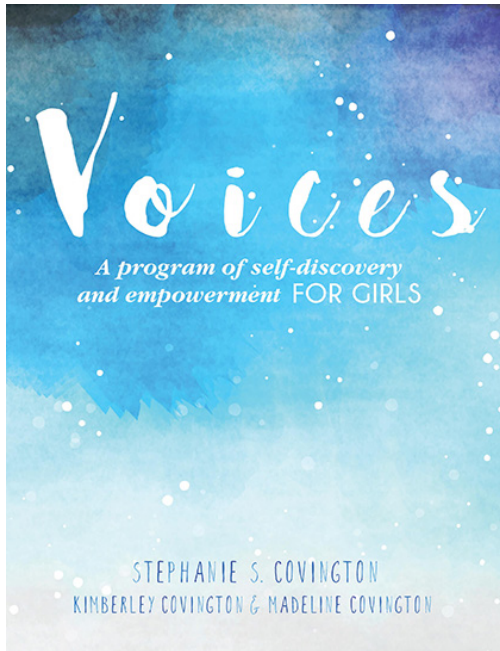


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Voices: A Program of Self-Discovery and Empowerment for Girls, 2nd Edition



Developed by Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., co-director of the Institute for Relational Development and the Center for Gender and Justice, *Voices: A Program of Self-Discovery and Empowerment for Girls (revised 2017)* addresses the unique needs of adolescent girls and young women between the ages of 12 and 18. This research-based program model uses a trauma-informed, strength-based approach that helps girls to identify and apply their power and voices as individuals and as a group. The focus is on issues that are important in the lives of adolescent girls, from modules about self and connecting with others to exploring healthy living and the journey ahead. Given the pervasive impact of abuse and substance use in many girls' lives, these themes are woven throughout the sessions. *Voices* encourages girls to seek and discover their "true selves" by giving them a safe space, encouragement, structure, and support to embrace their important journey of self-discovery. In addition, skill-building in the areas of communication, refusal skills, anger management, stress management, and decision making is integrated across program topics. It can be used in many settings (e.g., outpatient and residential substance abuse treatment, schools, juvenile justice, and private practice).

Voices: A Program of Self-Discovery and Empowerment for Girls is based on the realities of girls' lives and the principles of gender-responsivity. It is also grounded in theory, research, and clinical practice. The following theories create the framework of thought for the development of the *Voices* model: psychological development, attachment, resilience, addiction, and trauma. This is the theoretical base on which the *Voices* program was developed. The various treatment strategies used in the program apply the theories to create the therapeutic process. The therapeutic approaches include psycho-educational, cognitive-behavioral, expressive arts, and relational theory. The psycho-educational approach helps young women begin to link some of their current difficulties and experiences to larger social influences.

The first part of the facilitator's manual gives the facilitator background information about girls and about the formation of the *Voices* program. It includes information on the reality of girls' lives: socialization and identity, culture and class, sexuality, violence and aggressiveness. It also addresses expressions of risk: depression, substance abuse, relationship violence, eating disorders, teen mothers, and girls in juvenile justice settings. The second part includes the four modules (or themes), with a total of 18 90-minute sessions. The sessions may be arranged in a variety of ways, however, the curriculum is laid out in the suggested sequence.

Each group member is provided a *Voices* journal. This journal serves as a girl's personalized tool for exploring and recording her experiences, thoughts, and feelings as she progresses through the program in a safe space.

This program is designed for facilitation in a group setting but can be adapted for one-on-one use. The suggested number of participants per group is between 6 and 10. Ideally, the groups would be "closed," that is, the same girls would begin and end the program together. The curriculum can be adapted for larger groups and open groups, if either is essential to the program setting (Note that *Voices* is an adaptation of *Helping Women Recover* for girls).