

SEPTEMBER -
DECEMBER 2022

<https://ifaradainstitute.org/>



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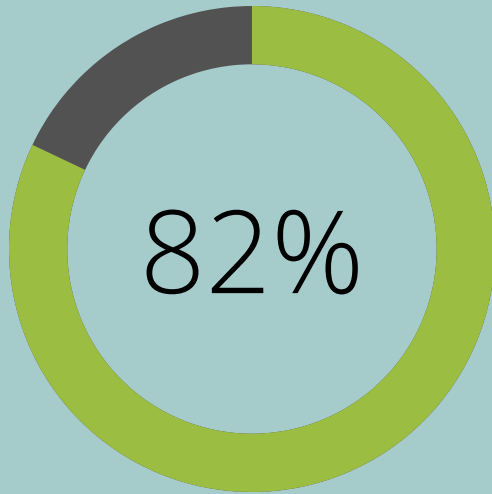
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CHILD AND YOUTH
PROGRAMMING REVIEW



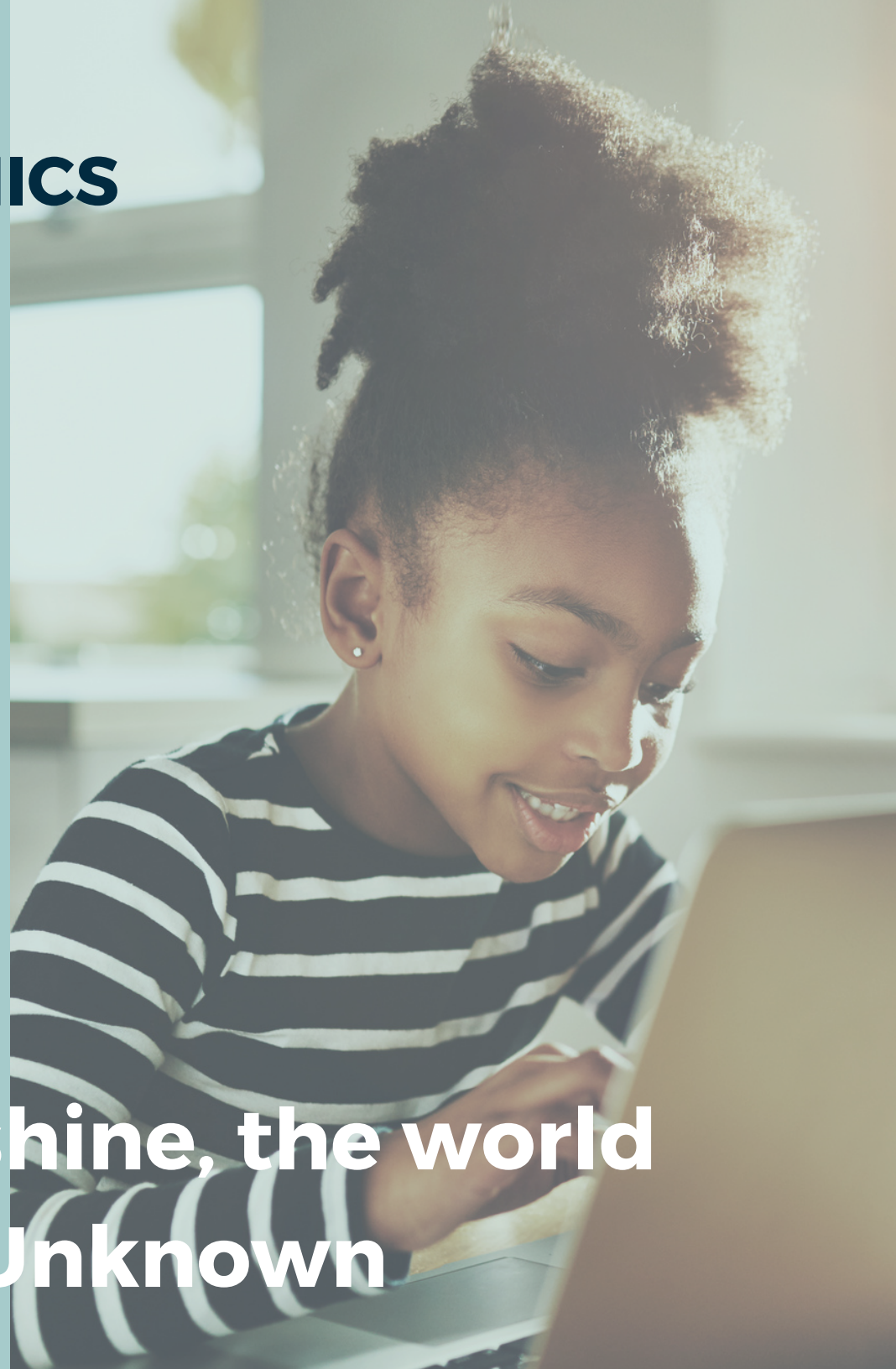
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GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS



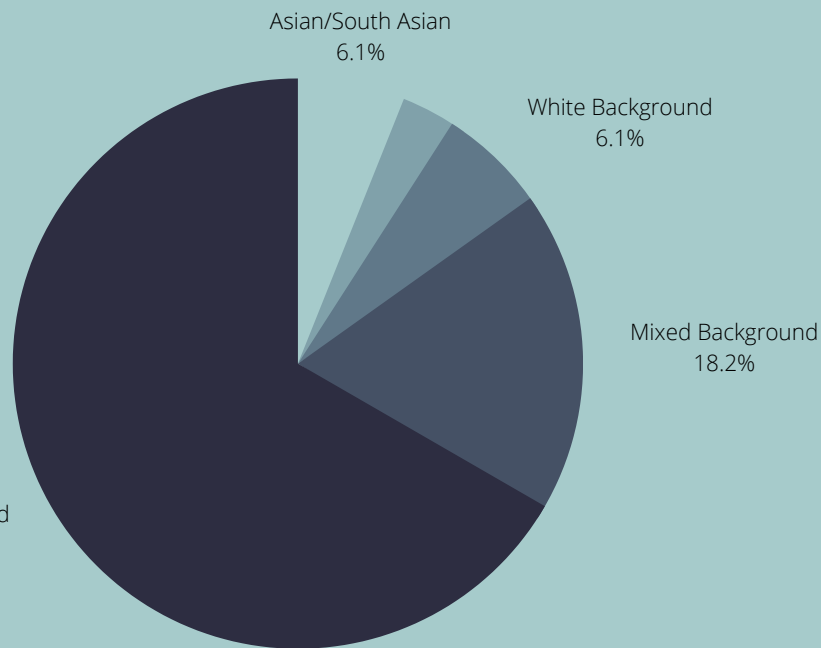
82 percent of
attendees were
Women-
Identified/Girls

**"When girls can shine, the world
grows brighter" Unknown**



GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS

From September 2022- December 2022 Ifarada supported demographics of marginalized children and youth in Ontario, Canada, mostly the Durham Region, with the aim to provide tools, strategies, community feeling and healing in relation to fostering positive mental wellness.



- **Term: People who experience oppression and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.**
- **Both community and individual health are deeply impacted by marginalization.**
- **Black communities in nearby Toronto, Ontario were found to be disproportionately impacted by the challenges of COVID-19 along with facing systemic anti-black racism when looking for support for their overall wellness in 2020 - 2021. (Black Health Alliance, 2021)**

Kusoma Reading Circle

Kusoma Reading Circle is a youth group with a goal to connect youth in the GTA area with their love for reading and learning more about Black, Indigenous, POC and LGBTQIA2S+ authors. Kusoma means reading in Swahili, this word was chosen to empower and normalize terms from the African diaspora with our work. Similarly, the age ranges for KRC also have Swahili names: Mapema (4-8), Kupanda (9-12) and Kabambe (13+). Literacy is a powerful tool and studies have shown that children with higher levels of literacy tend to have more successful life outcomes in the future.

Example Session: Learning Phonic Sounds (November 10, 2022)

In this session, we focused on learning and practicing the recognition of phonic sounds through an engaging and collaborative activity. A facilitator read a book (the oldest participant helped with this), and the participants had to listen out for phonic sounds they heard in the book, that were on the bingo sheet. If they recognized the sound they crossed it off their bingo sheet. To grasp the participants knowledge when they heard the phonic sound they were asked to think of other words this sound could be in. The participants loved this activity as the bingo sheet was displayed on the screen and they got to come up and cross the sound out themselves, thus establishing a sense of confidence and independence.

Group Demographics

**Children
aged 3-4
Participated**

Black-Identified
100%

THERAPEUTIC GROUPS

Youth Programs

Youth programming is vital to supporting the positive development and growth of youth. We support each other's journey, and we have developed unique, African-centric, and Indigenous-inspired tools to enhance your leadership skills.



Askira Girls

Designed for girls ages 5 to 9 years old. The program focuses on social skills, emotional management, healthy relationships, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.



Nia Gwenda Girls

Nia Gwenda is designed for girls ages 10 to 16 years old. The program focuses on social skill development, internet safety, managing conflict, healthy relationships, and emotional management.



School Programming

There has been a demand for programs in schools. This term, our team worked with Alexander Graham Bell Public School and started a program focussed on leadership, mental health and empowering voices of Black and racialized students.

COUNSELLING THEORY

The theories and theoretical orientations that grounded the therapeutic support groups Askira Girls and Nia Gwenda. These groups are grounding in theory of empowerment, anti-oppressive practice and trauma-informed practices to create a safe and supportive space for the girls in the groups.



Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is focused on the emotional bond between two people and the relationship between the parent and child. Bowlby argued that the earliest bonds created by children and their caregivers have a significant impact on the child's life and development as they grow up (Theories & practice, 2020).



Ecological Systems Theory

This acknowledges the child environment from the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. In the microsystem, this involves the child's immediate environment such as parents, teachers, family, caregivers, and peers. (Theories & practice, 2020)



Family Systems theory

Aims to look at the family patterns, personalities, behaviour, and emotions of the child & family. The family dynamic has a role in the development of a child. In the social work field, practitioners may try to suggest different strategies for families to work on such as creating boundaries, using active listening and communication skills (Theories & practice, 2020).



TESTIMONIALS

Askira Girls
October - December 2022
11 week Program

***“I love Askira because I get
to come and make friends”***
***(Quote from one of the group participants
on why she loves coming to Askira each
week)***



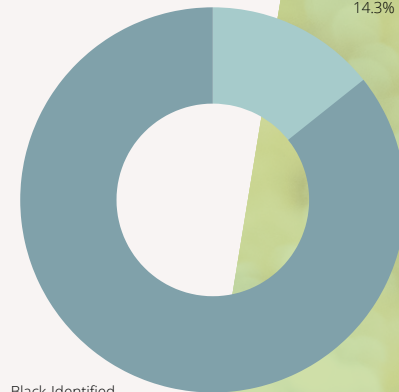
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ASKIRA GIRLS

Girls Aged 5-8 Participated

The focus of Askira Girls is on building confidence, social skill development, and emotional support. Askira girls is ideal for all girls, but can provide tremendous support for girls experiencing family conflict, grief/loss, divorce/separation, bullying, and organic disorders such as ADHD, and autism. Askira Girls is led by a wellness therapist, child and youth worker, and/or skilled professionals. Each group is tailored to meet the needs of the girls within the group. Groups are held once per week for up to eight weeks. A closure report is provided at the close of group highlighting the girls strength and activities throughout the group.

<https://ifaradainstitute.org/programs/askira/>



Black-Identified
85.7%

Mixed Background
14.3%



THEMES

Over the past four programs in the prior years time some of the themes for sessions are discussed in the table below. Themes and interventions are tailored to the unique needs identified in the intake completed at the start of the group with the caregiver and child.

| Theme | Intervention Example | Outcome Goal for Session |
|---|--|--|
| Emotions/Emotional Regulation | Mindfulness/CBT: Girls make an 'emotions pie'. They draw a circle and create a pie where each piece of pie represents emotions they have been feeling. Some pieces larger than others. . | Girls are able to identify and name their emotions. Discussion afterwards of how we can deal with negative emotions (providing coping tools). |
| Social Skill Development | Narrative Therapy: Girls wrote a short story about themselves. Social Skills Bingo | Build confidence in girls to outline their lives thus far and share it with the group. Be able to identify appropriate behaviours in certain settings. |
| Positive Self Talk/ Dealing with our "Inner Bully" | Narrative and Art Therapy: Girls were given negative thoughts 'inner bully' might tell us, they had to come up with alternative positive thought. Self portrait. | Validating that it is normal to experience negative self talk, and how we can reframe these thoughts. Also, build a sense of confidence and increased self-esteem. |

Feedback

Askira Girls

October-December 2022

11 week Program

The following were common themes when participants and parents were asked what they enjoyed about the Askira Girls Program:

- Learning new things
- Making friends/building connections
- Having a designated space to discuss important topics.
- Child having a weekly commitment that creates consistency and routine.
- Something to look forward to each week/ something child is excited about.

“My daughter is always excited for Askira Girls and I know how excited she is to continue in the new year.”

(Quote from parent of Askira Girls participant)



ASKIRA GIRLS

Issues that Came up in the Group

- Low self-esteem and not able to identify personal strengths
- Grief and Loss, having the experience of losing a family member, experiencing separation or divorce in the family, moving schools, unable to participate in beloved activities
- Experiences of bullying based on the way the girls look and systemic racism at school
- Difficulty with emotional regulation and identifying coping tools

Counselling Theory in Group Programming and Interventions

- Narrative therapy interventions, helping the girls to identify their strengths, personal stories about their unique self and find pride in their culture and identity with facilitator knowledge of anti-oppressive practices and the forces that the girls face in their lives. Process difficult events in their life through storytelling and supportive safe group space
- Trauma-Informed CBT child therapy, Psychoeducation about emotions, and identifying more helpful coping for emotional regulation and management of big emotions.
- Play & Art Therapy, a creative and engaging format for therapeutic interventions at an age appropriate level. Encourages expression and exploration of inner world and emotions.

Example of Activity

Riding my Emotion Wave

Facilitator provided psychoeducation on how big emotions are experienced like a wave. Girls were asked to draw a wave and include things they would bring on their "boat" that helps them ride this big emotion. Including healthy activities or coping tools that aid them in experiencing a big emotion.



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TESTIMONIALS

**Adrinkahene Boys Program
November - December 2022
5 week Program**

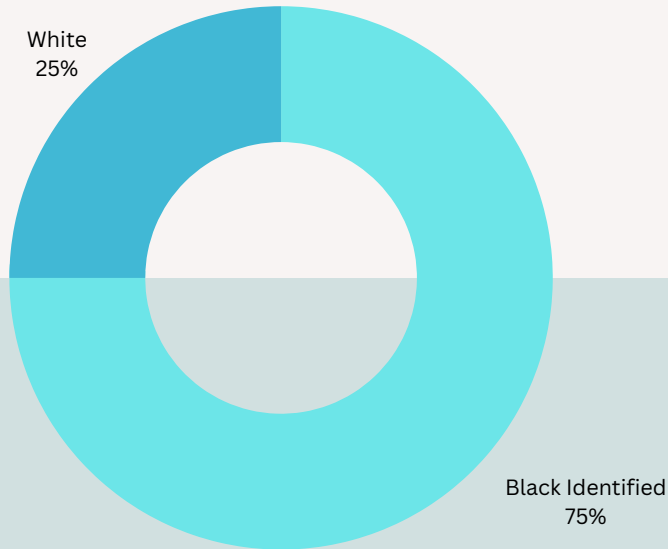
"I want to stay here forever!"
***(Quote from one of the participants at the
end of the first session)***

***"I am very pleased with the
program and my son is excited
to come back each week."***
(Quote from parent of participant)



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Example Activities



- **"Trash Can Basketball"**
 - Boys were asked to write down an emotion they have been feeling they want to let go of on piece of paper. They then crumpled it up and they had to aim their "ball" into the net (trash can).
 - They enjoyed the sports aspect of the game where they moved around the net to make the game increasingly more challenging
- **"Blindfolded Obstacle Course"**
 - An obstacle course was set up. The person moving through the obstacle course was blindfolded. The other group members had to lead the person through the obstacle course.
- **"I am Me"**
 - Art activity - Group members drew a portrait of themselves and surrounded this with different identity markers of what make them unique.
- **Movement Videos**
 - Just Dance, Stretching, Other exercise oriented videos to get the group members moving.



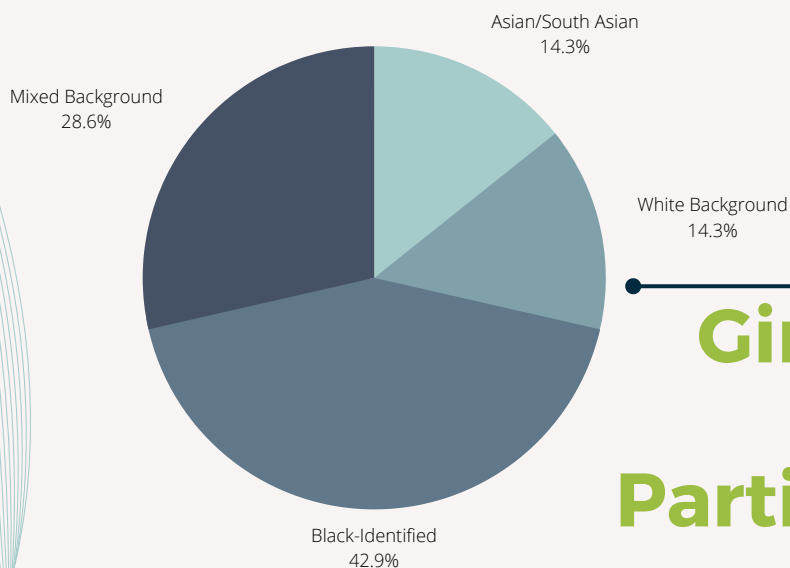
NIA GWENDA

<https://ifaradainstitute.org/programs/nia-gwenda/>

Nia Gwenda focuses on working through different ways to cope with emotions and developing new skills to implement in daily routines. Enriching young girls with skills to be confident, courageous and strong leaders in their community is imperative to the success and continuation of Nia Gwenda.

Each youth is interviewed individually prior to the group starting for an intake assessment. The youth all have opportunities to speak with the facilitator one on one after sessions with more private concerns and are given a final survey upon termination of the group.

Nia Gwenda is held in-person in our confidential office location Wednesdays from 5pm to 7pm. Between September and December, two terms of the program has run ranging from 5 to 6 sessions per term. It is aimed to be accessible as a free program.



**Girls Aged
10- 16
Participated**



THEMES

Some examples of themes researched and developed for the young girls aged 10 - 16 are described in the table below. The goal of this group is to empower young girls and give them a space to learn more about themselves and how to make healthy connections with others. The themes were carefully considered with the needs of the participants in mind and adjustments were made throughout the programming to make sure it was relevant for them.

| Theme | Activity Example | Outcome Goal for Session |
|---|--|---|
| Positive Self-Talk vs. Negative Self-Talk | Art Therapy: The girls were given the opportunity to re-work examples of negative self-talk to be more positive on a canvas. They designed them to how these statements made them feel. | Self-acceptance and self-compassion work. Increasing their positive self-talk and the importance of reciting daily affirmations. Learning to give themselves grace and forgiveness. |
| Emotional Regulation and Coping Skills | Group discussion and expressive writing activity: The group were asked to discuss how they cope with four different emotions. From there, they wrote their favourite ways to cope with these emotions. | Garner better understanding of their emotions and how to cope with them in positive ways. Also to discuss coping with emotions with the group to increase their trust with one another. |
| Signs of Healthy Friendships | Movement activity: The group were individually given examples of healthy and unhealthy friendship scenarios and had to put them in under the good, bad or warning categories taped around the room. | Learn the warning signs of friendships so they can be aware when they see that at school. Understanding the importance of having healthy relationships and positive friendships. |

"I like the affirmation pumpkin art activity. I have it hung up in my room and read the words whenever I see it."

(Quote from 12 year old girl Nia Gwenda September - December 2022)



Testimonials

September - December 2022

Nia Gwenda

10 year old Girl

"I love the art and that we get to talk about our feelings in a group instead of just doing it in private. I like talking with the group because I feel safe. I get to do something out of my home finally so I am always excited to come."

13 year old Girl

"I like it because of the art we do. I like to talk in the groups it makes me feel safe, and it's a lot of fun. I want to come back in January and do it again. I have made new friends that I like."



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IMPACT STATEMENTS

"The client seemed shy and a little closed off when first joining the group. Over the weeks she really found her voice and was noticeably more comfortable engaging in discussion with the group. There has been immense growth in her confidence and she has built connections with other girls in the group."

(Quote from facilitator October-December 2022)

Askira

"This program has created a great sense of togetherness among the attendees. They started the program as strangers and through the weeks have developed a support network and even some friendships. It has been an amazing experience seeing these girls learn more about themselves and find comfort with each other."

(Quote from Lead Facilitator September - December 2022)

Nia Gwenda

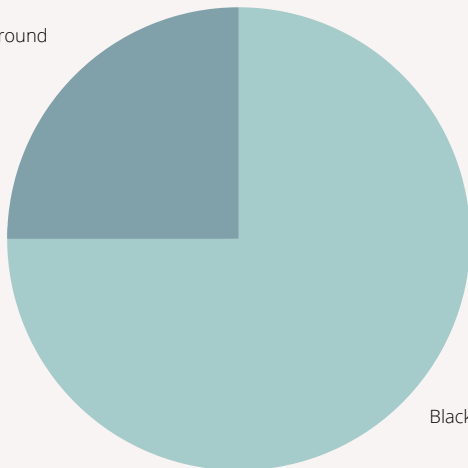
Young Queens

<https://ifaradainstitute.org/programs/nia-gwenda/>

Young Queens is a girl's group. The purpose of this program is to provide a safe space for Black girls to speak on issues that are concerning them.

Young Queens is an 8-week program, where youth will have discussions and activities, touching on a variety of topics, such as, healthy relationships, bullying, mental health, self care, developing self esteem, self confidence and self worth. Goals of this program: to provide an open and safe space for girls that is judgement free, make new friends, learn new things and to empower young Black girls to just be themselves.

Mixed Background
25%



Black-Identified
75%

**Girls Aged
9- 12
Participated**



Young Queens Activity Example

In this intimate group, the girls made their experience their own and guided the discussions. It was noticed that they spend a lot of time on social media so the idea of doing an activity where they make their own app was well received by the group.

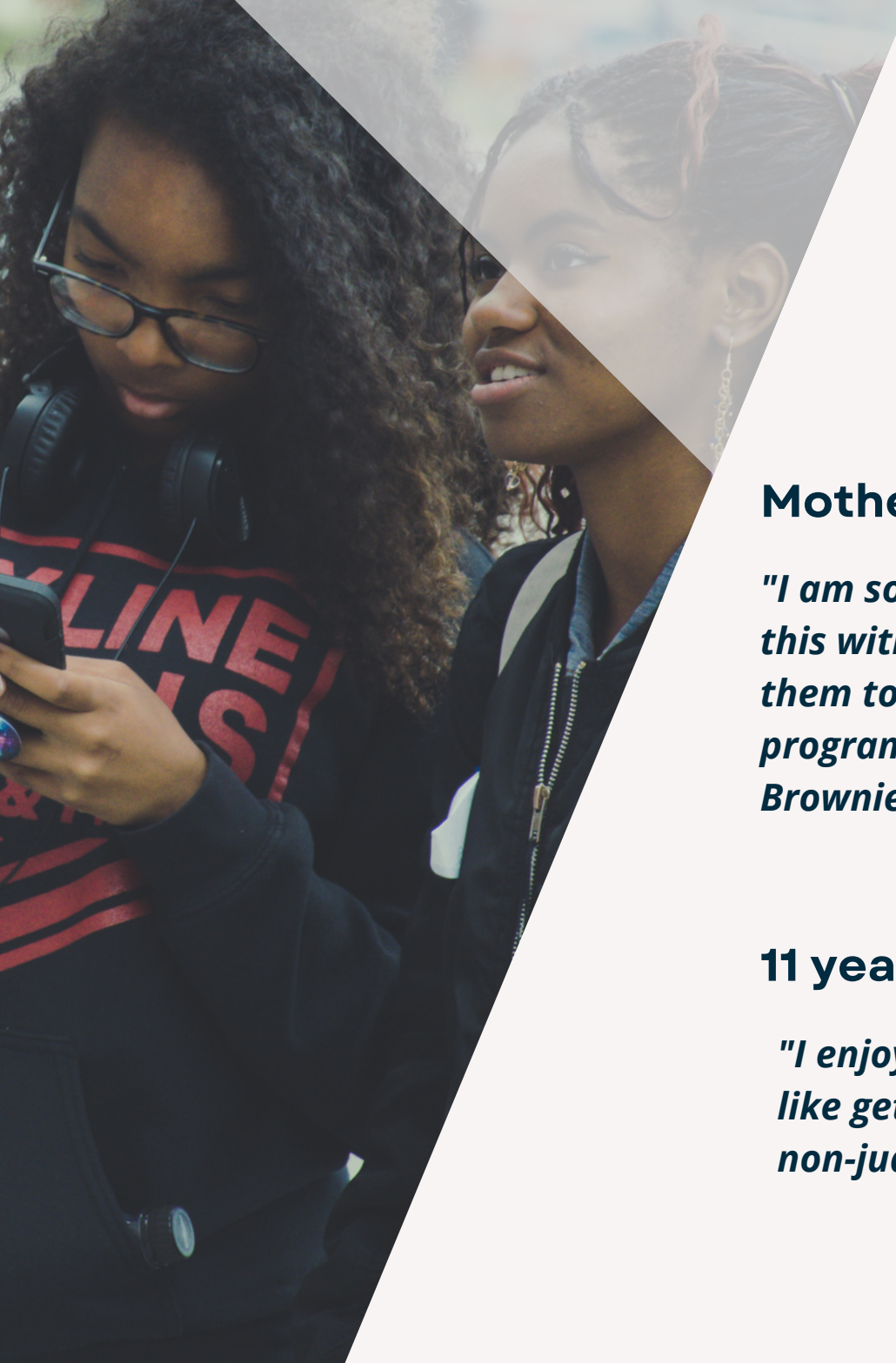
Make Your Own App

For this activity, the girls were given a sheet where they had to plan and develop their own app. From there they had to write the purpose of their app, the audience the app is for as well as parameters to make sure this app is safe for those using it and safeguards to assure it will not be abused.

Final Thoughts on Activity

The girls enjoyed doing this activity because it allowed them to make their dream social media app. The apps ranged from music apps, to designing apps to even a fitness and self-confidence building app. The girls spoke about the need for safety on their apps and this led the conversation to speaking on how the apps they use can sometimes be misused and abused. Upon further reflections, the girls noted their own feelings on their apps and looked more into how they are using and potentially misusing them.





Testimonials

September - December 2022

Young Queens

Mother of participant

"I am so happy my daughter is doing something like this with other Black girls. It is so important for them to have spaces like this and I hope this program can continue similar to Girls Inc. or Brownies."

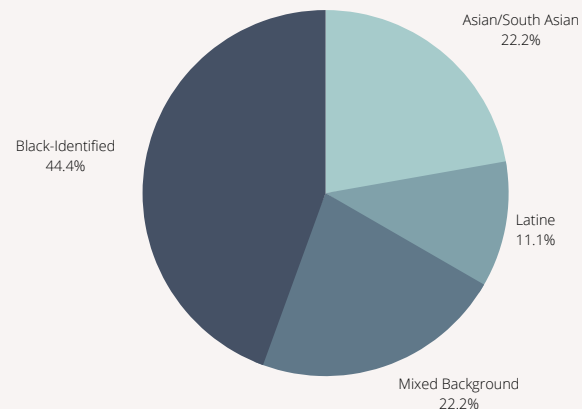
11 year old Girl

"I enjoy coming and getting to make new friends. I like getting to talk about how I'm feeling in a safe non-judgemental space."

Alexander Graham Bell Program

This youth program at Alexander Graham Bell Public School focused on building leadership among the group participants as well as coming together to better the overall school community. We touched on discussions surrounding conflict resolution, mental health/wellness, emotional regulation, intersectionality/identity, healthy relationships, racism within the school, and touched on personal experiences of the group members as well. The students had an overarching goal of creating presentations for their school that touch on racism, mental health, healthy relationships and confidence.

The group members really formed a sense of connection and support for one another as the sessions progressed. The facilitators have seen much progress when it comes to knowledge on the previously stated topics and we look forward to continuing our work in the new year.



Group Demographics

**Students aged
10-13 years old**

Alexander Graham Bell Activity Example

The goal of this program is to create a space for Black and other racialized students in this school community to discuss their concerns, increase their leadership skills and make their community safer for all students. Each week, topics ranged from identity to racism to healthy relationships and even bullying. Below is an example of an activity done on identity.

Identity Signs Activity

For this activity, different identifying words were plastered around the room such as: race, ethnicity, gender identity, class, language, religion, ability, sexuality, mental health, education and body size. Statements such as: "The part of my identity that provides me the most privilege is _____," were then read aloud and the students were instructed to walk around the room to the identity sign that they most felt completed this sentence for them. After each round, students were asked to share why they picked the identity sign they did and their thoughts on either being in a large group or by themselves at a certain sign.

Final Thoughts on Activity

As the students made their way around the room, they started to realize they had many similarities in their identity and insecurities they may have. Some students noted that they were not aware of some of these aspects of their identity and wanted to learn more about them. This activity also allotted the students opportunities to get vulnerable on topics they do not speak on openly frequently like their struggles with mental health. This activity proved to be successful in fostering safety in this group, making new connections and strengthening previous ones.



TESTIMONIALS

Alexander
Graham Bell P.S.

"I love having a space to come discuss certain issues every week."

"I feel so comfortable talking about personal issues with both of you (the facilitators)."

"Every week I look forward to coming here and being able to vent/let out my emotions."

IMPACT STATEMENTS

"The client was originally brought into the group to resolve a conflict she had been involved in. At first she came in seeming guarded and uninterested in the group. However, as the session went on she was able to express her emotions extremely well and even asked to be a part of the program moving forward. There has been an immense amount of progress with this client where she engages in discussion, is articulate in explaining her emotions, provides support to other group members and demonstrates in depth knowledge of the topics we discuss and how it relates to her as well as others in the group. "

(Quote from facilitator October-December 2022)

"Over the course of this program there has been an increased sense of community and togetherness among the participants. They have demonstrated a sense of support for one another and have been working towards a goal to create positive change within their school. They have become wonderful leaders within their school community

(Quote from Facilitator October - December 2022)



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Thank you

**Promoting healthy families,
embracing equity and celebrating
diversity and resilience**

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