Inspiring Courage in Girls: An Evaluation of Practices and Outcomes

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Adventure-based programs focusing on adolescent girls' development often claim that they cultivate courage in girls; however, very little research has examined whether they accomplish this goal or how they accomplish this goal. An evaluation was conducted on one such program, Passages Northwest, to examine the efficacy of adventure-based experiential education programs for girls. One hundred girls participated in the evaluation. Using a Likert-type scale and open-ended questions on pre- and post-program questionnaires, we examined (a) whether the girls increased their courage through their participation, (b) how the girls defined courage, (c) how the girls were courageous during their adventure program, and (d) how they planned to apply these skills to their everyday lives. The analysis of the data indicates that girls increased their physical and expressive courage and developed moral courage through their participation. Best practices used to inspire courage in girls are recommended.

Keywords: Courage, Best Practices, Girls, Programming

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T
he term *courage* has a powerful connotation and serves as a goal for youth development and course planning for many adventure programs. The American Camp Association (2009) stated that summer enrichment experiences should provide opportunities to develop life skills, such as responsibility, cooperation, courage, and self-esteem. The Girl Scouts of the United States of America (2009) said that the purpose of their organization is to build courage, confidence, and character in girls. In fact, for a wide variety of organizations focused on serving girls, program planning and curriculum are intentionally designed to create an environment that fosters courage. A review of adventure programs designed for girls found that many organizations include promoting or inspiring courage as part of their mission statement or as part of their program's goals and objectives (Girls Move Mountains, 2009; GirlVentures, 2009; Passages Northwest, 2009). This paper describes the evaluation of one such organization in the United States, Passages Northwest, which is based in Seattle, Washington. Passages Northwest stated that its mission is to inspire courage and leadership in girls through the exploration of the arts, sciences, and natural environment (Passages Northwest, 2009). This nonprofit organization offers adventure-based experiential education programs that seek to inspire in girls and women physical courage (nurtured by helping girls find their inner strength to act despite fear or uncertainty), expressive courage (cultivated through creating art, spoken word, effective communication, and conflict resolution), and inquisitive courage (developed by encouraging girls to ask questions and to be curious about the human and natural world in order to foster the skills of a scientist). Curriculum is intentionally designed to emphasize the exploration and the development of physical, expressive, and inquisitive courage and to empower girls to develop and express their strengths.

Some core principles that guide Passages Northwest's work, given its experience with girls and its research on girls' development, are: making physical and emotional safety a baseline; building an inclusive community; reinforcing healthy, authentic relationships; honoring resistance; teaching communication and conflict management skills; integrating a diversity of activities; encouraging girls to face challenges, but honoring "no"; creating opportunities for independence and responsibility; and fostering a desire in girls to be curious, to ask questions, and to think critically and creatively about themselves and the world around them. These principles, in combination with core traditions and structures—such as

jobs of the day, chow circles, one-on-one check-ins, transference activities (to help guide the transition to back home), the closing ceremony and graduation—are the elements and practices that comprise a Passages Northwest course (Passages Northwest, 2007).

Rate, Clarke, Lindsay, and Sternberg (2007) said, "It is important to know people's notions of courage's nature and if it is both possible and beneficial to cultivate courage" (p. 84). Passages Northwest seeks to foster courage in girls through intentionally designed and implemented adventure programs. A program evaluation was conducted to analyze the efficacy of these programs and to examine whether it is possible and beneficial to cultivate courage in this way. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine (a) if participation in a Passages Northwest program inspired courage in girls, (b) if pre- and post-program questionnaires demonstrated evidence of change, and (c) if changes occurred, highlight the elements and practices used by Passages Northwest that lead to positive outcomes. Ultimately, if we can better understand the practices that were effective in encouraging courage in girls, a set of best practices can be shared.

Review of Literature

Defining Courage

The concept of courage is commonly accepted, but it is difficult to identify a consistent, clear, and concise definition of courage (Lopez, O'Byrne, & Peterson, 2003; Medina, 2008; Pury, Kowalski, & Spearman, 2007; Rate et al., 2007; Woodard & Pury, 2007). Rate et al. (2007) identified more than 29 different definitions or descriptions of courage. Some have argued that courage should include overcoming a fear, while others have suggested that fear may or may not be present in the courageous act (Putnam, 2001; Woodard & Pury, 2007). Putnam (2001) stated that "courage involves deliberate choice in the face of painful or fearful circumstances for the sake of a worthy goal" (p. 463). He drew on Aristotle, who claimed fear is directly related to a lack of confidence in one's abilities. An individual—in order to act—must have a "realistic confidence in the worth of a cause that motivates positive action. The cause must be worth the risk, and we must be confident of that" (Putnam, 1997, p. 465).

Others have created definitions for types of courage that were based on a particular outcome. Two common terms that have been used include *physical courage* and *moral courage*. Lopez et al. (2003) identified physical courage as "the ability to overcome the overwhelming fear of harm or death" (p. 186), and it typically involves a public heroic act (Lopez et al., 2003; Putnam, 1997). Moral courage has been described as overcoming the fear of social disapproval (Goud, 2005; Lopez et al., 2003; Putnam,

1997) and as standing up to someone powerful (Lopez et al., 2003; Putnam, 1997). Researchers stated that moral courage was "the platform on which positive mental health rests" (Lopez et al., 2003, p. 187).

More inclusive definitions of courage included personal and every-day courage (Medina, 2008), which can be viewed in the context of an individual's personal limitations—for example, a young person with a learning disability who struggled to go to school on the day of a big test (Pury et al., 2007). Although personal and everyday courage may have received attention within one's immediate social circle, it may not have within the public domain (Putnam, 2001; Rate et al., 2007; Woodard, 2004). Pury et al. (2007) argued that focusing on the study of public acts of courage without considering more personalized acts of courage "may hinder the scientific study of courage" (p. 100).

Adventure Education and Courage

Understanding courage and how it can be fostered is important because courage may provide coping and appraisal mechanisms (Lopez et al., 2003; Woodard, 2004). Appraisal mechanisms include "appraising the stressor in a manner that reduces perceived threat, viewing the self as capable to effectively cope, and relying on problem-focused and support-seeking strategies" (Woodard, 2004, p. 173). Research over the past two decades has sought to describe courage as supportive of a hardiness–psychological health relationship and, although this research is limited and inconclusive, it indicates that courage offers individuals the strength and the ability to cope with life's challenges—both of which are compo-nents of resiliency (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2005).

Connecting With Courage, an Outward Bound course and one of the first outdoor adventure programs offering an all-girl experience, was developed to create an opportunity for girls to "amplify rather than stifle their personal voices" (Porter, 1996, p. 269). The program design involved combining traditional physical elements with creative initiatives. Staff members develop "relationships with the girls and show them through example that it is okay to speak out, to be playful in questioning conven-tion, and to engage assertively in relationships" (Porter, 1996, p. 272). In an evaluation of that program, McKenney (1996) concluded that the Con-necting With Courage approach was relevant for adolescent girls who are often at risk for decreased self-esteem and loss of voice. McKenney's research found that girls described expressing one's opinions and speak-ing one's mind as courageous.

Passages Northwest and Courage

Passages Northwest is a nonprofit organization that was created to respond to the growing concern that "girls experience a loss of courage and confidence as they become teenagers" (Kent, Evans, & Shirley, 2004,

p. 1). As research on girls' development became available, there was a con-
cern that as girls entered adolescence, many of them began to lose their
vitality, their resilience, and their voice as well as to question their abili-
ties and self-worth (Brown, 1999; Kent et al., 2004; Rogers, 1993). During
middle childhood, girls aged 8 to 11 are strong, confident, and outspoken
(Basow & Rubin, 1999; Brown 1999); they trust their feelings and are not
afraid to say what they think. Once girls enter adolescence, many of them
begin to question their self-concept, including their self-esteem and self-
efficacy (Centers for Disease Control, 2006), and in the face of cultural
pressures, contradictions, and gender stereotyping, many young women
silence their voices (Girls Incorporated, 2006; Lamb & Brown, 2006).

Courage is a recurring theme in the research on girls' development.
Much of Passages Northwest's work is based on a definition of courage
brought forth by Rogers (1993), who posited that the personal or everyday
courage to speak one's mind by telling one's heart is courageous. Passages
Northwest's work is also rooted in Deak's (2002) research, suggesting that
self-esteem in girls is derived from three essential components: confi-
dence, competence, and connection. With this information in mind, prac-
titioners at Passages Northwest (2007) developed a definition of three
types of courage—physical courage, expressive courage, and inquisitive
courage:

> Physical courage is found through being unsure or scared on the rock wall but
> finding the inner strength (with mentoring and guidance, if necessary) to take
> action anyway, or [through] attempting to navigate with a map and compass
> [in an] unknown wilderness.
>
> Expressive courage is cultivated through creating art, expressing oneself fully,
> or dealing with conflict constructively.
>
> Inquisitive courage is developed by asking questions and being curious about
> the human and natural world. (p. 1)

Although physical courage derives some meaning from the broader
literature, expressive and inquisitive courage are new concepts created by
the staff at Passages Northwest to describe their methodology. The defini-
tion of expressive courage was developed directly in response to the
research on girls' development. The definition of inquisitive courage was
developed in part to combat stereotypes that limit girls' participation in
science-related fields and to inspire girls with the courage to explore—
rather than to fear, criticize, or avoid—the differences between themselves
and others.

Adventure activities such as hiking and rock climbing form the heart of physical courage as girls use their bodies to take healthy risks, to learn new physical skills, to try things they have never done before, and to move through progressive physical challenges. "Girls have so much to gain by engaging in physical activity—increased body awareness and comfort, strength and endurance, a growing sense of competency and accomplishment, and the opportunity to face challenge and fear in a safe environment" (Passages Northwest, 2007, p. 52). These challenges, such as climbing a rock face or heading out on a backpacking expedition, serve as metaphors to "real-life" challenges.

Expressive courage is found in many forms—from saying that which is hard to say or dealing with conflict constructively to expressing appreciation for someone or creating art. Expressive courage activities on course include poetry writing and spoken-word performances, journaling, art activities, communication skill building, and training sessions in conflict resolution. An excerpt from the Passages Northwest (2007) curriculum guide stated: "Whatever you are doing, try to integrate the arts and invite the participants' creativity. Role model being creative, silly, and deep. Make mistakes and celebrate them. Let there be a lot of room for being fully present and fully oneself" (p. 41).

Inquisitive courage is the courage to question: be curious; allow oneself to wonder; test and challenge assumptions; and problem solve solutions. Inquisitive courage is required when exploring the natural world as well as the human world. Through the exploration of the natural environment, Passages Northwest seeks to inspire girls' inquisitive courage to make observations, to ask questions, and not only to cultivate the skills of a scientist (Kent et al., 2004) but also to connect with, and nourish, a love for the natural world. Because Passages Northwest's courses are intentionally diverse in regard to race/ethnicity and socioeconomic class, inquisitive courage is also utilized to foster a sense of curiosity about others and to create an environment for participants to learn about people who have a different life experience. Taking the critical thinking skills a step further, Passages Northwest staff and mentors encourage girls to reflect on stereotypes and constructs that create social disparities or limit social equity. According to Passages Northwest's (2007) curriculum guide:

> In our ever modernizing and increasingly diverse U.S. society, girls need to think critically in order to navigate the many social and environmental pressures that they are facing. In addition to exploring their identity in terms of body image, race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and family history, girls also need to place their experience in the context of U.S. society with many of its remaining oppressive institutions and norms. They need to

feel that they can question and make choices that are healthy and empower-

ing for them. And they need to feel that they can act and make change. (p. 61)

To inspire courage in girls, Passages Northwest has implemented various strategies during program planning and delivery to address their developmental needs. These strategies were described by McKenney, Budbill, and Roberts (2008) as activities that promote the seeing, hearing, and valuing of each girl; structured time for relationship building; the ability to analyze risk and make healthy choices (including saying no); physical activity; technical skill development; leadership opportunities; communities that value diversity; a strong sense of self and resistance to public scrutiny; effective communication skills and the ability to resolve conflicts; and strong and diverse role models for girls. Researchers have described these strategies as components of a program that models best practices for supporting girls' development in an adventure-recreation setting.

Passages Northwest's standard course curriculum can be customized according to the course's length, elements, and individual or group dynamics, and it includes the following themes: relationship building, self-awareness, communication skills, the exploration of the world around us, leadership and awareness, and the transference of course experience into participants' daily lives. Each program incorporates core rituals and traditional activities, such as the opening circle with girls and their families; safety talk; the creation of a community behavioral contract; chow circles; a nightly courage circle; group and individual journaling; jobs of the day; skill-building lessons; nature exploration; instruction on a framework for resistance and honoring "no"; the writing of letters to oneself; the closing circle; and a graduation ceremony to share with families. These core traditions and rituals provide consistency and structure, and are designed to help girls thrive. They are also part of an important framework for bringing out the participants' strengths and helping them discover new interests and talents. Passages Northwest uses them to challenge and support girls to do things and to work with people that they might not otherwise choose by themselves.

Evaluation Methods

Using a mix of both formative and summative methods, this evaluation was conducted as an outcome evaluation, which gauges the extent to which a program, in this case a girls' adventure-based program at Passages Northwest, produces changes and improvements in the participants (Holden & Zimmerman, 2009). Formative evaluations are used to help revise portions of the course or the implementation of the program as well as to improve the existing program. Summative evaluations

examine whether the program has achieved its intended objectives (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006).

The girls in this study completed pre- and post-program questionnaires administered on the first and last days of their program participation. As there are no empirically tested and recognized assessment tools related to courage in this context (girls and adventure programs), a series of questions were created by the Passages Northwest staff and research consultants to analyze change in the three types of courage—physical, expressive, and inquisitive. In developing questions, measures of change in confidence were chosen as indicators of courage because (a) definitions of courage state that one must have confidence in one's ability in order to be courageous (Goud, 2005; Putnam, 1997, 2001) and (b) researchers of girls' development see a decline in both courage and confidence during adolescence (Brown, 1999; Kent et al., 2004; Rogers, 1993), indicating that the two may be related. It was hypothesized that a reported increase in girls' confidence would indicate an increase in courage. Using a 4-point Likert-type scale of 1 = *not at all confident*, 2 = *somewhat confident*, 3 = *confident*, and 4 = *very confident*, the pre- and post-program questionnaires assessed the girls' physical, expressive, and inquisitive courage before and after their adventure education experiences.

For physical courage, six questions examined the girls' confidence in a variety of activities, from hiking in the woods to participating in a physical activity. The seven questions related to expressive courage measured how confident the girls felt in their ability to try a variety of activities, such as drawing, singing, or telling a story. Two questions related to inquisitive courage asked if the girls were comfortable raising their hands in class to ask or answer a question. In the post-program questionnaire, girls were also asked a series of open-ended questions to determine how they defined courage and how they thought they were courageous during their adventure program. Open-ended questions included: (a) My definition of courage is . . .; (b) Give a specific example of how you have shown courage on this trip; and (c) What are ways in which you could use this courage that you have developed on this trip in your life at home and at school? Give at least one or two examples. Most of the responses we received were short answers (words or single sentences) with a few more extensive responses (short paragraphs).

Participants

Participants in this study included 100 girls who completed one of several programs offered through Passages Northwest over a two-year time period. Course size ranged from 4 to 9 participants and length ranged from 4 to 12 days with a median length of 9 days. Courses included a minimum of one or two of the following elements: rock climbing, backpacking, camping, hiking, and sea kayaking. The age of participants ranged between

10 and 17 years, with a mean age of 11.2 years. Approximately 36% of the girls identified themselves as a person from a minority group, 69% received financial assistance to participate, and more than 90% resided in an urban setting.

Data Analysis

Using SPSS software, we utilized a composite t-test for dependent means to analyze the pre- and post-program questionnaire quantitative data. This allowed the evaluators to compare changes in the types of courage—physical, expressive, or inquisitive—before and after the girls' participation in an adventure program. The open-ended questions were analyzed using NVivo—qualitative data-analysis software that allowed the evaluators to retrieve, organize, categorize, and code the data in order to identify themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002), to simplify the raw data, and to determine the significance of the data (Patton, 2002). The two evaluators individually analyzed the qualitative data to uncover themes and patterns and then discussed their findings. This process is referred to as check-coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994); it offers clarity and serves as a reliability check. The evaluators included one external and one internal evaluator.

Results and Discussion

This study found that programs at Passages Northwest inspire courage in girls in the physical and expressive domains; data results were inconclusive about the inquisitive domain. Qualitative findings supported the quantitative data analysis of physical and expressive courage and also revealed that the girls gained moral courage—a concept described in the literature review but not explored in the quantitative data collection or promoted as a type of courage at Passages Northwest.

Changes in Measures of Courage

Prior to hypothesis testing, the reliability of the questions developed for the questionnaire was assessed. Separate analyses were conducted on the pre- and post-program questions and were grouped according to the type of courage measured—physical, expressive, and inquisitive. All scales exhibited acceptable reliability with Cronbach's α coefficients between .73 and .82 (Field, 2009).

Quantitative analyses of the pre- and post-program comparison tests were statistically significant, with increases in all self-reported post-test measures, indicating that the girls experienced positive changes. A composite t-test for each category of courage was also conducted. The category of physical courage included six questions, and the mean and standard deviation for physical courage prior to the trip reported as ($M = 18.81$, $SD = 5.83$) with a post-program score of ($M = 21.11$, $SD = 4.02$), $t(99)$

= 4.28, $p < .001$. This category indicates positive changes in the girls' confidence to accomplish and participate in physical activities. As adventure-based programs often emphasize a physical activity, an element of risk, and new challenges, one could assume that girls would increase their physical courage.

For expressive courage, seven questions were asked, and the pre-program scores of ($M = 18.30$, $SD = 6.67$) and post-program scores of ($M = 21.75$, $SD = 4.95$), $t(99) = 5.51$, $p < .001$ indicate a positive change in the girls' expressive courage.

The pre-program scores of ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 1.87$) for inquisitive courage differ only slightly from the post-program scores of ($M = 7.0$, $SD = 1.61$), $t(99) = 2.29$, $p = .024$. Two questions on inquisitive courage were included, and it is difficult to draw inferences regarding inquisitive courage from the limited number and content of these questions. For these two reasons, data results are inconclusive. It is recommended that additional questions be created to better analyze inquisitive courage.

The effect sizes were calculated, utilizing Cohen's $d,$ for each of the three types of courage (Yockey, 2008). The effect sizes were generally small to medium with physical courage = .428; expressive courage = .551; and inquisitive courage = .229. Although the effect sizes reported are small, given the brevity of the intervention programs, this indicates that participating in a Passages Northwest adventure-based program increased courage in girls.

Girls' Voices: Definitions and Applications of Courage

This section presents the analysis of the surveys' open-ended questions and reports on definitions and applications of courage as conveyed by the participants in this study. The open-ended questions allowed the girls to define courage in their own words and to describe how they were courageous during their experience.

Girls' voices in defining courage. Ninety-two percent of the girls provided a response to how they would define courage. Their definitions included multiple characteristics. As an example, one girl defined courage as "self respect." And she added, "Knowing your limits and how far to push them. Standing up for yourself and others. Staying true to what you believe in." Although the girls used a variety of characteristics to describe how one can be courageous, three consistent themes developed: overcoming fear, being brave, and having moral courage.

In regard to "being scared," many wrote extensively about "being able to do something even though you're scared" and "standing up to your fears." This often involved "stepping out of your comfort zone" and accomplishing a task despite your fears. The girls wrote about the importance of "trying something new" or "doing something you have never done

before" as an important characteristic of courage. One girl wrote, "Courage is taking a step forward. Doing something you have never done before. You are being brave and strong and trying something new." This description of courage is consistent with the traditional definition of physical courage.

According to the girls, being brave is an important component of courage. Bravery takes many different shapes, including measures of both physical and expressive courage: trying something new, confronting a situation, accomplishing a goal, doing something physical, or simply talking with someone they don't know. For many girls, showing your "true self" or "your true emotions" was considered brave. This is evident in the following definitions of courage: "Not being afraid to show your true emotions or personality," "Express yourself," and "To be yourself and talk about how you're feeling through words or emotion." These themes become important components of how the girls felt they were courageous during their adventure program with Passages Northwest, and they are consistent with the definition of moral courage.

Courage on an adventure program. Ninety-one percent of the girls stated that they showed courage during their adventure program in two primary ways: physical accomplishments and voice. This supports physical and moral definitions of courage as identified in the literature review and adds an unintentional outcome that girls experienced during their participation in a Passages Northwest program—moral courage. The girls in this study participated either in a rock climbing, backpacking, or sea kayaking trip or in some combination of two activities. For many girls, it required courage to accomplish a goal and to persist through the challenge. One girl said:

> On the last day of climbing, I tried this really hard wall. I kept trying and
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> couldn't get up the first part, and kept saying, "I can't do this." I tried more
>
> and more, and I was so scared to jump and grab the rock and I did. I made it
>
> to the top. I was so proud.

Many of the girls did not initially think they could accomplish the tasks that were presented to them. One said, "I rock climbed to the top for the first time when I thought I would never be able to do it." Others described how they initially didn't want to do certain tasks but felt elated once they had accomplished their goal: "[I showed courage] when I was on the hike and I didn't want to do it because it was long and tiring and hard. But I did it and I was glad I did it."

Regarding moral courage, girls described themselves as being courageous when speaking up, taking a stand for themselves and others, and voicing their opinions. Some of the girls spoke about how they stood up for

others. "I showed courage when I stood up for a friend," said one girl. Another girl helped her friend when others were being mean to her, and one girl refused to bow to peer pressure, stating, "On this trip I showed courage by telling the instructors about something the girls did that was wrong."

Applying courage skills at home or at school. Eighty-seven percent of the girls could describe ways in which they planned to use the courage they developed upon returning home. It is important to note that this is a limitation of the study as it asks the girls to extrapolate from their experience and to project how they may apply the concept of courage at home, yet it does not actually analyze if and how they applied this upon returning home. Regardless, these data are reported as descriptors of the girls' hopes for implementing courage upon returning home and serve as evaluation tools in helping us to understand what the girls' gained and how they intend to apply it.

The girls' responses can be classified into four categories: (a) acceptance/confidence, (b) perseverance, (c) interpersonal relationships, and (d) voice. Acceptance/confidence includes acceptance of one's personality, body, and an increased sense of self-confidence. Several of the girls stated they would be more themselves and more accepting of who they are: "Be okay with my body" and "Be more of myself and not worry about what other people think of me as much." One girl exclaimed, "BE MYSELF! I will appreciate myself more and others will really see who I am." Another girl summed it up by writing, "I'm not going to let others judge me and tell me what or what not to do."

Resilience is described by the girls in their examples of how they would use courage in their everyday lives—by trying harder, overcoming challenges, taking the initiative, and trying something new. One girl stated, "I've learned persistence, patience, and determination." Another said, "When I don't feel I want to do something, I can remember this trip and push myself to do it." Resiliency allows the girls to "push through stressful challenges." As one girl stated, "I will not give up on something I have started."

Interpersonal relationships include developing relationships with new people, resolving conflicts, and supporting others. The girls spoke about using their courage "to support and cheer people up" and "to support my peers to keep trying." When girls are allies for each other and stand up for each other, this is often a manifestation of courage. As one girl stated, "When someone is saying no to something and someone is pressuring them, I could stand up for them." Additionally, the girls stated that they would like to "make friends [who] are different" from themselves and that they could use their courage to "be outgoing and make friends in high school."

Voice includes speaking up and standing up for oneself or others. This is a very important theme throughout all the data analysis, as the girls

frequently expressed how standing up for what they believe in or stating how they feel is an important form of courage. Many girls mentioned that they plan to apply this form of courage upon returning home by standing up for others, speaking their opinion, and having the confidence to do so. As one girl said, "When something is wrong, say so." Others simply stated they gained skills that will help them with "speaking my opinion" or "standing up for people, for [myself], and for my family."

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that programs offered at Passages Northwest create an environment where girls develop physical, expressive, and moral courage. Although this was an evaluation of Passages Northwest's adventure-based experiential education programs, certain elements of program planning and implementation may be beneficial to other organizations supporting the development of courage in girls. Other programs can replicate activities to increase courage in girls by implementing best practices applied by Passages Northwest, such as focusing on curriculum that includes structured time for relationship building while concurrently providing opportunities for skill acquisition and physical challenge in a supportive environment. Specific strategies for relationship building and providing a supportive environment include: facilitating an opening circle that includes a formal "welcome," introductions, an icebreaker, and time to say good-bye to family members/guardians; setting a tone of safety and inclusiveness; doing multiple name games and creating opportunities to learn names; providing structured time to help the participants feel comfortable with each other and move past barriers based on skin color, class, language, or other factors; reviewing nonnegotiable rules; building a community behavioral contract; and providing multiple opportunities for self-expression through art-based activities, sharing circles, games, and other activities.

To ensure every girl is seen, heard, and valued, other factors need to be considered, such as hiring culturally competent staff that can provide strong and diverse role modeling, facilitate group experiences, foster inclusive communities, and teach communication and conflict resolution skills.

By delivering programs that intentionally target courage, adventure educators actively assist girls' development through adolescence by encouraging strength, resiliency, and a sense of competence. Programs fostering courage also support girls in knowing their limits, taking healthy risks, and preparing to navigate into adulthood with increased self-efficacy and self-concept. Fostering courage prepares girls to make healthy and empowering choices that are resistant to negative societal pressures and public scrutiny or disapproval.

Through this research study, only short-term changes were analyzed. Continued evaluation with participants (at 6 months, 1 year, and 1½ years after the end of the program) would benefit the long-term examination of the impacts of participation in Passages Northwest programs and the transferability of courage to girls' everyday lives.

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