The Ophelia Project and Boys Initiative of Tampa Bay

Program and Evaluation Model

Need: Address specific risk factors created by gender differences, which may be biological, psychological, or cultural.	Program Philosophy	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
▶ CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS: The "box" for girls includes certain standards of attractiveness as well as a strict definition of "girl-appropriate" behaviors. The "box" that boys are put in can be quite narrow and includes expectations to be strong, tough, brave, and in control. ▶ BULLYING AND VIOLENCE: Girls' aggression is as much a problem as boys' aggression, even though it often looks different. Youth who experience bullying often report feeling impacted well into adulthood. ▶ MENTAL HEALTH: Depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and self-mutilation are more common for women; violence, risky behavior, and denial of vulnerability are more common for men. ▶ BRAIN DIFFERENCES: Brain differences in development, functioning, and information processing lead to different needs in school and different areas of school success. Boys tend to struggle more in grade school and girls tend to struggle more in middle school.	Gender-specific programs address the unique needs, risk factors, and strengths of girls/young women and boys/young men. **Program Components** Small, consistent group of similar-age youth Adult facilitator and role model Peer support Minimum of 8 sessions Safe space	▶ Sense of self and identity that is developmentally appropriate ▶ Healthy and supportive connections with family, peers, and adults ▶ Leadership skills, self-efficacy and meaningful community service ▶ Critical thinking skills to understand and critique cultural messages about gender	▶ Positive adult identity, life purpose, and self-worth ▶ Healthy interpersonal relationships as an adult ▶ Application of leadership skills to create positive change ▶ Safe transition from childhood through adolescence to adulthood