STAYING REAL...

Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes

A film by Sophie Bissonnette

Animation Guide — Option A: 1 workshop
Screen the entire film.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FILM SUMMARY

Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes

A film by Sophie Bissonnette

Advertising disguised as entertainment targets preteens and adolescents at a vulnerable time in their lives, bombarding them with sexual stereotypes in the hopes of selling them all manner of consumer goods.

Taking a good hard look at marketing and the media, girls and boys talk about the adverse effects of sexual stereotypes on their own lives, at the same time raising some important questions. At an age when being themselves and finding their niche in the world can be a real challenge, how can they be popular without losing their identity? In a consumer society that widely encourages sexist behaviour, sexualizes everything and worships celebrity, how can they remain themselves?

By letting kids speak for themselves, award-winning director Sophie Bissonnette continues the consciousness-raising work begun in her earlier film, *Sexy Inc. Our Children Under Influence*, which decries the sexualization of children in the media. This new educational documentary, produced in collaboration with the Montreal Women's Y, is a great way to kick off a lively discussion with 11- to 13-year-olds.

INTRODUCTION

Documentary filmmaker Sophie Bissonnette, the NFB and the Leadership Department of YWCA Montreal have followed up their first successful partnership for the film *Sexy Inc.: Our Children Under Influence* (adult and youth versions) with a second collaborative project: *Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes.*

Sophie Bissonnette's dedication to promoting awareness of women's struggles and social injustice finds expression in her new film, *Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes*, which exposes the world of illusion created by the marketing industry and the media. The film shows how these two sectors define current concepts of masculinity and femininity for commercial purposes and constantly bombard teens with messages to buy hyped products and live the lifestyle associated with them in order to conform to an industry-created sexually stereotyped standard.

The Leadership Department of YWCA Montreal, a community organization founded in 1875 with a mission to empower women to achieve their potential and improve their lives, has continually dedicated itself to developing effective ways of reaching out to girls and women. Through our work and interventions over the years, we have observed the various methods used by marketing firms and the media to influence girls, resulting in increased sexualization of girls' attitudes and behaviour. This influence can be seen at a very early age. Making this film thus became a top priority because we saw the urgent need to intervene on behalf of a younger age group: girls in their final year of elementary school and first year of high school.

GUIDE OBJECTIVES AND DISCUSSION VENUES

This activity guide is intended for persons working with teens and children in education, health, social services and community agencies. It is a creative teaching tool for planning and leading activities for girls and boys in grade six in elementary school and year one of high school (ages 11 to 13). The activities focus on developing strategies to counter the sexual stereotypes circulated by marketing firms and the media that are preventing pre-teens and teens from making enlightened choices.

The film for which this discussion guide has been developed specifically aims to make teens aware of the influence and pressure brought to bear on them by the sexual stereotypes that they encounter daily and which the marketing industry and the media circulate.

Through peer education, the film encourages teens to apply critical thinking in response to the sexual stereotypes projected by the business and entertainment industries. By showing the film and doing the activities suggested in this guide, you will be able to lead discussions and encourage group members to share their reactions and insights, in addition to helping teens develop leadership skills.

Through its many partnerships over the years, the YWCA Montreal Leadership Department has developed an expertise in creating teaching tools and guides. The principles of community education and the integrity of each individual are the foundations of these tools that aim to develop management and leadership skills. They are designed to:

• Identify and strengthen personal skills;

• Awaken, nourish and sharpen critical thinking to enable each individual to make enlightened choices that respect her own human values.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

As you can see in the DVD notes, the film *Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes* can be shown in its entirety, in two parts or in five chapters. The workshops are designed to be used in the same way: over one, two or five sessions.

Workshop duration

While workshops should ideally last **75 minutes**, you can shorten them to **60 minutes** by giving priority to those sections that speak directly to the needs of your particular group of teens.

Workshops

Each workshop is structured in the same way. The first page introduces the subject headings covered in the workshop and relevant details. Subject headings are: leadership skills, objectives tied to workshop content, supplies, teacher's notes and discussion topics. Directions on how to conduct the workshop follow.

Leadership skills:

These skills are directly related to teens' personal leadership development. You will find the summary table on page 11 of the guide.

Objectives tied to workshop content:

These objectives focus on the influence that sexual stereotypes have on teens and, more specifically, their ability to make enlightened choices.

Supplies:

The supplies icon points to the supplies you need to conduct the workshops (e.g. film segments, appendices, pencils, fun-tak, etc.).

Teacher's notes:

The teacher's notes outline a specific methodologies or objectives.

Topics:

Topics consist of relevant information, content and additional information that you can transmit during the discussion according to the interventions (comments) and interaction with the young audience members. They are on page 12 of the guide and are repeated as key words for each discussion.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

As mentioned above, workshops can last from 60 to 75 minutes, according to the time available.

NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS	DISCUSSION FORMAT	TOPICS	APPENDIX
Option A 1 workshop	1. Screen entire film (full version) Debate.	Stereotypes, sexualization, marketing, sex and gender, transition from elementary to secondary school and insults (name calling, verbal abuse)	Appendix - 1 workshop
Option B 2 workshops	1. Screen part 1 of the film Debate. 2. Screen part 2 of the film Debate.	Stereotypes, sexualization, marketing, sex and gender Transition from elementary to secondary school and insults (name calling, verbal abuse)	Appendix - Workshop 1 Appendix - Workshop 2
Option C 5 workshops	1. Children's toys and gender stereotypes 2. Sexualization in the media and in fashion 3. Impact on girls 4. Impact on boys 5. What can we do?	Stereotypes, marketing, sex and gender Stereotypes, sexualization, marketing, sex and gender Transition from elementary to secondary school and insults (name calling, verbal abuse) Transition from elementary to secondary school and insults (name calling, verbal abuse)	 Appendices 1 and 2 Appendix 3 Appendix 4 Appendix 5

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DISCUSSION A SUCCESS

As discussion leader, you will need to take special care in preparing for the workshops described in this guide. The guidelines below will give you some helpful tips:

- Watch the entire film *Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes* to develop an in-depth understanding of the issues it covers and provide broader scope for your personal reflection.

- Decide how many periods you will use: one, two or five.

- Carefully read the entire list of topics on page 13.

- Carefully read the instructions on how to conduct the workshops. In this way you will familiarize yourself with their objectives, the leadership skills they develop, their contents, their appendices, etc.

- For each section of the workshop, look over the list of questions for discussion and select those most likely to generate reactions and debate among group members.

- Take note of the resources listed at the end of the guide. They could be useful in responding to requests for additional information on the topics or concepts covered in your activity.

- Remember that as workshop leader, it is up to you to encourage group members to engage in dialogue, to discuss the issues and to take a critical look at themselves; avoid behaving as though you were an expert on the subject.

- Use language that includes the different social contexts that teens experience in their daily lives (e.g. diversity in culture, sexual orientation, social environments, etc.).

- As an adult, don't hesitate to act as a reference point for the teens in your group: you can demonstrate an open mind, lend a sympathetic ear and show that you are committed to your own values. In taking a stand and sharing your ideas, you contribute to true dialogue. Active listening makes it easier for teens to take a critical look at their own values.

- After the session, read the objectives once again and think about how the workshop went (e.g. discussions, the group's level of understanding of the film's topics, and the activities that were carried out by the young people). In this way, you will be able to check whether the group attained the desired objectives.

INTERVENTION APPROACHES

The YWCA Montreal Leadership Department promotes a variety of intervention approaches in our work: 1) leadership, 2) non-violent communication, and 3) community education.

1. Leadership (YWCA Montreal 2009)

Leadership is a dynamic combination of knowledge, insight and know-how that enables individuals to achieve their potential and strengthen their self-esteem. To bring about lasting achievements, we believe that sustainable leadership must be based on five essential components: self-knowledge, personal expression, critical thinking, solidarity and action. This combination of attributes can be acquired and developed through a cyclical and ongoing process rather than through linear and point-based learning.

Page 11 of this guide features a summary table of leadership skills for each of the five components to which we refer at the beginning of each workshop.

2. Non-violent communication (YWCA Montreal, 2009)

Non-violent communication is inspired by the non-violent communication movement (CNVTM) promoted by Marshall Rosenberg (2005) and taught worldwide in specialized institutes.This approach offers an interesting addition to our usual communication practices by putting the human needs that motivate our behaviour at the core of our interactions.

In fact, while all human beings have the same basic needs, the strategies we use to satisfy those needs make us all different.

Another component of non-violent communication is the concept of **empathy**. In interpersonal communication, empathy is the sincere interest we take in the other and in what she is experiencing at that moment; the interest we show in what she is saying and the ability to put ourselves in her place; to see the world with her eyes and to perceive it with her senses. Empathy means being there for the other or for ourselves (**self-empathy**) and it goes beyond any thought, judgment or advice. Finally, self-empathy is essential in our interactions with young people; it helps us to keep sight of our own needs and to be clear about our abilities and our personal limits.

3. Community education (YWCA Montreal 2009)

Community education recognizes that each individual and each community possesses the ability to learn and move forward in order to improve their quality of life and well-being. Once we become aware of the forces, dynamics and interests that influence our relationships and daily interactions, we can change the conditions and quality of our personal and community life and our relationships. This approach is based on the principle that a person acquires knowledge through experience and her actions according to the reality of her life.

For more information about these intervention approaches, please consult the website of the YWCA Montreal under the Leadership tab: www.ydesfemmesmtl.org.

SUMMARY CHART OF SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF LEADERSHIP	LEADERSHIP SKILLS
Self-knowledge	1. Learn to listen to your own inner voice and to respect yourself: identify your feelings, needs and values. 2. Recognize your personal power and the responsibility that it implies. 3. Recognize your own ability to make enlightened choices. 4. Develop a positive self-image by recognizing your strengths and what you have learned (qualities, talents, skills, knowledge, passions, interests, etc.). 5. Experience situations that demonstrate your potential.
Personal Expression	1. Recognize, share and celebrate the fact that you are unique and that others are also. 2. Develop confidence in yourself and others. 3. Give a name to what you are experiencing and make your needs and feelings known. 4. Express yourself honestly and truthfully. 5. Use creative activities to share your talents and enable others to benefit from them.
Critical Thinking	1. Become aware of external and social influences, especially those created by images from the world of advertising and the media. 2. Make a commitment to personal growth that encourages learning and skill development. 3. Develop tools to imagine and create new ways of thinking and taking action that will be an asset to your well-being. 4. Be aware of the many and diverse choices available to you when encountering the drivers that influence your living conditions: (environment, gender, culture, politics, economy, etc.).

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Solidarity	1. Apply the skills you learned in workshops to your daily life. For example, end an unhealthy relationship. 2. Become an agent for change. For example, organize a fundraiser to help support a school project. 3. Be an active participant in your community by contributing to its well-being. 4. Adopt prosocial behaviour by making your ideas a reality. 5. Find solutions to problems and conflicts that appeal to your conscience and call for respect of others and yourself.
Action	1. Build relationships based on trust and respect with friends and neighbours. 2. Recognize that human beings everywhere have needs and feelings. 3. Lend a sympathetic ear and be empathetic to others. 4. Be concerned about and contribute to the general well-being of society. 5. Feel that you belong and have strong ties to your community and that you are capable of helping others. 6. Be aware that people in society depend on each other. Find the balance between your need for autonomy and the need to trust others.

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TOPIC CLARIFICATION

Each workshop includes suggestions for topics that are to be covered. These topics and suggestions for further self-examination will broaden the scope of the questions asked during the discussion and activities.

STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are condensed representations of reality. To manage the volume of information inundating us on a daily basis from childhood on, we have to create categories and models that enable us to use this information more easily (Lienard, 2006).

However, stereotypes are "synonymous with impressions, with simplified and rigid opinions that are immediately accessible and have little in common with the reality that the individuals and social groups impose on each other and, indirectly, impose on themselves in their quest to define and differentiate themselves." (Free translation) (Decarries and Mathieu, 2010, p. 7)

Sexual stereotypes are simplified, often simplistic representations used to describe women and men, the concept of what it means to be a woman or a man. (Lienard, 2006)

Repeated use of these kinds of stereotypes has several consequences. It:

• leads to rigidity that can affect what women and men expect of each other and themselves;

• influences the perceptions of women and men by confirming their own behaviour, thereby accentuating the inequalities in the social relationships between the sexes;

• creates an obstacle to an individual's personal and social development as well as the full exercise of their abilities and rights;

• conceals the much more varied and complex realities about women and men (Descarries and Mathieu, 2010).

If using sexual stereotypes is necessary, the repeated use of these same sexual stereotypes means that women and men are shortchanged. This unceasing repetition contributes to the gradual integration of behaviour, values, etc, which end up becoming a new standard. Moving away from sexual stereotypes reveals a wide diversity of models and possibilities for what it means to be a woman or a man.

The marketing of children's toys is rife with sexual stereotypes. Toys are made for play. They also enable children to use their imagination and promote acquisition of interpersonal skills such as solidarity, sharing, listening, respect, etc. When toys circulate sexual stereotypes, they do not fulfill these functions.

Indeed, the world of feminine and masculine stereotypes created by marketing firms leads girls and boys to reproduce and believe in fixed social roles tied to their gender.

And so tea sets and dolls invite girls to reproduce expectations of a life of service and caring in the private sphere, while toy cars and police uniforms invite boys into the public sphere to take control of the situation.

Sexual stereotypes transmit an extremely narrow view of lifestyle choices that children integrate at an early age as a behavioral standard. Children then end up acting out the values associated with the sexual stereotypes that they observe in their toys: sexism, violence, inequality, contempt, racism, etc., (COLLECTIF, 2007).

The marketing industry also establishes a code of behaviour for both girls and boys that is tied to beauty and to physical appearance: the **beauty canons**. Beauty canons are a kind of stereotype. They have always existed in one way or another and, as a matter of fact, they have undergone many changes through the ages, as society has altered the expected roles for women and men.

SEXUALIZATION (YWCA Montreal, 2010)

In Quebec and all over the world, the media teems with messages of a sexual nature (advertising, music, magazines, etc.). Taken as a whole, these messages comprise a "sexualized culture" that is often labeled "hypersexualization."

Sexualization is a process that attributes a sexual nature to those who not necessarily have one. Specifically, it results in the banalization of sexuality in the messages that the media aims at teens. This results in children being encouraged to dress and behave in a sexy way because the image they receive lets them believe that this is what they must do to be appreciated, fashionable or popular.

Young people are increasingly exposed to brands names, advertising and the codes of pornography. Given this situation, their search for identity and belonging can make them especially vulnerable to the influences of this "sexualized culture."

In trying to gain acceptance by a group, young people may not think about or understand the consequences of their actions or appearance. For example, wearing a sexy outfit may label children as sexually available, something that is clearly not their intention.

What's more, the media's stereotypical images of women and men create effects that are contrary to the legal principles of sexual equality, respect of diversity between individuals and of their right to integrity, especially the right not to be treated as an object.

MARKETING

Marketing is a field of management. It uses a certain number of methods and tools to reach a public that has been targeted for commercial purposes. More than anything, marketing is image management tied to a specific product. This image is a vehicle for commercial messages, for information about the product for sale and also for stereotypes directly tied to the targeted public.

Young people become targets of marketing strategies from a very early age, a practice illustrated in the film *Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes*. Their large number and great vulne-

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rability make children and teens perfect targets. Companies take advantage of teens' insecurity and their search for an identity by cramming this void with illusions: if you buy their product, you will be able to fulfill your needs and get your wish to be cool or popular, to feel self-confident and comfortable in your own body.

Marketing companies target girls by implying that they will feel good, have many friends and be popular if they have the perfect body (which does not exist, since advertising images are all computer enhanced). This state of perfection that girls strive to achieve actually leads to a very lucrative search that pays off for fashion and cosmetics companies, plastic surgery, diet plans, etc.

These marketing images use many stereotypes, such as the belief that being thin will make you happy. Being constantly bombarded by these ads puts enormous pressure on many girls, leading them to become dissatisfied with their bodies and develop eating disorders.

Marketing companies target boys by showing them that popularity depends on attitude. They must be undisciplined, in control, dominating and physically strong. They are, moreover, more influenced by brand names and more likely to buy them than girls (Rioux, 2007).

In conclusion, we can say that marketing companies create artificial needs and a standardized world which pretends to meet the real and legitimate needs of teens: i.e. the need to find out who they are, to be accepted and to belong.

Sex and gender (*Le Monde selon les femmes*, 2004)

The word **sex** relates to our body's biology: our sexual characteristics determine whether a person is female or male. All persons of the same sex share the characteristics related to sex: for example, "only men have sperm; only women can menstruate."

The term **gender** on the other hand, deals with social identity (feminine/masculine). It assigns roles and functions to each sex in a given society and time period. Feminine and masculine social roles are not decided by sex but are rather learned and expected as a person is educated in a given culture. They are, therefore, subject to change depending on the social, cultural and economic situation.

Gender analysis highlights the inequalities in the social interactions between the sexes: it throws light on the inequalities between men and women subject to their situation in life.

In fact, the biological differences between the sexes do not in any way justify the social inequalities that exist between men and women.

Transition from elementary to high school

The beginning of adolescence is a period of significant social, cognitive and physical change: the changes caused by puberty, the growing importance of the peer group, the desire for independence, etc. This period also marks the transition from elementary to high school. For many teens, this time is

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a source of stress and fears (Lipps, 2005), such as the fear of failure, of being isolated and rejected by others, of not being appreciated. These fears are directly related to the need to feel capable, loved, respected and recognized that are especially important during the teen years.

This transition sometimes becomes tumultuous for teens at a time when their lives seem to be filled with turmoil as they try to discover who they are. They go from elementary school, a place that is controlled and monitored and move on to high school, where they are asked to acquire new skills that will take them from childhood to adolescence (Larose *et al*, 2006).

Insults (name-calling, verbal abuse)

An insult is a word meant to hurt, attack or diminish the person to whom it has been addressed. Its use is evidence of an unequal relationship. Thus, its very nature makes it unacceptable.

Using the insult "slut" or "fag" diminishes the person targeted and refers to the idea of what is feminine to do so. This type of insult is doubly offensive, not only for the person who is insulted but by the sexual nature that diminishes the feminine.

Using insults is a form of violence that can never be justified. It can be a sign of lack of confidence or weakness on the part of the user. Nevertheless, in all cases, it is an indication that dialogue is urgently needed. Dialogue is, in fact, the only solution.

Zero tolerance: women and men are born with equal rights. Making light of insults is a banalization of such violence, which has consequences on mental health, and the well-being of all individuals.

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Discussion

OPTION A:
1 WORKSHOP

Screen entire film.

Leadership skills:

Self-knowledge
- Learn to listen to your own inner voice and to respect yourself: identify your feelings, needs and values (1)*.

Critical Thinking
- Become aware of external and social influences, especially those created by images from the world of advertising and the media (1)*.

Objectives tied to workshop contents:
- Become aware of the diversity of the concepts defining feminine and masculine to counter sexual stereotypes.
- Understand the factors that influence our personal choices.
- Identify sexualized and stereotyped representations of women and men as shown in the media and in fashion.
- Become aware of the impact of stereotypes and sexualization on girls and boys.

Supplies:
Film *Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes and Appendix.*
- Option A: 1 workshop.

Teacher's notes:
- It is important for the teen group members to gain an understanding of the concept of stereotype since it is at the core of this workshop.

Topics:
- Stereotypes, sexualization, marketing, sex and gender, transition from elementary to secondary school, insults (name calling, verbal abuse)

See "*Summary Chart of Sustainable Leadership" on pages 11-12.

Conducting the Workshop

1. Introduction to the film and workshop .... (Duration: 10 minutes)

a.   Briefly introduce the film *Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes* by using the film summary (see p. 4 of this guide).

b.   Introduce the workshop by presenting the topics covered and by asking the group the following questions :

- What are your favourite toys and hobbies?

- Who are your favourite performers? What songs do you like to listen to? (think about asking these questions again towards the end of the workshop, when discussing the film, to discover the needs associated with their choice of toys and artists)

2. Screening the film .... (Duration: 23 minutes)
Staying Real - Teens Confront Sexual Stereotypes
Watch the entire film together as a group.

3. Film review and discussion .... (Duration: 35 minutes)
After watching the film, lead a discussion with the teen group members. Choose questions that will appeal to them from the two sections below

1.   **Film response questions**

- What are your reactions or comments with regards to what you have just seen in this film?

- What parts of this film had the greatest impact on you?

2.   **Film content questions**

  (See appendix on the following page for discussion questions dealing with the contents of the film.)

4. Conclusion and group review .... (Duration: 5 minutes)
Summarize today's workshop and ask the teens questions about what they experienced in the workshop and what they thought of it:

- Overall, what did you gain from this workshop? What did you take away with you?

- What parts of the film or discussion did you appreciate the most?

- What did you learn about sexual stereotypes, marketing and sexualization? Of the impact they can have on teens your age?

- What did you learn about yourself or about the daily life of teens your age?

- Will your participation in this workshop have an impact on your daily life? How?

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Appendix Option A: 1 Workshop

CHILDREN'S TOYS AND GENDER STEREOTYPES

- Jonathan Deschênes, professor of marketing at HEC Montréal, states that specialists in marketing design "worlds" specifically aimed at girls and boys. Have you also noticed this? What differences have you noticed between these two worlds? Can girls also play with cars? Can boys also play with dolls?

- What are your favourite toys and hobbies? What do you look for or what do you like about them?

SEXUALIZATION IN THE MEDIA AND IN FASHION

- Who are your favourite singers and what songs do you like to listen to? Why do you like them?

- What messages are conveyed by the artists' comments or by the words in their songs?

- Do your choices in clothing and music define who you are?

- Do the media, singers and fashion influence your personal choices? How?

IMPACTS ON GIRLS

■ **Respect**

In the film, one of the **girls** describes a situation in which she experienced a lack of respect during a physical education class: a male classmate pulled down her gym pants.

- If you had been in this girl's shoes, how would you have reacted?

- If she had been your friend, would you have tried to help her? How?

- In your opinion, why did the boy behave in this way?

- How would he have reacted if someone had done the same thing to him? Why?

- How does respect or a lack of respect manifest in your relationships with others? When do you know that someone is no longer treating you respectfully?

Insults, verbal abuse, name-calling

A **girl** in the film talks about a bad experience she had at a party: her best friend was called a "slut."

- What do you think about this situation?

- How would you have reacted in such a situation?

- If the girl who was insulted had been your friend, what would you have done to help her?

- In your opinion, what causes a person to insult someone?

- What does being a "slut" mean? Is this a stereotype?

The need for love and recognition

In the film, a **girl** talks about a situation she experienced when she began high school: she wanted to make friends and be accepted by the other kids, so she tried to get the boys to notice her. However, she realized that this was not the best way to go about it because the other students did not treat her with any respect.

- What do you think of this situation?

- What would you like to say to her if you happened to run into her?

- In what ways can you make friends with or be accepted by others without wearing sexy clothes or behaving in a sexy way?

How others see us

A **girl** in the film states that boys are sometimes very demanding about how girls look.

- What do you think of this statement?

- Why is makeup so important for some girls?

- In your opinion, does a person's worth depend on her appearance?

- Do we have to correspond to an image to get others to notice us? Explain.

- The needs to please and to be appreciated as an individual are entirely legitimate. What are the means you use to meet these needs?

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IMPACTS ON BOYS

■ The need for love and recognition

In the film, a **boy** talks about what a hard time he had when he began high school: "*When I was in grade 6, I was always the tallest. Then, when I got to high school, I became the smallest once again, and I felt like a shrimp compared with the other kids. I didn't know anybody, I was a bit nervous.*"

- What do you think of this situation?

- How would you have reacted in his place? Would you have liked someone to help you?

- What would you like to say to the boy if you were to meet him soon?

- What are this boy's needs? How can he meet these needs?

- What means and resources are available to him?

■ Insults, verbal abuse, name-calling

In the film, a **boy** talks about a difficult experience he had when he came to school after he had joined a professional dance school: some people at his school called him a "fag."

- What do you think of this situation?

- If you were in this boy's shoes, how would you have felt?

- If he had been your friend, what action would you have undertaken to help him?

- In your opinion, why did some students insult him by calling him a "fag?"

- What does it mean to be a "fag?" Is this a stereotype?

- What do you think of this boy's comments when he says that, in time, being insulted in this way this hurts less? Explain

■ How others judge us

A **boy** in the film tells about how lonely he felt at a certain point in high school: "In secondary 2, there was a time when I didn't talk to anyone; I was really alone because people said I wasn't "normal" and so at that time lot of kids judged me."

- What do you think about this situation?

- How would you have reacted if that had happened to you?

- Why do we judge other people?

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■ Being popular

A **boy** in the film talks about the issue of popularity in high school: "There are two types of popularity: either you are popular because people like you, think you are "chill" and want to hang out with you, or you are popular because people make fun of you, of the fact that you have no friends, but everyone knows who you are anyway."

- What do you think of this statement?

- In your opinion, what does 'being popular' mean? What is the point of being popular?

- Is it worth it to try and be popular at any price?

- Do you know anyone who is popular and who cares about the well-being of others and treats them with respect? How do these individuals show their concern for others?

- Can a person be happy without being popular?

■ The importance of being ourselves

A **boy** in the film makes these comments: "You can change your look and your hairstyle, but you can't change your personality. If people don't like the kinds of jokes you tell and you always have to hold back, I think that sucks. You can't be yourself. People don't like you, they like what you are forcing yourself to be for them."

- What do you think of this statement?

- What does being yourself mean?

- Do you have to pretend to be different to please others? Explain.

- Can you be yourself and also be accepted, appreciated and respected by others? Explain.

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WHAT CAN WE DO?

- The girls and boys in the film convey several messages to teens your age about stereotypes, marketing and singers, as well as the importance of being yourself and giving your opinion in your day-to-day life. Which of these messages strikes you the most or gives you the most to think about? Explain.

- If you had the chance to influence teens your age, what would you say to them?

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RESOURCES

The resources below will give you a deeper understanding of the topics covered in the film and in the activity guide. They help you to answer questions asked by teens and children, and to encourage them to gain a broader perspective through critical thinking.

INFORMATION GUIDES:

Bouchard, Pierrette and Natasha Bouchard. *Miroir, miroir: la précocité provoquée de l'adolescence et ses effets sur la vulnérabilité des filles*. Laval: Les Cahiers de recherche du GREMF (Groupe de recherche multidisciplinaire féministe), Cahier 87. 2003. Print.

CALACS de Rimouski (2009). *Hypersexualisation? Guide pratique d'information et d'action*. Print. 2010.

Descarries, Francine and Marie Mathieu (2010). Conseil du statut de la femme: *Entre le rose et le bleu : stéréotypes sexuels et constructions sociales du féminin et du masculin* – Summary. Québec : Gouvernement du Québec. www.csf.gouv.qc.ca/modules/fichierspublications/fichier-35-1079.pdf. Web. June 3, 2010.

Latitude Jeunes (2009). *Hypersexualisation : Trop, trop tôt, trop vite*. Brussels: Éditeur Pierre Baldewyns. www.ifeelgood.be/Ifeelgood/extra/hypersexualisation.htm. Web. June 3, 2010.

YWCA Montreal (2010). *Early Sexualization: A Guide for Parents of Preteen Girls*. Available at: www.ydesfemmesmtl.org/documents/Guide%20earlysexualisation_en_2010_2.pdf

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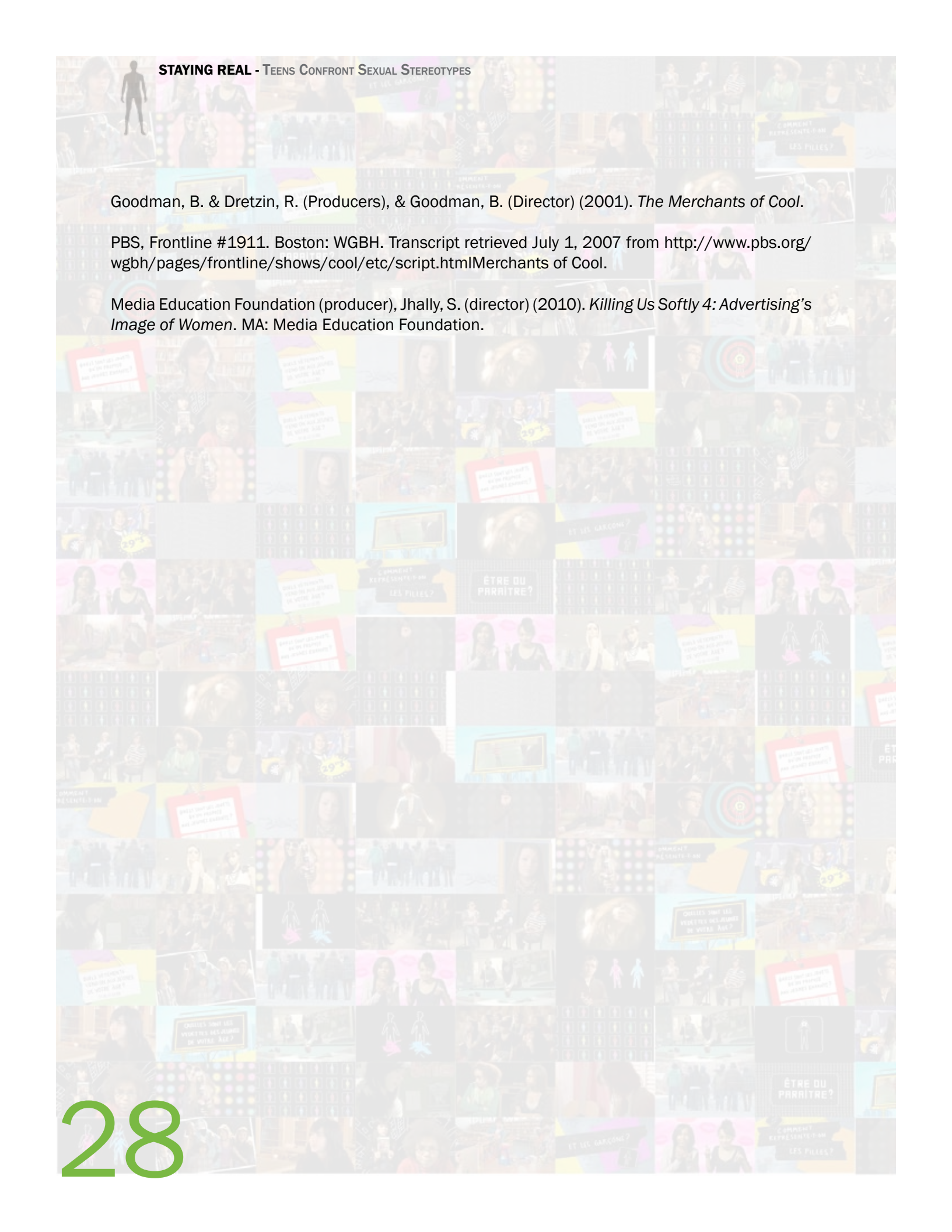
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