Dear Educators and Counselors,

Spring presents the final stretch of the school year—a time of high emotions and testing tension. As you and your students push through to the end, look to this lesson guide as a resource that balances the high stakes with opportunities for personal connection.

The writers in this issue share their experiences of “Getting Through It.” We hope their courage in meeting their various challenges inspires your students to embrace the lessons learned when things get tough. This issue also includes a standout reported piece that takes on the complex issue of racism in a NYC high school. The accompanying lesson guides you to facilitate Circle, a core practice of restorative justice. I have found that Circle is a highly effective way to create safer space for youth voice and to help us all listen to one another across our differences.

Another difficult, but important, conversation occurs in “Refusing to Stay Silent,” p.9. We chose not to write a lesson for this powerful story of surviving childhood sexual abuse because it is better suited for individual use. As the caring adult sharing our stories with teens, we encourage you to observe your students’ responses as they read and be ready to respond if this story brings up difficult feelings. Thank you for having the courage to bring our writers’ truths to your students.

Finally, please take the time to complete our 2016-17 subscriber survey accompanying this issue. The results from last year’s survey were helpful, and validating for us. We were thrilled to see that 83% of teachers participating in the survey use stories in facilitated learning activities. We also discovered that some of you are using the magazine and lesson guide with middle school students. With this in mind, my colleague Jillian Luft wrote the lesson “Controlling My Fear” specifically for younger adolescents.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Johnson
Education Director

Don’t let this issue be your last!

Have you renewed your YCteen subscription yet? If you haven’t filled out the renewal form for this school year, please take a few minutes to do it now:

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Controlling My Fear

**Story to Use:** “Acting Brave Made Me Brave,” by Shameera Sheeraz, p.14

**Story Summary:** Shameera experiences both an earthquake and a hurricane. She surprises herself when she’s able to remain strong and brave during these natural disasters that are out of her control. Inspired by her courage in handling these intense situations, she decides to conquer her biggest fear: public speaking.

**Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:**
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will reflect on previous experiences for growth and learning.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences (CCLS W.10).

**Before Reading the Story** (10 min)
This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who realizes she’s braver than she gives herself credit for.

2. Introduce the freewrite activity by explaining that students will have about four minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The goal is to express their thoughts freely without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes, without stopping, for the full time. (Note: writing lists and/or drawing with labels are modifications that support diverse learners.)

3. Share the freewrite prompt: “List five things that you are afraid of in order from most fearful to least. What do you think would change about your life if you conquered these fears? How do you think you’d be able to do it?”

4. After students have completed the freewrite, transition to a pair share. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.

5. Facing each other and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing parts of their responses that they feel comfortable sharing. The listener should not respond, but should actively listen to the speaker. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.
6. Thank students for sharing their writing and thinking.

**During Reading** (20 min.)

*By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to read for moments in the text when Shameera shows she’s brave and tries to conquer, or control, her fears. When this occurs in the text, students should place an **exclamation point (!)** in the margins of the story.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote an **exclamation point (!)** next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. Next, ask the group to further consider these questions:
   - What did Shameera learn about herself through all of her experiences?
   - What do you think about the ways she deals with her fear of public speaking?

**After Reading the Story** (15 min)

*During this post-reading activity, students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. Introduce the **drawing** activity by explaining to the group that they will be doing an activity where they envision themselves as acting brave and controlling their fears like Shameera.

2. Read the following **quote**, lifted from Shameera’s story, to the group: “I thought: If I didn’t lose my courage to a hurricane and an earthquake (which isn’t even in human control) then I shouldn’t lose my courage with something that is within my control—like talking in front of a group. I just needed to believe in myself and my ability to come up with ways not to let the fear control me.”

3. After reading this quote, explain to the group that they’re going to think more about what would happen if they were able to conquer, or control, their greatest fear.
4. Have students draw using these **guidelines**:

- Look back at your freewrite and select one of the fears you listed.
- Now, draw yourself facing that fear. Use speech bubbles, thought bubbles, symbols, and color to show how it feels to get through this fear and try to control it.
- Write a caption at the bottom of your drawing that explains how you feel, or what your motto is to “get through it.” For example, Shameera’s motto is that the more she speaks, the closer she gets to the end of her presentation.

5. Give students about 10 minutes to draw and write.

6. Invite students to share their drawings, as time allows. One option is to perform a gallery walk. Have students display their drawings on a large table or their desks. Then have everyone get up and walk around the room to look at all of the drawings.

7. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Shameera’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Painting a Picture

Before Reading the Story (10 min)
This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who decides to break the cycle of violence in his family.

2. Introduce the quick draw activity by explaining that students will have about a minute to respond to a prompt by drawing. The goal is to express their thoughts freely without worrying about artistic skills.

3. Quick draw prompt: Listen to the following quote from the story: “I went into my room, slammed the door, threw myself on my bed, and put on my headphones. The music overpowered my dad’s words but I felt his anger. It was there in that mischievous smile he’d had planted on his face—it made me want to vomit.”
   - What do you imagine when you hear this passage? Quickly draw the details that stand out most in your mind.

4. After the students have completed the quick draw, transition to a pair share. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.

5. Facing each other and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing what they visualized, or imagined, when hearing the quote from the story. The listener should
not respond, but should actively listen to the speaker. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.

6. Thank students for sharing.

**During Reading** (20 min.)

*By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to read for moments in the text when the writer uses sensory language to paint a powerful picture in the reader’s head. When this occurs, they should draw a 🎨 in the margins of the story.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers from each section of the room to share what they drew a 🎨 next to and why.

6. After reading, ask the group to refer back to the places they marked with a 🎨 and do one of the following:
   - Discuss what they see, hear, smell, touch, or feel when reading these passages
   - Discuss the mood of these passages, or how they make them feel

**After Reading the Story** (15 min)

*During this post-reading activity, students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. Introduce the **writing** activity by explaining to the group that they will be writing a poem that paints powerful images in the hearts and minds of their readers.

2. Explain to the group that the writer of the story uses poetry as an outlet for his anger. Tell them they’re going to create their own “Feelings” poem using rich description and sensory language.

3. Then follow these **poem guidelines**:
   - **Line 1**: “(Name emotion/feeling word) is the color of ______.”
   - **Line 2**: Describe how this emotion looks.
   - **Line 3**: Describe how this emotion sounds.
   - **Line 4**: Describe how this emotion smells.
4. Give students about 10 minutes to write their poems. They can feel free to write beyond the suggested six lines.

5. Invite students to share their poems. Encourage audience members to silently applaud or snap fingers in appreciation of the reader.

6. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to this story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

**Finding Your Sounding Board**

**Story to Use:** “Too Much Pressure,” by O.P., p.12

**Story Summary:** O.P.’s parents unfairly put him in the middle of their marital issues. He’s stressed and overwhelmed from taking on their problems and assuming an adult role in his family. When he finally turns to his friends and teachers for guidance and support, he finds a way to not only deal with the pressure, but a way to tell his parents how he really feels.

**Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:**
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will recognize family, school, and community sources of support.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences (CCLS W.10).

**Before Reading the Story (10 min)**

*This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.*

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who is caught in the middle of his parents’ issues.

2. Introduce the freewrite activity by explaining that students will have about four minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The goal is to express their thoughts freely without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes, without stopping, for the full time. (Note: writing lists and/or drawing with labels are modifications that support diverse learners.)

3. Share the freewrite prompt: “List the people in your life that you turn to when you’re stressed out or need help dealing with a situation. They can be friends, family members, teachers, or other people in your community. Then, next to each person’s name, jot down the reasons why you turn to this person.”

4. After students have completed the freewrite, transition to a pair share. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.

5. Facing each other and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing parts of their responses that they feel comfortable sharing. The listener should not respond,
but should actively listen to the speaker. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.

6. Thank students for sharing their writing and thinking.

**During Reading** (20 min.)

*By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to read for any moments in the story when they make a personal connection, or it reminds them of something that has happened in their or a friend’s life. When this occurs in the text, students should place a ❤ in the margins of the story.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a ❤ next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

**After Reading the Story** (15 min)

*During this post-reading activity, students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. Introduce the **letter writing** activity by explaining to the group that they will be writing a letter to O.P. asking him questions about his experience and making more connections to his story.

2. Referring to the story, have students write their letters using these **guidelines:**
   
   - What you connected to in his story. Be detailed and specific.
   - One thing you learned from his story.
   - Any advice you want to give O.P if the situation with his parents happens again.
   - Closing: “Sincerely, (Your Name)”

3. Give students about 10 minutes to write.
4. If they wish, students can share their letters with the rest of the group. Letters can also be mailed to the YCteen office at this address:
   242 W. 38th St., 6th floor
   New York NY 10018

5. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to O.P.'s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning
Talking About Racism—Because it Matters

Story to Use: “#blackinbrooklyntech” by Aniqa Tasnim, p.5

Story Summary: Aniqa reports on the everyday racism experienced by black students in her high school. When a #hashtag is created to raise awareness and inspire students to speak out, it pushes the school community to confront difficult issues. Aniqa extends her observations to issues of educational equity across NYC. Lesson Purpose: Using the restorative practice of Circle, this lesson explores the difficult topic of racism in our schools. By creating a space for young people to communicate with each other, and with adults, the Circle will increase adult awareness of what young people experience and help build relationships.

Preparation: For the Circle you will need to arrange chairs so that everyone is equally included in a circle. Select a talking piece ahead of time- a simple object that can be passed around.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will build their self-awareness by reflecting on previous experiences for growth and learning.
- Students respond thoughtfully to, and seek to understand, diverse perspectives (CCLS SL.1).
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).

Before Reading the Story (15 min)
This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who reports on students speaking out against racism in her high school.

2. Explain to the group that in this lesson they will be participating in Circle, which is a restorative practice that helps people speak freely and listen deeply to one another about important issues that affect them and their community.

3. Introduce “rounds” as the way you will be discussing today’s story. A “round” is a pass of the talking piece around the Circle. The keeper (teacher) will pose a question and, as a
participant, usually answers first. The keeper then passes the talking piece to his/her left or right. When you hold the talking piece you may respond to the question by speaking honestly from your experience and from your heart. When you do not have the talking piece, you are actively listening to the speaker. Remember, it is always okay to pass.

4. **Round #1:** “Name a value that helps you participate in a good way when you are discussing a very difficult topic.” Write the values as participants name them and place the list in the center of the circle.

5. Acknowledge that racism is a huge presence in our society, but we have very few opportunities to talk with one another about what racism means to each of us. It takes courage to talk about racism in an honest and respectful way. Thank students for bringing their best selves to the conversation.

**During Reading (20 min.)**
*By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like around the Circle.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose.** This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared for the Circle discussion that will follow.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to read for any moments in the story when they make a personal connection or something stands out to them. When this occurs in the text, students should:
   - Personal connection = Place a ♥ in the margins of the story
   - Stands out = Place a ★ in the margins of the story

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together around the Circle.

**After Reading the Story (15 min)**
*During this post-reading activity, students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. Introduce the **Circle** activity by explaining to the group that they will be responding to questions you pose in rounds, just like they did earlier. Remind participants to be mindful of the list of values in the center of the circle as they speak and listen, and that passing is always okay.

2. **Round #2:** What stands out to you in this story? Tell us what gets your attention and why. ★
3. **Round #3:** Based on your own life experiences and observations what wisdom do you have to share on this topic? What would you want the adults in this school to understand? 🌱

4. **Round #4:** Do you have any additional thoughts about this story or about what others in the Circle have expressed?

5. Thank students for participating in the Circle today and working to make connections to Aniqa's story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.

The Circle protocols in this lesson were adapted from *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*, by Carolyn Boyed-Watson and Kay Pranis. You can find this resource through Living Justice Press.
Open-ended questions you can use with any story in YCteen:

1. What main problem or challenge did the writer face?
2. What choices did the teen have in trying to deal with the problem?
3. Which way of dealing with the problem was most effective for the teen? Why?
4. What strengths, skills, or resources did the teen use to address the challenge?
5. If you were in the writer’s shoes what would you have done?
6. What could adults have done better to help this teen?
7. What have you learned from reading this story that you didn’t know before?
8. What connections from your own life, the world, or other text you have read, can you make to this story? This reminds me of…. (text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text)
9. What surprised you in this story?
10. Do you have a different view of this issue, or see a different way of dealing with it, after reading this story? Why or why not?

$150 First Prize | $75 Second Prize | $50 Third Prize
Enter online at bit.ly/yctranswritingcontest

CONTEST QUESTION #234
If you could go back in time, who would you most want to meet and why?
It can be anyone—from history, literature, your family—and either real or imagined.

Deadline: September 30, 2016
Subscriber Renewal & Feedback Form
(Your response is required if you would like to continue your free subscription to YCteen.)

1. Mailing Address
First & Last Name ____________________________________________
Title ___________________ Organization _______________________
Address ________________________ Fl/Rm # ________________
City ________________________ State ______ Zip ____________

2. Email address after June 30th: ________________________________
(so that we can reach you if you win the $250 Visa Gift Card)

3. Approximately how many teens read or use the YCteen magazines that are mailed to you? ______

4. How do you use YCteen? (Check all that apply)
   __ I read it myself __ I share it with colleagues
   __ I give it to teens to read on their own
   __ Other (please specify) ________________________________

5. If you use YCteen with your class or group, what do you use it for? (Check all that apply)
   __ Facilitated reading/discussion __ Choice/Independent reading __ Journalism/school newspaper
   __ ELA __ Social and emotional learning __ Advisory group activities
   __ Health education __ Community circle __ Literacy skills development
   __ Other (please specify) ________________________________

6. Do students independently read stories in YCteen (beyond the ones you’ve assigned)?  __ Yes  __ No

7. Please answer the following question about the impact of YCteen stories on you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The YCteen stories helped me...</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen to teens and understand the diversity of their experiences.</td>
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<td>Empathize with the personal struggles of teens. Build stronger relationships with teens. Effectively facilitate conversations about difficult topics. Facilitate non-judgmental discussion among my students. Engage and support struggling readers.</td>
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Please turn the page

Save time! Go paperless! Visit bit.ly/ycteen2016 to complete this form online.
8. Do you use YCteen stories in facilitated learning activities with your students?  __ Yes  __ No

9. If you use YCteen lessons, how do you access them?
___ In print -- through the YCteen Lesson Guide that arrives with my issue of YCteen (I use approx. ___ lessons/year)
___ Online -- via an email or searching for lessons on the website YCteen.org (I use approx. ___ lessons/year)
___ No, I don’t use YCteen lessons at all

10. If you use YCteen lessons, how would you rate your overall experience with them?
___ Very helpful  ___ Somewhat helpful  ___ Helpful  ___ Not helpful (Why?______________________________)

11. Do you create your own lessons from stories in YCteen?  ___ No  ___ Yes, I create approx. ___ lessons/year

12. If you use YCteen lessons, please answer the following question about your students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The YCteen lessons helped me teach my students to...</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Make personal connections to a text to increase comprehension.</td>
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<td>Have text-based discussions within a diverse group with different perspectives.</td>
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<td>Feel more confident that they can manage challenges and achieve goals.</td>
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<td>Strengthen self-awareness.</td>
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<td>Increase self-management skills.</td>
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<td>Strengthen positive relationship skills.</td>
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<td>Make responsible decisions.</td>
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<td>Build empathy and social awareness.</td>
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<td>Become more interested in expressing themselves as writers</td>
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<td>Be more likely to access resources and supports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Become more responsible members of the group/community.</td>
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13. What stands out most for you about YCteen? ________________________________

14. What stands out most for your students about YCteen? ________________________________

15. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience using YCteen? What can we do better?

Thank you! Please return the survey by fax 212-279-8856 or mail to Youth Communication, 242 West 38th St., 6th Fl., New York, NY 10018 no later than June 30th. We’ll contact you by email (make sure you’ve completed question #2) if you are the winner of the $250 Visa Gift Card.

Save time! Go paperless! Visit bit.ly/ycteen2016 to complete this form online.