For Staff: Activities for Youth

Taking Care of Me

Opening Activity - Opinion Continuum: 10 minutes
Put up a sign on one side of the room that says “Agree” and at the other side of the room, put “Disagree.”

Tell the group, “I will read a statement and then you move toward the sign that reflects your opinion. If you’re unsure, stand somewhere in the middle. Once everyone has moved, I will ask volunteers why they chose to stand where they are.”

Gather everyone at the center of the room. Read the first statement and ask group members to move to a spot between the two signs:
- “It’s just as important to take care of yourself as it is to take care of others.”

Once all group members have moved, ask them to notice where other group members are standing. (If someone is alone at one end of the continuum, you can join them.) Ask teens to share why they are standing where they are. Then repeat the process for the next two statements:
- “Sometimes you have to give up on someone else in order to take care of yourself.”
- “Self-care means putting yourself first.”

Thank group members for sharing their opinions.

Read the Story: 20 minutes
As a group, read aloud “What Happened After Rehab” by K.G. (p. 8), taking turns. Let teens pass if they don’t want to read.

Story Discussion: 15 minutes
Ask group members if their thoughts about what “self-care” means were changed by reading K.G.’s story.

To encourage more discussion, ask:
- “Does the meaning of self-care change depending on your age?”
- “What factors made K.G. move from trying to take care of her mother to taking care of herself?”
- “Do you think that was selfish of her? Why or why not?”

Forgive, Not Forget

Opening Activity - Toss One, Take One: 10 minutes
Pass out pieces of scrap paper. Tell members not to write their names on the paper. This is an anonymous activity. Ask them to write a response that completes the following sentence, which you have written on chart paper.
- Forgiveness means...

Give group members three minutes to think and write their responses. After group members have written their responses, tell them to crumple them into paper balls and toss them into the middle of the circle. Then tell them to each retrieve an anonymous response from the container and return to their seats. (Tell members that if they happen to choose their own response, it’s OK because no one will know.)

Have each teen read a response out loud.

Read the Story: 20 minutes
As a group, read aloud “Forgiving My Mother” by Anonymous (p. 13), taking turns. Let teens pass if they don’t want to read.

Four Corners – 15 minutes
Prior to the group, write the following quotes on flip chart paper, one quote per piece of flip chart paper:
- “I’ve had a better life away from [my mom], and now I’m figuring out how to forgive her because being angry at my mom was bad for both of us.”
- “You only live one life. Don’t live it hating people for the past or for their mistakes.”
- “You don’t want to hate your parents no matter how bad they were to you. Because it’s not a good feeling to hate the one who brought you into this ugly but beautiful world.”
- “I started to think that regardless of the bad things someone did to you, you have to forgive and keep making yourself a better person.”

Read the signs aloud. Then ask teens to walk to the quote that stands out to them the most. Ask group members to turn to one another and share their thinking about why they chose this corner. Someone should jot down their ideas on the chart paper.

While the small groups discuss and write, move around to listen and support. (If groups are struggling with what to write, tell them they can put down connections they have with the prompt or things they’re wondering about it.)

After about five minutes, have one person from each corner share a few highlights from their group. They can share out points of agreement or disagreement, new ideas they’ve been given, and any questions they still have. They can also share the most common reasons for choosing that corner.