my interests and what I liked to do."

As newcomers, Alice and her family faced financial adversity but their circumstances improved

after some years. Alice attributes these improved circumstances to her parents' hard work. Alice

acknowledges these familial and parental struggles when she shares more details:

> "Well, definitely I know that my parents, my family struggled a lot financially at
> that time. When we had come here, we actually stayed at a family centre for the
> first month but then we moved into our own apartment, so [for] quite a few years
> before [we moved] to the place we're living now, my family struggled financially

and […] my dad worked multiple jobs, my mom ran her own business but […] it wouldn't be a normal work day, it would be open all day long."

Alice did not get a chance to explore her interests through activities and events for many years after arriving in Canada. She said this is because of her parents' cultural background and resulting protectiveness:

> "Because my parents came from […] a third world country, they had a lot of concerns about security and safety and just generally who I would be spending my time with, so [when younger], I didn't really get to hang out with friends too often. I interacted with people my age with adult supervision, being my aunt or uncles of family friends."

South Asian culture relies on an extended family network which includes non-blood relatives, all of whom are addressed by younger people as Aunt, Uncle, or Grandparent. Young girls are especially monitored in certain South Asian cultures (such as Pakistani and Indian) because they maintain the family's reputation within their community.

At age 12, before starting Grade Six, Alice and her family moved to a different neighbourhood in the GTA and she discovered a girls-only program in her community. Alice says, "That's where a lot of the fun began for me because I started to explore different types of activities, start going to new events for the first time." Her parents continued to remain concerned about her safety; however, they trusted the setting of the community program:

> "My parents really trusted the place because they knew the mentors who were there quite well, too. So that's when I really began being able to do things that I liked, for example, watching movies with others girls who were there of just going out. […] I had a lot of companionship with people that met at the program and my parents grew comfortable with that but they also began to be more comfortable with me hanging out with just friends, even outside."

Through trying new activities and developing connections with peers her own age, Alice also developed a lasting interest in understanding people that are different from her. She says,

> "One of the big parts of my life and was my biggest goal was to try to be more of an understanding person. And understanding what people very different from me would go through. It's just something I've been interested in since I was very young. Because when we first moved here I was in a community with people who - I'm sure they were all very different from me but at that time it seems pretty homogenous to me, and moving into a new environment where people were really different, that's something I really wanted to embrace."

This goal has also inspired Alice's interest is learning new languages to communicate with other people and "see where they are coming from." Currently, Alice says, "right now I'm learning Korean. Yeah, it's quite fun. So I also know how to speak Bengali, I understand Hindi and Urdu pretty well, and then English, I guess."

Alice's family does not share her same interests in engaging with new cultures and learning new languages: "I would say my parents are very comfortable with having a general understanding of the people they interact with on a daily basis. I don't think they really have a desire to expand it beyond that, but that's completely fine." While her relationship with her parents is "really healthy" and they are a "huge source of support" in her life, Alice says there are some things that they do not see eye-to-eye with because they "have grown up in completely different circumstances." She elaborates,

> "One of the biggest things would be we grew up in completely different countries. So, my parents grew up in Bangladesh while I grew up here in Canada. So that alone causes so many differences, like what the society is like there compared to here, what are some acceptable practices, how are people culturally - like there's a lot more diversity here. So my thought process equals to a lot more stages than I would say my parents go through."

Having grown up in Canada and being accustomed to certain norms and patterns of thought and behaviour, Alice states that while there are many beautiful things about her culture, there are also some restrictive elements for women:

"So when I'm [in Canada] on a daily basis, I wake up in the morning, I go to work, I might hang out with my friends afterwards and I come home [when I want to], but [in Bangladesh…] definitely I could not go by myself. Which I understood because it is a foreign country so maybe that wasn't the only thing to it, even my other cousins who do live there, like my female cousins, were not allowed to go out by themselves either, and […] the logic is because of how dangerous it could be there, but some of it is also because of cultural norms about where women should be, should they be out by themselves, and things like that."

This interaction with is perceived as a patriarchal and oppressive system in her country

was more than enough for Alice. When asked if being a woman has influenced her Canadian

experiences, such as in school, Alice said:

"I feel like I have been given equal opportunity from when I was a girl up till now. I think the only time that I can think of where it influenced me in school was when I was trying to decide on a career in high school. […] Throughout my time in high school, elementary school, and university, I think it wouldn't have been any different if I was a guy."

Effects of patriarchal and gender-biased thinking are also found in her home, through her

parents; however, Alice is successful in negotiating her wants and needs. In choosing her

university program, Alice said she convinced her family into letting her pursue the path she

wanted. When asked for elaboration, she said: "Because of where my parents are from, their

mentality […] is that you either go into the medical field or go into something related to science,

for example engineering. But for me, it was business." Despite a patriarchal system in which

women do not question or think outside of the fate that the eldest household male arranges for

them, Alice was able to convince her father to let her pursue her preferred path which may not be

seen as ideal by him.

Cultural knowledge and values are important protective factors, and Alice sees both the

beautiful and less appealing elements of her South Asian culture. In elementary school, Alice

says that "not only were the majority of people South Asian, but the majority of people were

from the same country […] and a lot of them were recent immigrants as well." For this reason,

she doesn't perceive that her ethnicity has affected her too much in her school life. Her

experiences of being in a culturally homogeneous school have influenced her value of diversity,

and she says: "It's not the diversity in where they're from that is really important to me, it's the

diversity of what they're able to accept and the different mindsets they have." She also believes

that Canadian societal perceptions about South Asian culture as a whole are relatively neutral:

> "I think there would definitely be some negative perceptions that South Asian
> people might be cheaper than others, or certain things that people perceive about
> South Asian culture. Or South Asian people have a weird culture to them. But
> there are also a lot of people who think that our culture is very beautiful or people
> who see the beauty and the diversity in it, and then there are people who will
> think that we're just like everyone else, which is how I see it sometimes."

School is another major source of adversity and resiliency in the lives of young girls and

women as they discover many academic spaces appears to belong to boys and men. Prior to

grade six, Alice was not very interested in school: "So school for me in the beginning would just

be a task. Something that I had to get over every single day to get home and relax, but that really,

really changed for me growing up. Actually, completely the opposite almost." As Alice learned

and connected more with her personal likes and dislikes through the girls-only program, she was

introduced to some inspiring business students from a university. "We basically learnt about

budgeting and other business related topics and that really brought out my interest. It made me

feel like this is something that I'm interested in, like if I don't pursue it, it's something that I'll

think about or I'll regret."

> When asked about satisfaction with school grades for Alice and her friends, Alice said:

> "I would say that a lot of my friends, they're probably all around my grade range
> but some of them are a quite…, like they might even have better grades than me
> but I don't think that they're too satisfied. I'm generally… after I've given it a
> good enough effort I'm satisfied with the things that I do, even if they're not the
> best results in comparison to others."

When asked to elaborate why there may be differences between Alice's attitude towards grades

and her friends' attitudes, Alice said:

> "Those marks like seem really good right now but back then nothing was ever
> good enough and it wasn't really a good feeling. […] When it was no longer about
> getting into a good university, it became about 'how well do I want to do?' Like
> what compromises will - like are these two extra hours gonna be worth me getting
> one more percentile higher in the exam? So it became more about 'what's going to
> make me more comfortable as a person?' 'What's going to make me more
> happy?'"

Alice contributes her resilient thought processes and behaviours to role models like her older

brother and her mentor, Claire, from the girls-only programs she continues to attend:

"[Claire] is always striving towards improvement which is something I really value. I really
think moving for improvement is one of the most important things in life. It's something that is
one of my reasons to wake up every single morning as well. She's someone who really embodies
that and I really admire her in that, and she's taught me that a lot throughout life."

As a mentor and mentee in girls-only programming from age 11 to age 19, Alice feels strongly

about the impacts of community programming on her individual development:

> "I feel like going to the [program] really gave me the tools to develop myself so I
> was more comfortable and more confident speaking to others. And aside from
> that, I feel like it has taught me so many of the basic skills that I need now for
> example project management, […] time management, and so many of those basic
> skills which are so necessary to my everyday life. I feel like it's really shaped me
> into who I am. Especially my mentor, Claire, also has shaped a lot of values that I
> have as well."

The case study provided an in-depth look into the girlhood and adolescent experiences of 19

year-old Alice. Alice's narrative shows how multilevel factors can impact a girl's ability to deal

with adversity in her life, and how physical and social ecologies interact to provide resources to

sustain individuals' wellbeing. These findings will be critically analyzed in the Discussion

section.

Research Question 2

Survey data were used to examine the second research question: What is the relationship between protective factors and risk factors for 16 to 20 year old women who have participated in girls-only programming? We hypothesize that the relationship between protective and risk factors is negatively correlated, with a higher presence of protective factors indicating lower presence of risk factors.

Descriptive information (means, standard deviations, and ranges) for all eight measures are reported in Table 3. As mentioned previously, participants' average for confidence (M = 6.94, SD = 4.89), critical thinking (*M* = 11.17, *SD* = 5.64), and connectedness (*M* = 17.06, *SD* = 7.83) were all low values, indicating a high presence of these factors in participants' lives. Parental relationships was also identified as a protective factor and participants averaged low on a score out of 16 (*M* = 6.87, SD = 4.99) indicating strong relationships with their parents. Measures 4 through 8 identify risk factors such as adversity, depressive symptoms, negative behaviours, and substance use. Participants averages for adversity within their environments (*M* = 13, *SD* = 7.73), depressive symptoms (*M* = 7.33, *SD* = 4.63), negative behaviours) (*M* = 4.67, *SD* = 6.16), and substance use (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = 3.88) were measured based on a spectrum of low to high presence in the lives of the participants. All scores for risk factors were low indicating a low presence of these factors in the lives

Correlations between risk factors and protective factors were conducted on SPSS 20 (IBM Corp., 2011). Seventeen significant correlations were found, of which thirteen are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and four are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). These correlations are shown in Table 5.

Table 4

Correlations between Protective and Risk Factors

Variable		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Confidence	Pearson's	1							
	Sig.								
	N	18							
2 Critical Thinking	Pearson's	.798*	1						
	Sig.	.001							
	N	18	18						
3 Connectedness	Pearson's	.751*	.819*	1					
	Sig.	.001	.001						
	N	17	17	17					
4 Parental Relationships	Pearson's	.648*	.442	.221	1				
	Sig.	.009	.099	.447					
	N	15	15	14	17				
5 Adversity	Pearson's	.404	.157	.247	.590*	1			
	Sig.	.108	.549	.356	.021				
	N	17	17	16	15	15			
6 Depression	Pearson's	.788*	.647*	.617*	.624*	.546*	1		
	Sig.	.001	.004	.008	.013	.023			
	N	18	18	17	15	17	18		
7 Negative Behaviours	Pearson's	.366	.411	.292	.624*	.635*	.639*	1	
	Sig.	.135	.090	.255	.013	.006	.004		
	N	18	18	17	15	17	18	18	
8 Substance Use	Pearson's	.166	.296	.289	.687*	.694*	.606*	.882*	1
	Sig.	.059	.249	.278	.005	.002	.010	.001	
	N	17	17	16	15	17	17	17	17

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 and/or 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Correlations for these eight measures resulted in 17 significant relationships, which are detailed below:

1) Confidence is strongly correlated with Parental Relationships, and very strongly correlated with Critical Thinking, Connectedness, and Depression.

2) Critical Thinking is strongly correlated with Depression, and very strongly correlated with Confidence and Connectedness.

3) Connectedness is strongly correlated with Depression, and very strongly correlated with Confidence and Critical Thinking.

4) Parental Relationships are strongly correlated with Confidence and all four risk factors.

5) Adversity within Environments is strongly correlated with Parental Relationships and the remaining three risk factors.

6) Depression is strongly correlated Critical Thinking, Connectedness, and all three risk factors, as well as very strongly correlated with Confidence.

7) Negative Behaviours are strongly correlated with Parental Relationships, Adversity within Environments and Depression, and very strongly correlated with Substance Use

8) Substance Usage is strongly correlated with Parental Relationships, Adversity within Environments and Depression, and very strongly correlated with Negative Behaviours.

A one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on SPSS 20 (IBM Corp., 2011) to compare the effects of four risk factors (Adversity, Depression, Negative Behaviours, and Substance Use) on *Confidence* as a protective factor. There was a significant main effect for Adversity, $F (10, 6) = 6.40$, $p = .017$; Negative behaviours, $F (11, 6) = 10.30$, $p = .005$; and Substance Use, $F (10, 6) = 5.64$, $p = .023$. There was no significant main effect for Depression, $F (11, 6) = 2.55$, $p = .131$.

A one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to Adversity, Depression, Negative Behaviours, and Substance Use with *Critical Thinking* as a protective factor. There was a significant main effect for Negative behaviours, $F (11, 6) = 77.76$, $p = .001$. There was no significant main effect for Adversity, $F (11, 5) = 1.31$, $p = .404$; Depression, $F (11, 6) = 1.46$, $p = .335$; or Substance Use, $F (11, 5) = 3.81$, $p = .076$.

A one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the four risk factors with *Connectedness* as a protective factor. There were no significant main

effects for Adversity, F (14, 1) = .21, p = .953; Depression, F (14, 2) = 7.35, p = .126; Negative

behaviours, F (14, 2) = 18.23, p = .053; or Substance Use, F (14, 1) = 3.61, p = .393.

A one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare

the four risk factors (Adversity, Depression, Negative Behaviours, and Substance Use) with

Parental Relationships as a protective factor. There was a significant main effect for Negative

behaviours, F (9, 5) = 14.09, p = .003. There was no significant main effect for Adversity, F (9,

5) = 2.20, p = .200; Depression, F (9, 5) = .528, p = .809; or Substance Use, F (9, 5) = 3.45, p =

.093.

The four variables for risk factors (Adversity, Depression, Negative Behaviours, and

Substance Use) were used to compute ten interaction terms: Adversity x Depression, Adversity x

Negative Behaviours, Adversity x Substance Use, Depression x Substance Use, Depression x

Negative Behaviours, Substance Use x Negative Behaviours, Adversity x Depression x Negative

Behaviours, Adversity x Depression x Substance Use, Depression x Negative Behaviours x

Substance, and Adversity x Depression x Negative Behaviours x Substance Use.

Multiple regression analysis was used to test if risk factors significantly predict

participants' Confidence. The results of the regression indicated that one predictor explained

62% of the variance, F (1, 15) = 24.66, p < .001), with an R^2 of .622. It was found that

Depression significantly predicted Confidence (β = .834, p < .001), Critical Thinking (β = .794,

p = .004), and Connectedness (β = 1.074, p = .006); as well as one interaction between Adversity

and Depression which significantly predicted Parental Relationships (β = .026, p = .001).

To sum up the statistical results for research question 2, 17 correlational relationships

were found between eight measures of protective and risk factors. Protective factors are

positively and significantly correlated with each other in most cases, and the same was found for

risk factors. Parental relationships was strongly correlated with all four risk factors, and

Depression was strongly correlated with 6 of 7 other measures. The following section will

discuss these key findings and link them with the literature reviewed on resilience, girls' critical

development period, and protective factors developed through girls-only programming.

Discussion

This research was designed to examine the presence of resilience in the lives of Canadian

young women aged 16 to 20 affected by participation in programs during the ages of 9 to 13.

Research objectives for the current research were to 1) investigate whether these resilience

outcomes are sustained over time, and 2) contribute to a practical understanding of the impacts of

protective and risk factors for girls-only programming. The following section will present the

principle findings, followed by discussion of each research question under separate subheadings.

Principle Findings

Resilience outcomes appear to be sustained and enhanced over time as seen in the

evaluations completed from 2006 to 2009 and collection of current quantitative data in 2015.

Young women report higher presence of confidence, critical thinking, and connectedness in their

lives. In addition to high presence of strong parental relationships and low presence of risk

factors such as adversity within environments, substance use, depression, and negative

behaviours. Protective factors and risk factors have numerous correlational relationships, with

parental relationships and depression standing out as highly correlated with most other measures.

In addition, all 18 young women fondly recall their girls-only program experiences and the three

interviewees report maintaining contact with their mentor ever since they joined the girls-only

program in their girlhood. Findings from the case study support findings from the survey and

interviews.

Research Question 1

Are the resilience outcomes developed through girls-only programming at ages 9 through 13 sustained into adolescence, specifically ages 16 to 20? The research team hypothesized that girls' resilience would be sustained due to the long-lasting impact of programming received during girls' critical development period of 9 to 13. In other words, resilience will not have decreased due to challenging life experience faced by girls as they progress through pre-adolescence and adolescence. Key findings from content analysis of the Phase 2 Summary report indicated high improvement ratings for girls' self-reported confidence, critical thinking skills, and connectedness after participating in a girls-only program. Girls reported that they felt totally better about their confidence and connectedness, and somewhat better about their critical thinking skills because of the girls-only program. Quantitative data gathered from a current sample of girls showed extremely high presence of confidence, critical thinking skills, and connectedness. Current ratings of these three main protective factors for the young women were significantly different from the self-reported ratings from the population of younger girls. Qualitative data complemented these results because many young women recalled important lessons learnt through their girls-only program when they were younger and how it impacts them at their current age. Narratives of young women's lives through the interviews and case study were interspersed with details of numerous protective factors that were complex and interdependent, and because of this the development of the three main protective factors was not attributed solely to participation in girls-only programming. Parents, school environments, and culture were indicated as having significant impacts on young women's current values and personalities. Structural factors relating to gender, ethnicity, and class, and their impact on resilience for these select young women were more evident in the case study.

The literature review reflected on the disassociation that occurs by late adolescence for girls that become disconnected from themselves after suffering "unnecessary losses" (Iglesias & Cormier, 2002, p.261) of freedom to feel and express themselves outside of expected societal norms. Large populations of girls become miserable about their physical bodies; lose much of their school-related competence in the academic areas of science, technology, and mathematics; and suffer behavioural losses as their disempowerment becomes internalized and manifests in unhealthy ways (Henneberger, et al., 2013; Iglesias & Cormier, 2002). Girls and young women of colour can feel devalued, stigmatized, and isolated – but not all girls feel these and not to the same degree. Girls that are Indigenous, immigrants, disabled, or LGBTQ are isolated in a more severe way due their interlaced and intersectional identities. Validation of these losses by adults and institutions is an important strategy for resistance of oppressive societal norms (Iglesias & Cormier, 2002). The case study showed evidence of the impacts of a consistent mentor who provides a safe space and outlet for girls. In Alice's case, she said was introduced to new ideas, activities, and ambitions that she feels may have been otherwise been repressed due to cultural factors at home. Patriarchal values manifest in Bangladeshi culture through a decreased focus on school and recreation for girls, and an increased focus on domestic labour and learnings home-making skills. An intellectual and academic woman who is allowed too much liberty to come and go from her father's home is perceived as troublesome because she may not adhere to traditions and values of the Bangladeshi culture. Having Claire as a mentor from age 11 to age 19 helped Alice gain confidence and connectedness with other peers and adults, and critical thinking skills that helped her evaluate and develop a healthy and resilient response to risk factors witnessed in herself and her world. Alice's strong cultural awareness, cultural engagement, as well as the early development of critical thinking have largely protected her from being aware of systemic

oppression in her life due to ethnicity; however, her experiences show a clear intersection of gender and culture in her life. Even though inequality and oppression exist in Canadian culture, in thinking critically about gender inequality and systemic oppression, Alice is comparing across cultures to find Canadian systems far less oppressive and unequal. The comparison across cultures results in Alice's belief that oppressive structures are not currently affecting her life despite her unique identity as a first-generation immigrant turned citizen, Bangladeshi woman and university student.

According to the Girls Action Foundation (2013), interventions that are participatory, asset-based, culturally relevant, and provide a focus on empowerment and community involvement can help girls successfully avoid harmful "patterns of low self-esteem, negative body image, anxiety, depression, and passivity" (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2013b, p.4). Girls-only community and school-based programs developed based on best practices consistently provide opportunities for girls' development of protective factors (Chaplin et al., 2006; Girls Action Foundation, 2013; Roa, et al., 2007). Once girls find the strengths within and around themselves to maintain confidence, develop strong relationships based on trust and honesty, and develop the ability to think critically about societal messages, they are not likely to forget them quickly. The case study with Alice adds to the idea of girls' agency through evidence of structural and community supports that came together to help Alice deal with stress and adversity. Other young women also shared similar evidence:

"I learned how to appreciate diversity. Now diversity is something I crave in a friendship, relationship and in mentorship. Many of the most important lessons I have learned in life came from participants I met at the [program]. Some of these girls were individuals I would never talk to at school; they were too different from

me. I thought that nothing in their lives was relevant to mine, but as I opened my

eyes I learned that we as girls share similar struggles." – Maria

Narrative interviews strongly indicate that many girls remain connected with their

program and mentors:

"One of my longest lasting relationships is with my mentor from the [program].

Even till this day after I have aged out of the programs, we keep in contact. She is

a pillar of support in my life." – Alicia

Girls that realize the full impact of the program on their lives continue to remain in this safe and

friendly environment until they are young women. The lessons learned continue to stay with

them long after the program is completed:

"Could I have done it on my own? Could I have done without the mentors I grew

up with? Maybe, but it would have been a much longer road of insecurity and

struggle before I learned how to find all of the things that I love in myself.

Although this may sound conceited I have learned that I am strong woman, who

has enough confidence in me to stand up for myself and others." – Yasmin

This is aligned with Michael Ungar's (2008) views on the three capacities of resilience: people

have the capacity to navigate their way to resources that sustain wellbeing; their physical and

social ecologies can provide these resources; and, people and their families and communities can

share these resources in a culturally meaningful way. Findings from this research also support

the cumulative-risk hypothesis which proposes that the development of protective factors at a

critical life stage can tip the scales of risk accumulation which occurs during adolescence. This is

evident in Alice's personal narrative as she shares how her family, community, girls-only

program, and school choices and setting emboldened her to be a strong and resilient woman, who

"strives for improvement" every day. Perhaps it is true, as Anne Masten states, that "resilient youth appear to place themselves in healthier contexts, generating opportunities for success or raising the odds of connecting with prosocial mentors […]" (Masten, 2001, p.233). However, Alice received support from her parents and permission to continue attending girls-only programming long after the end of her initial program. Protective factors in Alice's life overlapped to develop the large situations and circumstances in her life. The collectivist view of resilience defined by Thira (2009) may consider enhancing the definition of resilience used by Paton, Violante, and Smith (2003). Individuals, communities, and organizations have the capacity to draw on their competencies across all ecological levels to manage adversities; however, protective factors developed through different ecological levels can often overlap to sustain development of additional protective factors.

Results from mixed methods research involving data collected through content analysis of archival data, a quantitative survey, and qualitative interviews indicate that young women remain resilient years after their involvement in girls-only programming; however, additional factors such as parental values and relationships, strong cultural connections, supportive school environments, and continued connections with a mentor all play a role in the maintenance of girls' resilience as they navigate through adolescence.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between protective factors and risk factors for 16 to 20 year old women who have participated in girls-only programming? The research team hypothesized that a relationship between protective and risk factors exists and will be negatively correlated, with a higher ratings of protective factors indicating lower ratings for risk factors. A survey with 177 close-ended questions was used to gather data and develop eight statistically reliable measures

for protective factors and risk factors. Key findings from the analysis show very high confidence, critical thinking skills, and connectedness for participants, in addition to strong parental relationships. Risk factors had low effects on the lives of these young women and self-reported ratings for depression, adversity within environments, negative behaviours, and substance usage were low.

Synthesis of correlational findings shows: 1) Parental Relationships as a protective factor is correlated with all four risk factors, 2) Depression is correlated with all protective and risk factors, and 3) all risk factors are correlated with each other. One-way between-subjects ANOVA tests found that Negative Behaviours had a significant effect on Confidence, Critical Thinking, and Parental Relationships. Adversity had a significant effect on Confidence, but none of the other protective factors. Substance Usage also had a significant effect on Confidence and no other protective factors. Depression did not have any main effects on the four protective factors; however, multiple regression tests found that Depression significantly and positively predicts Confidence, Critical Thinking, and Connectedness. The interaction variable for Adversity and Depression had a significant, positive effect on Parental Relationships.

Taken together, these findings indicate that relationships between risk factors and protective factors exist; however, they may not be as simple as our hypothesis for negatively correlated relationships between protective factors and risk factors. Based on Darien Thira's (2009) understanding of individualistic resilience as a state of recovery to one's original level of functioning instead of a state of survival through impaired environmental and personal situations, resilience can be seen as a quality in which personal and social assets help alleviate the effects of complex and multifaceted risk factors. Protective factors, in the form of personal and social assets, and risk factors are in a constant state of flux for different populations. In the case of girls

between the ages of 9 and 13, we know that vulnerabilities develop rapidly over a short span of

years (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Calhoun Research and Development, 2005; Public Health

Agency of Canada, 2007). Sexual harassment and exploitation, physical violence, bullying,

homophobia, barriers to school experiences, gender influence on girls' educational and career

paths, and mental and sexual health issues are some of the problems faced by girls soon after

childhood and during a time when they are developing self-identity and self-worth (Girls Action

Foundation, 2013; Tipper, 1997).

As seen in the results, depression is a significant risk factor for this population, more so

than adversity within environments, negative behaviours, and substance use. A national survey

on children's health found that "girls consistently report more negative emotional health

outcomes than boys" (Freeman, King, Pickett, & Craig, 2011, p.xii). Gender socialization and

gendered identity development are key factors in higher rates of depression as girls learn early to

internalize their emotions in order to portray a nurturing and sweet disposition to adults and other

children (Berman & Jiwani, 2002; Tipper, 1997). During their critical development period, girls'

self-confidence decreases and depression symptoms increase each year from age 12 to 16

(PHAC, 2007). Girls of colour, girls who are part of LGBTQ communities, girls with disabilities,

and girls with other non-dominant identities are likely to feel these effects differently.

Evidence of rapidly developing mental health vulnerabilities and their potential of

increasing depression despite protective factors is aligned with research on the cumulative-risk

model by Rutter (1979). Research validating this model finds that children can handle one or two

risk factors, but more than two factors significantly increase their chances of developing negative

outcomes (Albee, 1982; Atzaba-Poria, et al., 2012; Kloos, et al., 2012). The correlation of

depression with all risk and protective factors in the current research as well as the significant,

positive effects of depression on confidence, critical thinking, and connectedness indicate that

the variables effecting girls which result in depression may overpower the development of

protective factors through girls-only programming. Harmful and gender-based inequalities that

occur in the lives of girls since they begin the process of socialization are far more powerful and

may require more intensive approaches for protective factor-development, especially racialized

and low-income girls who may have additional non-dominant identities.

Limitations

The current project had five major limitations: 1) time parameters, 2) sample size and

diversity, 3) the process of content analysis, 4) self-selection bias, and 5) the exclusion of

Indigenous participants.

Time Parameters.

Research processes can encounter many delays, especially human-subjects research

which requires additional months for research ethics review. It was quite unexpected for this

project to be held by the university Research Ethics Board for seven months. Five rounds of

revisions and one in-person meeting between research team members and the full REB were

required. While the initial project design and procedures were not immensely unethical, the delay

occurred due to our lack of clarity around two points causing confusion about the purpose and

participants of this project. Community-based research involves collaborations and relationships

between faculty members, students, community organizations and community researchers. It was

our error in not presenting clearly to the REB how participant contact information will remain

anonymous and safe with community program sites that already have this information and sites

will not be providing it to researchers at WLU (Wilfrid Laurier University). Instead, we would

provide a recruitment flyer to program sites and request their assistance in dissemination to the

target sample. The link on the flyer allows privacy and anonymity for interested participants. Secondly, the extremely sensitive nature of the survey raised many red flags until we added a clear and concise research question to address our reason for collecting sensitive information that thoroughly examines the presence of risk and protective factors in the lives of participants. A seven month ethics review process heavily altered our research timeframes, resulting in 4 weeks for data collection instead of 12 weeks, which affected the sample size.

Sample Size and Diversity.

The sample size for this project was set at 50 survey participants and 15 interviews; however, when approval was finally received at the end of May our timeframe conflicted with the potential availability of participants within the eligible age range. The initial timeline for this project allotted 12 weeks for data collection between March 1st and May 30th. Unfortunately, delays with research ethics approval as well as potential issues of elementary and secondary school strikes resulted in data collection for four weeks in June 2015. During these four weeks, many young women aged 12 to 16 were completing examinations in high school or were away for summer vacations. To compensate for a brief data collection period, program managers who were distributing flyers were sent weekly updates and gentle reminders. Most program managers were excited about an opportunity for the older girls in their programs to share their life and programming experience. Due to the community-based nature of this project, it is known to this research team that a large number of girls in girl-only programming at younger ages continue to stay involved at their program sites and become mentors for younger girls. Despite this level of engagement from program sites, enough participants aged 16 to 20 were simply unavailable during the 4 weeks of June.

Geographical and ethnic diversity of our sample size was also not ideal. The five program sites are located in B.C., Alberta, Nova Scotia, and two in Southern Ontario, and the research team had hoped to reach out to an equal number of participants in each location. Required sample sizes were shared with program managers who were disseminating recruitment flyers to program alumni. Data collected was primarily Ontarian (50%), some Nova Scotia (17%) and B.C. (6%). No Albertan participants accessed the survey, although a large portion of participants did not disclose their program location (28%). The sample size also limits our power to detect significant differences between groups.

Content Analysis.

Content analysis is a research technique which uses texts and other forms of matter to make replicable and valid inferences (Krippendorff, 1980). According to Krippendorff (1980), despite being an unobtrusive technique, content analysis may still have limitations if a researcher misapplies or utilizes an ill-suited technique to make inferences from their source. The primary research question in the current project involved a comparison between a population of girls from 2009 to 2012 ($N = 401$) who evaluated the potential development of protective factors through their girls-only programs, and the current sample of this population which is older in 2015 ($N = 18$). Raw data were unavailable from the Phase 2 Summary report (Alcalde, et al., 2012) and would have allowed more statistical tests of significance between 2012 and 2015 data. Cross-tabulation with chi-square analyses could have provided valuable information on the relationships between protective factors means from 2009 – 2012 and 2015. The large different between N values was noted; however, longitudinally comparing a small current sample to a large population is in our favour because it increases the reliability of the results.

Self-selection Bias.

Our sample is self-selected. Convenience sampling techniques were used because

participants' contact information was not retained by the researchers from their Phase 2

evaluations. Participants, now aged 16 to 20, were recruited through flyers delivered to their

program site managers via e-mail. By using this sampling technique, self-selection bias was

introduced as a limitation. Results of this research may have been impacted by a sample that is

biased due to the self-selecting nature of the participants. Certain young women may be more

inclined to respond to the recruitment flyer at their program sites, such as young women that

were positively affected by their participation experiences. Another case may be that

participation in girls-only programming is a venture sought out by girls and parents of girls that

share commonalities.

We cannot make definitive generalizations about young Canadian women who have

participated in programming because the sample of participants all chose to participate and there

may be commonalities between their motivations and reasons for responding to the flyer. To

address this limitation, it is important to remember that community-based research is not solely

focused on making generalizations or producing research that is representative of the entire

population of young Canadian women.

Exclusion of Indigenous participants.

Chapter 9 on research involving Indigenous peoples of Canada within the Tri-Council

Policy Statement 2 (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering

Research Council of Canada, and Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada,

2014) is designed to ensure research involving Indigenous peoples is based on the premises of

respect, collaboration, and engagement between researchers and participants. This community-

based research involves well-developed and reciprocal relationships between the Canadian

Women's Foundation and girls-only community programs across Canada which have been

carrying on since 2006. The Girls' Fund was created within the Canadian Women's Foundation

to provide funding for girls-only programs based on best practices that develop protective

factors. Over the last 9 years, strong relationships have developed between girls-only programs

focusing on Indigenous culture. It was unfortunate that for the purposes of this project, we were

unable to convince the WLU Research Ethics Board of the existing relationship between the

research team and the elders and girls in girls-only programs across Canada. The voices of

Indigenous girls would have been invaluable within this research on the resilience of Canadian

girls; however, a second phase of this research may be carried out with Indigenous young women

and program alumni after deliberate and extensive community engagement is carried out

between the research team and program sites involved in evaluation research since 2006.

Knowledge Translation

Within community psychologist, primary consideration is given to the prevention of harm

to the community and ensuring that "people's lives are not used as research fodder" (Thompson,

1992, pp.14). Feminist researchers have criticized traditional scientific methods that exploit and

silence the objects of their research (Thompson, 1992). To conduct research that serves the

interests of the researched and not simply our own career interests, we had established a concrete

plan for community engagement and knowledge transfer between university and community

researchers and participants.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) define knowledge translation as "the

exchange, synthesis, and ethically-sound application of knowledge – within a complex system of

interactions among researchers and users […]" (Tetroe, 2007, pp.1). Included within the context

of this definition are the terms knowledge dissemination, knowledge management, knowledge

utilization, and knowledge transfer. While the systems of interactions for knowledge

dissemination and management involve knowledge going from researcher to user, knowledge

transfer implies a two-way exchange (Tetroe, 2007). The knowledge transfer model that best fits

this research is the integrated knowledge translation model (iKT). IKT applies the principles of

knowledge translation to the entire research process as stakeholders, researchers, community

members, and funders are equal partners from the conception of the research idea to the design

of the research, as well as knowledge mobilization methods (CIHR, 2012).

      This research fits the iKT model because of the partnerships between the Canadian

Women's Foundation, community programming staff across Canada, girls and young women

involved within these programs, and a community-university evaluation research team that led to

the conception of the research goal, objectives, and questions. Researchers, community

members, and funders that are part of the evaluation research team provided their feedback on

this current project before initiation. There was reciprocal exchange and reliance between the

research team and community programming staff throughout the data collection process, as well

as involvement of participants in data analysis through a member check process. The final results

will be shared with the funding organization, community programs across Canada, and

participants.

      Table 6 conceptualizes a simple knowledge transfer plan of the different stakeholders that

need to be a part of knowledge transfer, as well as what specific information they need to

receive, by whom, when, and how. The thesis proposal and final report will be shared with the

research team but it is not wise to share jargon-filled theses with community members like young

girls. Creating obstacles to community members' access to knowledge can perpetuate the divide

between researchers and community members. Important community stakeholders such as programming staff and girls can benefit from community reports, one-to-two page research briefs, or infographics that are developed by the marketing team working at the Canadian Women's Foundation.

Table 5

Knowledge Transfer Plan

To whom should research knowledge be transferred?	What information should be transferred to this group?	By whom should it be transferred?	When should it be transferred?	How should it be transferred?
CWF evaluation steering committee	All information from beginning to end of project	Evaluation research team	Throughout the projects' lifespan	Email and presentations
Community programming staff	Thesis results and conclusions (mixed methods)	CWF evaluation steering committee	At the end of the project	Community reports and infographics
Program and research participants	Thesis results and conclusions (mixed methods)	CWF evaluation steering committee	At the end of the project	Infographics and a brief one-page report

Future Research

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first research project to focus exclusively on girls-only programming and the potential longitudinal resilience-based effects that it may have on girls and young women in Canada. Strengths of this project include the utilization of the well-established relationships between the funding agency, the girls-only community programs that

are funded across Canada, and the evaluation team that connects with the girls and program sites

on a yearly basis. Future research should attempt to replicate these findings with a quasi-

experimental design and prolonged data collection period in order to eliminate effect of some

limitations that were faced in this project such as reliance on archival data, short and ill-timed

opportunities for data collection, small sample size, and low diversity of sample. Strong

engagement with elders facilitating girls-only programs for Indigenous girls would ensure REB

permissions for research with indigenous populations, as stated in Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council

Policy Statement (2014).

Considerations for future research on girls-only programming and its effects on their

resilience should consider the duration of girls' overall involvement with their program of

choice. This current research confirmed that girls are eager to stay in touch with the mentors who

have become strong role models for them, and they often visit their program or become further

involved as mentors for other girls. Does prolonged involvement with a girls-only program

significantly improve the effects of protective factors learned within programming? Additionally,

does prolonged involvement with a girls-only program significantly improve girls' overall

resilience despite the accumulation of risk factors during the challenging period of adolescence?

Concluding Comments

In summary, the current research brings awareness to the necessity for girls-only

programs in the lives of girls and young women across Canada. As mentioned previously, there

is a lack of research focusing exclusively on girlhood, specifically between the ages of 9 through

13. A lack of Canadian survey data on children age cohorts of 8 to 13 indicates a lack of

awareness of the importance of this critical development period where girls and boys are

developing self-identity and observing societal norms that may be constricting. The current

research addresses this need for data on girlhood, specifically addressing the ways in which risk

factors and protective factors can impact their lives. An intersectional approach that understands

the different identities girls may hold - such as visible minority, disabled, LGBTQ, Indigenous,

immigrant, refugee, student, homeless, caregiver, and others – is crucial to understanding

resilience in the lives of all Canadian girls.

Oppressive systemic structures resulting from patriarchal and capitalist values of

Canadian society result in negative impacts on girls well before they arrive at the vulnerable

phase of life in which they attempt to develop self-worth and self-identity. With timely access to

resources and support, such as safe spaces and programming which contributes to the

development of protective factors, girls can be resilient. Prior research strongly indicates that

girls-only programs help develop protective factors which result in girls' resilience in the face of

oppressive and patriarchal social and economic systems (Alcalde, et al., 2012; Girls Action

Foundation, 2013; Hayward, et al., 2011). In addition to building on this literature, the current

research focused on the longitudinal outcomes for girls' resilience developed through girls-only

programming through comparison of self-reported confidence, critical thinking, and

connectedness from a population in 2006 through 2009 with a sample of this population in 2015.

The community-based nature of this project entails that quantitative and qualitative

results of this longitudinal look will be shared with funding agencies, community programs,

girls, and other stakeholders. Improving access to girls-only programming based on best

practices can result in cohorts of girls that aren't afraid to express themselves, question

oppressive societal structures, and develop strong relationships with adults and peers to help each

other develop sustained resilience as they journey towards becoming strong women. To

conclude, one participant of this current research spoke about how her life might be different without having participating in a girls-only program:

> "I feel like there would be a chunk of me that is missing almost. It's still such a huge part of my life right now. Like, the friends I've made, the mentors and mentees that I've met, the things that I've done, I don't know where else I could've gotten those experiences from. […] Maybe I wouldn't have the same interests that I have now, maybe I would keep sort of more to myself, and be less of an opinionated- well, I guess I would still sort of be an opinionated person but less willing to express it. Just so many things would be different because even just like- meeting one person can really change your life but through the [program] I've met so many people, so I can't even imagine the impact of that change in my life if that didn't happen." – Alice

Appendices

Appendix A: Program Sites

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Appendix C: Survey

Appendix D: Interview Guide 1 & 2

Appendix E: Standpoint

Appendix A: Program Sites

1. Boys and Girls Club of South Coast BC, Vancouver, BC

2. Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta program, Fort McMurray, BC

3. Hamilton Boys and Girls Club - Girls program, Hamilton, ON

4. YWCA Toronto - Miss Media or Safe Sisters program, Scarborough, ON

5. SuperNOVA - ITS for Girls program, Halifax, NS

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Tell the world about being a girl!

This is an invitation to participate in research about girls

We need you to help us understand young women's' life experiences from girlhood to adolescence and we will pay you for your time participating in this study.

Why participate in this study?
Young women who take part in this questionnaire will get $15 to thank them for their time.

There may be additional benefits to you:
- Feel good about having your voice heard.
- Provide information to organizations that want to develop great girls-only programs for girls aged 9 to 13.
- Help researchers understand whether girls-only program helps girls as they transition to adolescents and young women.

Would the study be a good fit for you?
The requirements for participation in this study are:
- That you are 16 to 20 years old
- You participated in the NAME OF PROGRAM when you were between 9 and 13 years old

What would happen if you took part in the study?
If you decide to take part in this study, you would be asked to:
- Complete an online questionnaire that will take 30-45 minutes.
- Asked if you were interested in participating in additional interviews later on.
- You (and your name) will not be identified.

To complete the questionnaire click here
or visit the following web address:
https://qtrial2014az1.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_7Wg87Gb2u qAxDBX

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This study has been approved by Wilfrid Laurier University ethics review board.

Nov 2014

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Appendix C: Survey

<u>**Survey**</u>

<u>Introduction</u>

This survey will take 30-45 minutes. Your answers will remain PRIVATE. No one from your home or school will see what you write. No identifying information will be requested from you for this survey.

The survey will ask about you and your life experience in many ways. Your answers will help us understand girls' experiences from childhood to adolescence, and how to plan programs and services for girls. The sections are called: 1) About Me; 2) Feelings and Behaviours; 3) Smoking, Drinking, and Drugs; 4) Health; 5) Friends and Family; 6) My Relationships, and 7) Participation in Programming.

If you share any information that indicates currently occurring or planned illegal activities, the researchers will have to report that to the appropriate authorities. Note that if you provide any information about previous illegal activities, the data may be subject to court ordered third party access.

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Some questions may seem personal and some are about things not everybody does. Take your time and please be sure to answer each question based on what you really think. You can choose whether or not to fill out a question, and you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable.

Q1 Choose the answer that best describes how you feel. Choose only one answer for each sentence.

	False	Mostly False	Sometimes False/ Sometimes True	Mostly True	True
a) In general, I like the way I am.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Overall I have a lot to be proud of.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) A lot of things about me are good.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) When I do something, I do it well.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) I like the way I look.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f) I forgive myself when I make a mistake.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g) I am proud to be a girl/young woman.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h) I pick close girlfriends and/or boyfriends who treat me the way I want to be treated.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
i) I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
j) If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
k) It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
l) I am confident that I can deal efficiently with unexpected events.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
m) Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
n) I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
o) I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
p) When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
q) If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
r) I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q2 Now you will be asked about how you relate to other people at home, school, or work. Choose only one answer for each sentence.

	False	Mostly False	Sometimes False/ Sometimes True	Mostly True	True
a) It is easy to tell people how I feel.	○	○	○	○	○
b) I like doing things for others.	○	○	○	○	○
c) I can get angry easily.	○	○	○	○	○
d) I can understand hard questions.	○	○	○	○	○
e) I think that most things I do will turn out okay.	○	○	○	○	○
f) I can easily talk about my feelings.	○	○	○	○	○
g) I feel bad when people have their feelings hurt.	○	○	○	○	○
h) I get upset easily.	○	○	○	○	○
i) I can come up with many ways of answering a hard question when I want to.	○	○	○	○	○
j) I hope for the best.	○	○	○	○	○
k) I can easily describe my feelings.	○	○	○	○	○
l) I know when people are upset, even when they say nothing.	○	○	○	○	○
m) When I'm angry, I act without thinking.	○	○	○	○	○
n) When answering hard questions, I try to think of many solutions.	○	○	○	○	○
o) I enjoy the things I do.	○	○	○	○	○
p) I have felt like an outsider or have been left out of things at school, work, or home.	○	○	○	○	○

Q3 In general, I am happy with how things are for me in my life right now.
○ Strongly Disagree
○ Disagree
○ Agree
○ Strongly Agree

Q4 The next five years look good to me.
○ Strongly Disagree
○ Disagree
○ Agree
○ Strongly Agree

Q5 In the past 2 years, have you personally been through any of these events?

	Yes	No
a) A painful break-up with a partner (i.e. a boyfriend or girlfriend).	○	○
b) A serious problem in school or at work.	○	○
c) A pregnancy or an abortion.	○	○
d) The death of someone close to you.	○	○
e) The divorce or separation of your parents.	○	○

f) Another difficult event. (Please specify).

Q6 In the past 12 months, have you personally been treated unfairly because of...

	Yes	No	I Don't Know
a) Your sex/gender?	○	○	○
b) Your ethnicity, skin colour, or ethnic group?	○	○	○
c) Your religion?	○	○	○

d) Another reason. (Please specify).

Q7 In the past 12 months, how many times did someone...

	Never	Once or Twice	3 or 4 Times	5 Times or More
a) Say something personal about you that made you feel extremely uncomfortable?	○	○	○	○
b) Threaten to hurt you but not actually hurt you?	○	○	○	○

Q8 How often do you see adults in your house physically fighting, hitting, or otherwise trying to hurt each other?
○ Often
○ Sometimes
○ Seldom
○ Never

Q9 How often do you watch television shows or movies that have a lot of violence in them?
- ○ Often
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Seldom
- ○ Never

Q10 What is your current age?
- ○ a) 16
- ○ b) 17
- ○ c) 18
- ○ d) 19
- ○ e) 20

Q1 How often have you felt or behaved this way during the past week (7 days)? Please choose one answer for each sentence.

	Never or Rarely (less than 1 day	Some or little of the time (1-2 days)	Moderate amount of the time (3-4 days)	Most or all of the time (5-7 days)
a) I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.	○	○	○	○
b) I felt I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family and friends.	○	○	○	○
c) I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.	○	○	○	○
d) I felt depressed.	○	○	○	○
e) I felt that everything I did was an effort.	○	○	○	○
f) I felt hopeful about the future.	○	○	○	○
g) My sleep was restless.	○	○	○	○
h) I was happy.	○	○	○	○
i) I felt lonely.	○	○	○	○
j) I enjoyed life.	○	○	○	○
k) I had crying spells.	○	○	○	○
l) I felt people disliked me.	○	○	○	○

Q2 In the past 12 months, about how many times...

	Never	Once or Twice	3-4 Times	5 Times or More
a) Have you stayed out all night without permission?	○	○	○	○
b) Were you questioned by the police about anything you did?	○	○	○	○
c) Have you run away from home?	○	○	○	○
d) Have you stolen anything from a store or school?	○	○	○	○
e) Have you intentionally damaged or destroyed anything that did not belong to you?	○	○	○	○
f) Have you fought with someone to the point of them needing care for their injuries?	○	○	○	○
g) Have you attacked someone with the intention of seriously hurting him/her	○	○	○	○
h) Have you carried a weapon for the purpose of defending yourself or using it in a fight?	○	○	○	○
i) Have you sold any drugs?	○	○	○	○
j) Have you attempted to touch anyone in any sexual way knowing that they would probably object to this?	○	○	○	○

Q3 In the past 12 months, were you part of a gang that broke the law by stealing, hurting someone, damaging property, etc.?
○ Yes

○ No

The next few questions are about smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and drug use. Please answer even if you do not use any of these substances.

Q1 Which of the following best describes your experience with cigarettes:
○ a) I smoke a few times a year.
○ b) I smoke once or twice a month.
○ c) I smoke 1-2 days a week.
○ d) I smoke about 3-5 days a week.
○ e) I smoke about 6-7 days a week.
○ f) I do not smoke anymore.
○ g) I tried once or twice.
○ h) I have never smoked.

Q2 On the days that you do smoke, about how many cigarettes do you smoke?
_____

The next questions are about drinking alcohol. A drink of alcohol is, for example: one bottle of beer OR one glass of wine OR one shot of liquor. Pick one answer.

Q3 Which of the following best describes your experience with alcohol:
❍ a) I drink (at least one drink) a few times a year.
❍ b) I drink (at least one drink) about once or twice a month.
❍ c) I drink (at least one drink) about 1-2 days a week.
❍ d) I drink (at least one drink) about 3-5 days a week.
❍ e) I drink (at least one drink) about 6-7 days a week.
❍ f) I do not drink alcohol anymore.
❍ g) I have only tried alcohol once or twice.
❍ h) I have only had a few sips.
❍ i) I have never had a drink of alcohol.

Q4 Which of the following best describes your experience with using marijuana and cannabis products (also known as a joint, pot, grass, or hash) in the past 12 months?
❍ a) I have used marijuana a few times in the past 12 months.
❍ b) I use it about once or twice a month.
❍ c) I use marijuana about 1-2 days a week.
❍ d) I use marijuana about 3-5 days a week.
❍ e) I use marijuana about 6-7 days a week.
❍ f) I have used it, but not in the past 12 months.
❍ g) I have never done it.

Q5 In the past 12 months, how many times have you operated a motorized vehicle after you have been drinking alcohol or doing drugs?
❍ Never
❍ Once or Twice
❍ 3-4 Times
❍ 5 Times or More

Q6 In the past 12 months, how many times have you been a passenger in a vehicle when the driver has been drinking alcohol or taking drugs?
❍ Never
❍ Once or Twice
❍ 3-4 Times
❍ 5 Times or More

Adolescence is a time when there are many changes to your body. In this section, we would like to know more about these processes. Please answer this section as honestly as possible and remember that your answers will be kept confidential.

Q1 How tall are you? (Please estimate if you are not sure).

Q2 How much do you weight? (Please estimate if you are not sure.)

Q3 Would you say you are... (Only pick yes for ONE of a, b, c, or d.)
❑ I. Dieting by eating less or eating differently?
❑ II. Exercising to burn calories or fat?
❑ III. Taking diet pills?
❑ IV. Smoking?
V. Other? Specify:

OR
❑ I. Eating more food or taking food supplements?
❑ II. Lifting weights or exercising to build muscle?
❑ III. Using steroids?
IV. Other? Specify:

OR
❑ I. Dieting by eating less or eating differently?
❑ II. Exercised to burn calories or fat?
❑ III. Taken dieting pills?
❑ IV. Smoked?
V. Other? Specify:

OR
⭕ d) Not trying to do anything about your weight.

This part of the questionnaire asks about your relationships with friends, family members, parents, and romantic relationships.

Q1 Choose the answer that best describes how you feel. Choose only one answer for each sentence.

	False	Mostly False	Sometimes False/ Sometimes True	Mostly True	True
a) I have many friends.	○	○	○	○	○
b) I get along easily with others my age.	○	○	○	○	○
c) Others my age want me to be their friend.	○	○	○	○	○
d) Most others want me to like them.	○	○	○	○	○
e) I try to see beyond girls' reputations.	○	○	○	○	○
f) When I meet a new person, I find things that we have in common.	○	○	○	○	○
g) I use my words to express my feelings.	○	○	○	○	○
h) I share secrets and private feelings with my close friends.	○	○	○	○	○
i) I tell adults what I need.	○	○	○	○	○
j) I tell people how much they mean to me.	○	○	○	○	○
k) I treat girls who are not my friends with respect.	○	○	○	○	○

This next section is about your close friends who would be the people that you trust and confide in. These may be friends from school, work, or anywhere else.

Q2 I feel that my close friends really know who I am.
○ False
○ Mostly False
○ Sometimes False/ Sometimes True
○ Mostly True
○ True

Q3 How many of your close friends are female? Please give an estimate.

How many of your close friends are male? Please give an estimate.

How many of your close friends identify other than male or female? Please give an estimate.

Remember that all of your answers will remain anonymous and private and no one from your home, school, or community will see your responses. The answers cannot be traced back to you.

Q5 How many of your close friends do the following:

	None	A Few	Most	All
a) Smoke cigarettes?	○	○	○	○
b) Drink alcohol?	○	○	○	○
c) Break the law by stealing, hurting someone, or damaging property?	○	○	○	○
d) Have tried marijuana?	○	○	○	○
e) Have tried drugs other than marijuana?	○	○	○	○

Q6 In the past 12 months, how many of your close friends have done the following:

	None	A Few	Most	All
a) Had a paying job?	○	○	○	○
b) Cut or skipped a day of school without permission?	○	○	○	○
c) Been suspended from school?	○	○	○	○
d) Dropped out of school for more than a week?	○	○	○	○

Q7 For each statement, choose one answer that best fits your situation with your close friends.

	All The Time	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Rarely	Never
a) My close friends push me to succeed and to do interesting things I would not do by myself.	○	○	○	○	○
b) When I make a decision, I take my close friends' opinion(s) into account.	○	○	○	○	○
c) When I make a decision, I think about all my options.	○	○	○	○	○
d) My close friends push me to do foolish or stupid things.	○	○	○	○	○

Q8 Other than your close friends, do you have anyone else in particular that you can talk to about yourself or your problems? Please check all that apply.
- ❑ a) Mother
- ❑ b) Father
- ❑ c) Stepmother
- ❑ d) Stepfather
- ❑ e) Brother
- ❑ f) Sister
- ❑ g) Grandparent
- ❑ h) Other relative
- ❑ i) A friend of the family
- ❑ j) Parents' partner
- ❑ k) Teacher or counsellor at school
- ❑ l) Coach or leader (i.e. spiritual leader or pastor)

m) Other (i.e. family doctor.) Please specify:

Q9 Think of the mother you are most involved with. Is she...
- ○ a) Your biological/ birth mother?
- ○ b) Your adoptive mother?
- ○ c) Your stepmother?
- ○ d) Your foster mother?
- ○ e) Another person (i.e. a motherly figure?)
- ○ f) I am not in touch with any motherly figure. (You may skip to question 13.)

Q10 Thinking of the mother you have identified:

	A Great Deal	Some	Very Little	None
a) How well do you feel that your mother understands you?	○	○	○	○
b) How fairly does your mother treat you?	○	○	○	○
c) How much affection do you receive from your mother?	○	○	○	○

Q11 Overall, how would you describe your relationship with your mother?
- ○ Very Close
- ○ Somewhat Close
- ○ Not Very Close

Q12 How often do you and your mother do the following things:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Daily
a) Eat a meal together?	○	○	○	○	○	○
b) Have a discussion together?	○	○	○	○	○	○
c) We make up easily after we have an argument.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d) We disagree and fight.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e) We bug each other or get on each other's nerves.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f) We yell at each other.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g) When we argue we stay angry for a very long time.	○	○	○	○	○	○
h) When we disagree, we refuse to talk to each other.	○	○	○	○	○	○
i) When we disagree, one of us stomps out of the room or the house.	○	○	○	○	○	○
j) When we disagree about something, we solve problems together.	○	○	○	○	○	○
k) When we disagree about something, I give in just to end the argument.	○	○	○	○	○	○
l) When we disagree, another person comes in to settle things or find a solution.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q13 Think of the father you are most involved with. Is he...
○ a) Your biological/ birth father?
○ b) Your adoptive father?
○ c) Your stepfather?
○ d) Your foster father?
○ e) Another person? (i.e. Fatherly figure?)
○ f) I am not in touch with any fatherly figure. (You may skip to question 17.)

Q14 Thinking of the father you have identified:

	A Great Deal	Some	Very Little	None
a) How well do you feel that your father understands you?	○	○	○	○
b) How fairly does your father treat you?	○	○	○	○
c) How much affection do you receive from your father?	○	○	○	○

Q15 Overall, how would you describe your relationship with your father?
○ Very Close
○ Somewhat Close
○ Not Very Close

Q16 How often do you and your father do the following things:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
a) Eat a meal together?	○	○	○	○	○
b) Have a discussion together?	○	○	○	○	○
c) We make up easily after we have an argument.	○	○	○	○	○
d) We disagree and fight.	○	○	○	○	○
e) We bug each other or get on each other's nerves.	○	○	○	○	○
f) We yell at each other.	○	○	○	○	○
g) When we argue we stay angry for a very long time.	○	○	○	○	○
h) When we disagree, we refuse to talk to each other.	○	○	○	○	○
i) When we disagree, one of us stomps out of the room or the house.	○	○	○	○	○
j) When we disagree about something, we solve problems together.	○	○	○	○	○
k) When we disagree about something, I give in just to end the argument.	○	○	○	○	○
l) When we disagree, another person comes in to settle things or find a solution.	○	○	○	○	○

Thinking of your mother and father identified previously, choose one answer for each sentence that best describes the way they have acted in the past 6 months. (If you are not in touch with any type of parental figure you may skip to question 20.)

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Q17 My parent(s)...

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
a) Tell me what time to be home when I go out.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Take an interest in where I am going and who I am with.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) Ask me to leave them a note or call to let them know where I am going.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) Let me know how to get in touch with them when they are not at home.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q18 How well do you think your parents get along with each other?
❍ Very Well
❍ Fairly Well
❍ Not Very Well
❍ My Parents Are Not In Touch With Each Other

Q19 How often do your parents get upset with one another, including times when they are mad but don't say much?
❍ Never
❍ Rarely
❍ Sometimes
❍ Often
❍ Always
❍ I Don't Know
❍ My Parents Are Not In Touch With Each Other

Q20 Overall, how would you describe your relationship with your brother(s) and sister(s)? Include step or foster siblings.
❍ Very Close
❍ Somewhat Close
❍ Not Very Close
❍ I Am Not In Touch With Them
❍ I Don't Have Any

Sometimes different situations or circumstances arise which may affect family life. The next few questions are about one of these situations.

Q21 Have you ever experienced being hungry because there was no food in the house or money to buy food? If no, go to question 23.
❍ Yes
❍ No

Q22 If yes, how often has this occurred?
- ○ Never
- ○ Occasionally, but not a regular occurrence
- ○ Every few months
- ○ Regularly or at the end of every month
- ○ More often then at the end of every month

Q23 How would/do you or your family cope if this happens? Mark all that apply.
- ○ a) My parent/guardian skips meals or eats less.
- ○ b) I skip meals or eat less.
- ○ c) I make sure others in the house eat before I do.
- ○ d) Cut down on a variety of foods usually eaten.
- ○ e) Seek help from relatives.
- ○ f) Seek help from friends.
- ○ g) Seek help from social worker/government office.
- ○ h) Seek help from food bank or emergency food program.
- ○ i) Use school meal program.
j) Other. Please specify:

Q24 Thinking of your parent(s) or guardian(s), what is the estimated combined household income per year?This question is asking about the financial settings withing your family. "Income per year" would refer to all the various sources of money that come into the household, such as through work, government, school, etc. Please make your best guess if you do not know for sure.
- ○ a) Under $25,000
- ○ b) $25,000 - $39,999
- ○ c) $40,000 - $59,999
- ○ d) $60,000 - $79,999
- ○ e) Over $80,000
- ○ f) Would rather not say
- ○ g) Unsure/I don't know

Q25 What is the highest level of education completed by your mother figure (or primary guardian)?
- ○ a) Did not complete high school
- ○ b) High school/GED completed
- ○ c) College diploma/degree
- ○ d) Bachelor's degree
- ○ e) Master's degree
- ○ f) Advanced graduate work or Ph. D.
- ○ g) Unsure
- ○ h) Would rather not say
- ○ i) Not applicable

Q26 What is the highest level of education completed by your father figure (or primary guardian)?
- ○ a) Did not complete high school
- ○ b) High school/GED completed
- ○ c) College diploma/degree
- ○ d) Bachelor's degree
- ○ e) Master's degree
- ○ f) Advanced graduate work or Ph. D.
- ○ g) Unsure
- ○ h) Would rather not say
- ○ i) Not applicable

The next set of questions are about relationships outside of regular friendship, such as a boyfriend or girlfriend. For the rest of this section, we will use the word partner to refer to a boyfriend or girlfriend that you may have had. Some of the questions are about you and may be personal or private. All your answers will remain private and anonymous. Your answers cannot be traced back to you and you do not have to answer anything that makes you uncomfortable.

Q1 Sexual identification is how one identifies one's sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual). Do you consider yourself to be:
- ○ Heterosexual or straight
- ○ Gay
- ○ Lesbian
- ○ Bisexual
- ○ Pansexual
- ○ Unsure
- ○ Do Not Want To Answer
- ○ Other
If Other, please specify:

Q2 How old were you when you had your first partner?
- ○ a) I have not had a partner. (Skip to question 6)
b) I was: (Please specify age.)

Q3 Do you have a partner right now?
- ○ a) Yes
- ○ b) No. (Skip to question 5)

Q4 How long have you been going out with/ dating your partner?
- ○ Less than 1 month
- ○ 1-5 months
- ○ 6 months to 1 year
- ○ Over 1 year

Q5 Outside of school or work hours, about how many days a week do you see your partner?
- ○ Less than once a week
- ○ One day a week
- ○ 2-3 days a week
- ○ 4-5 days a week
- ○ 6-7 days a week
- ○ Never

Q6 In the past 12 months, how many partners have you had?
- ○ None
- ○ 1
- ○ 2-3
- ○ 4-5
- ○ 6 or more

This section of the questionnaire only applies to young women that have participated in a girls-only community program. These questions aim to understand what young women think about being a part of a girls-only program and what you are interested in now.

Q1 Choose the answer that best describes how you feel or act. Choose only one answer for every sentence.

	False	Mostly False	Sometimes False/ Sometimes True	Mostly True	True
a) I like school.	○	○	○	○	○
b) I participate in a sport, hobby, or activity that I love.	○	○	○	○	○
c) I try to take care of my emotions and body.	○	○	○	○	○
d) I make my own decisions about if or when to have sex.	○	○	○	○	○
e) I make my own decisions about if or when to drink or use drugs.	○	○	○	○	○
f) I use protection if I have sex.	○	○	○	○	○
g) I eat healthy food.	○	○	○	○	○
h) I don't hurt my body when I'm upset.	○	○	○	○	○
i) If I drink, I don't get drunk.	○	○	○	○	○
j) I build relationships with adults who help me with my goals.	○	○	○	○	○

The remaining questions are open-ended and we hope you might provide some detailed responses that will help us understand girls' opinions about girls-only programming. Please answer as honestly as you can about your person experiences and memories.

Q2 What have you learned about yourself since participation in programming?

Q3 What have you learned about other girls that were in programming with you?

Q4 What have you learned about relationships from your participation in programming?

To show our appreciation for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire, we want to give you a $15 gift card of your choice (Tim Hortons, Cineplex Odeon, or Indigo Chapters).   Please click on this link and enter your name and mailing address.

(Open this link in a new tab by right clicking the link and selecting "Open link in new tab" Do not leave this questionnaire yet.)

https://qtrial2014az1.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_aeH5FV3tmk3OfoF

Including your name and e-mail address for compensation will not affect the privacy and confidentiality of your answers in this questionnaire because these are separate documents and are not linked together.

Continue on to read about how you can participate in interviews to share more about your experience as a girl!

Please go to the next page!

Are you interested in being interviewed as part of this research study?

Thank you for filling out the questionnaire. We want to ask you if you're interested in telling us even more about your life experiences!

Part Two of this research invites 15 young women to take part in two 30-minute interviews about their experiences from girlhood to adolescence. This interview will take place over the phone. If interested and chosen to participate, you will receive an honorarium of $10 per interview (for a total of $20) in gift cards of your choice. This is in addition to the $15 gift card that you are entitled to for this questionnaire.

If you wish to be considered for the interviews, please click on this link and enter your name and e-mail address. This link will not connect back to the questionnaire, so all of your answers will still be private!

https://qtrial2014az1.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1Y6KAtvSZCnGxdb

Including your name and e-mail address for the interviews will not affect the privacy and confidentiality of your answers in this questionnaire because these are separate documents and are not linked together. Only the researcher, Ayesha, will have access to your name and phone number to interview you.

If you're not interested in being part of the interviews, that's okay! Thank you once again for your time

Please go to the next page!

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire. Some of the questions were personal and may have acted as a trigger for negative moods or thoughts. In order to ensure your well-being, please contact the number provided below if you need some someone to talk to or if you need help. The Kids Help Phone organization is a confidential, anonymous, free, and bilingual counseling service available for anyone up to and including age 20. It is 24/7 so you can call whenever you need to.

Please contact Ayesha Umme-Jihad at umme0840@mylaurier.ca or (519) 884 0710 x 4352 if you have any feedback, questions, or concerns regarding this questionnaire.

LOCAL SUPPORT RESOURCES
National:

1. Kids Help Phone   1-800-668-6868 - Immediate, confidential, crisis intervention phone line. Available for youth aged 11-24. Free.

Vancouver, B.C.:
1. Vancouver 24-Hour Mental Health Crisis Line   (604) 874-7307 - Provides 24 hour telephone mental health crisis intervention for people in need of urgent support and information. Free service.

2. Raven Song Community Health Centre, 2450 Ontario Street, Vancouver (604) 872-8441 - Serves children, youth, and their families. Provides direct client services, consultation to referring agencies, education, training, and support. Multiple locations.

Fort McMurray, Alberta:
1. Alberta Mental Health Helpline 1-877-303-2642 - Provides confidential and anonymous crisis intervention service, as well as information about mental health programs and referrals

2. Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, 7 Hospital Street, Fort McMurray (780) 791-6194 - Provides assessment, treatment, therapy, and support for mental health problems. No referral necessary and free for Albertans.

Halifax, Nova Scotia:
1. Mental Health Mobile Crisis (902) 429 8167 or 1-888-429-8167 FREE - Provides intervention and short term crisis management for children, youth, and adults. Confidential, non-judgmental, and respectful

2. Halifax Community Mental Health Service, 6080 Young Street, Suite 1001, Halifax (902) 422-1611

Scarborough, Ontario:
1. Toronto Distress Centres 416-408-4357 - Provide immediate and confidential crisis intervention
2. YWCA Toronto Choices for Living, 2202 Jane Street, Toronto (416) 249 8000 - Free support group and program for women living with mental health challenges.

Hamilton, Ontario:
1. Hamilton Mental Health Crisis Outreach and Support Team (905)972-8388 - Crisis line for Hamilton residents, provides crisis intervention

2. Family Mental health Support Network for Hamilton, 193 James Street S, Hamilton (905)523-8345 - A resource centre that provides called with information about support and self-help groups, community services and programs, and family education opportunities.

Appendix D: Interview Guides

Initial phone call

Hi, this is Ayesha calling from Wilfrid Laurier University, may I speak with
_____?

Hi _____, thank you for your interest in my research and for completing the
questionnaire. I wanted to book two 30-minute interviews with you today. Can we do that right
now?

Book two interviews.

Please send me an e-mail or call me back if anything changes. May I give you my email and
phone number?
Thank you so much, I'll call you at _____.
Bye!

Interview 1

Hi _____, this is Ayesha calling from Wilfrid Laurier University for our
first interview.
Small talk about weather.

Today's interview is about yourself and your childhood. I'm interested in whatever you want to
share with me today, and your personal thoughts and opinions. Any information that you choose
to provide will be important for me in understanding the life experiences of girls like yourself.

Let's pick a pseudonym, or a fake name for you that we'll use to protect your identity. Can you
pick a fake name for yourself? Okay, from here on I'll call you _____.

Alright, I'm going to turn on the recorder now and we'll get started. Let me know if you have
any questions along the way or if you want to skip a question.

Let's begin.
- What was your childhood like?
- What were your favourite things to do?
- Did you have someone to do your favourite things with?
    o Parents? Siblings? Friends? Others?
- What were some of your favourite toys or TV shows?
- Do you remember any vacations with your family?
- Did you spend more time with your family, your friends, or on your own?

- I want to ask about you now, what are some of the things you like now?
  - School subjects? Hobbies? TV shows, music, games?
- What do you like about them specifically?
- How do you share these interests with friends?
- How do you share these interests with family?

- What are some of the things you dislike?
- What do you dislike about them?

- I want to talk about your experiences in school, what are your grades like?
- Are you happy with your grades? Why or why not?
- Do your friends have similar grades?
- I want to know about your ambitions, what do you want to be when you grow up?
- How did you get interested in that?
  - Through school? Girls program? Other?
- Do your friends and family support your ambitions? Why or why not? How?

That's it for this first interview. What did you think of this interview process?

Turn off the recorder.

The second interview will be about more personal and sensitive questions like the relationships in your life with parents, mentors, and friends; how your personal characteristics affect your life; and how the _____ program may have affected your life. If you need to, you can spend some time thinking about these things before our interview.

Do you have any questions for me?

We chose _____ for our second interview. Does this still work for you?

Great, I'll call you at then. Thanks _____, and talk to you next week!

<u>Interview 2</u>

Hi _____, this is Ayesha calling from Wilfrid Laurier University for our second interview.
Small talk about the week or weather.

This interview will be about the relationships in your life with parents, mentors, and friends; how your personal characteristics affect your life; and how the _____ program may have affected your life. I'm interested in your story, your thoughts, and your experiences.

We'll work with the fake name from last time which was _____.

Alright, I'm going to turn on the recorder now and we'll get started. Let me know if you have any questions along the way or if you want to skip a question.

- Let's talk about relationships first, how would you describe your relationship with your parents?
- Why do you think it is that way?
- How do you feel about that?
- Do you feel that you can go to your parent(s) to talk or tell them things?
- What's an example of that?
- Do you trust their judgment when they give you advice or instructions? Why or why not?
- When is the last time you remember this situation?
- Are you closer with one parent over the other?
- Why do you think that is?
- How could things be better?
- Why do you think that?

- In the last interview, you mentioned you had _____ siblings.
- How would you describe your relationships with siblings?
- Why do you think that is?
- How do you feel about that?
- Do you feel like you can share things with your siblings?
- Can I have an example of this situation?
- Do you go to them for advice or with questions?
- What's an example of that?
- How could things be better?
- Why do you think that?

- Do you have any mentors outside of your parents/siblings? Other grownups such as a relative, teacher, or other?
- Who would that be?
- Where did you meet this person?
- How long have you known them?
- Why would you consider them your mentor?
- Do you see this person regularly? How often? Why or why not?
- What do you like about them?
- Do they treat you differently than your parents? How so?
- Do you feel like you can go to them with questions and for advice?

Now I want to talk about your demographics. You said that you identify as _____.
- How do you feel about identifying this way?
- Do you like being _____? Why do you say that?
- Are many of your family members _____?
- Are any of your friends _____?
- Why do you think that is?
- Are there many people that identify as _____ in your community?
- Why do you think that is? How does that make you feel?
- What do you think is the general perception of people that identify as _____?
- How do you feel _____ people are generally treated in your neighbourhood and community?
- Why do you think that? How does that make you feel?
- How do you feel _____ people are generally treated in Canadian society as a whole?
- Why do you think that? How does that make you feel?
- Do you think your being _____ affects your school experiences?
- How? Why do you think that? How does that make you feel?
- Do you think your being a girl affects your school experiences?
- How? Why do you think that? How does that make you feel?

- How would you describe your experience in the _____ program when you were younger?
- Why would you describe it that way?
- Are you still connected with this program? How? With who?
- What did you learn from this program? Can I have an example?
- Did you learn how to connect with people around your age? How so?
- Did you learn how to connect with grownups such as teachers? How so?
- Did you learn how to evaluate the way other people treat you? How so?
- Did you learn how to question the things you heard from grownups and through media?
- Did you learn how to reflect on your own feelings and understand them? Can I have an example of the last time you did that?
- Do you think you learned these things from the _____ program? Why or why not?
- Do you think the _____ program impacted the way you are today? Why or why not?
- How might you be different if you had not done to the _____ program?

That's it for this second interview. What did you think of this interview process?
Turn off the recorder.

If agreed to member check process:
In the consent form, you said you're interested in the member check process. Are you still interested in that now? *Explain if needed.*

I can email you the summary by _____, would you be able to check it out and send me your comments by _____? That's great.

I will be sending you some gift cards to show you my appreciation. One is for the survey, and two are for these two interviews. That would be $45 in total. The options are for Tim Hortons, Indigo Chapters, and Cineplex Odeon. You can combine them or choose different options. What would you like?

_____

That's great, I will mail these to you as soon as I can.
Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your story. Have a great day, bye!

Appendix E: Standpoint

I am a young woman raised in and influenced by multiple cultures, and I have experienced being an insider and an outsider within those cultures throughout my childhood. The connection between being a woman and having less voice, power, and financial liberty were clear to me from a very young age. Primarily, I grew up in a patriarchal and religious culture in which men have a lot of power and are prone to abuse this power due to their entrenchment in their religion and culture. Growing up, I remember realizing that women have different rights in different countries, which are based on the moral values of those countries.

When I was six years old in Saudi Arabia, I saw a man beating his wife with his shoe outside of a public shopping centre and the police had cordoned off this spectacle instead of stopping him. At age 9 in Canada, I found out that neighbours call the police on other neighbours if they hear a loud fight in order to prevent domestic abuse against wives. While private affairs between husband and wife are relatively private still, the government and law enforcement will intervene when an abuse of power occurs – this is why I loved becoming a Canadian citizen at age fourteen. My experiences with gender-based violence in a Pakistani and Saudi Arabian context have been very severe, but moving to Canada was one of the best things to happen to me because physical distance from that environment played a major role in the development of my resilience.

As a teenager growing up in Canada, I struggled with having the word "jihad" as part of my last name – due the Americanized definition of "jihad" post-9/11 – until the day I discovered its metaphorical meaning and realized how much it describes my ideal self. This is a proudly unique Arabic name dreamt up by my Pakistani parents that you are not likely to come across on another person. My last name has a literal definition of "mother of holy war" and a metaphorical

definition of "the initiator of the fight for a righteous cause." It was then that I decided to live up to being an *umme jihad* and speak up when I see or hear something wrong. It was not until I enrolled in the master's in community psychology program that I learned that things that are wrong cannot always be seen or heard – not without a critical lens. Gender inequality is one of these things.

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