

Just 4

Girls



What's inside this booklet?

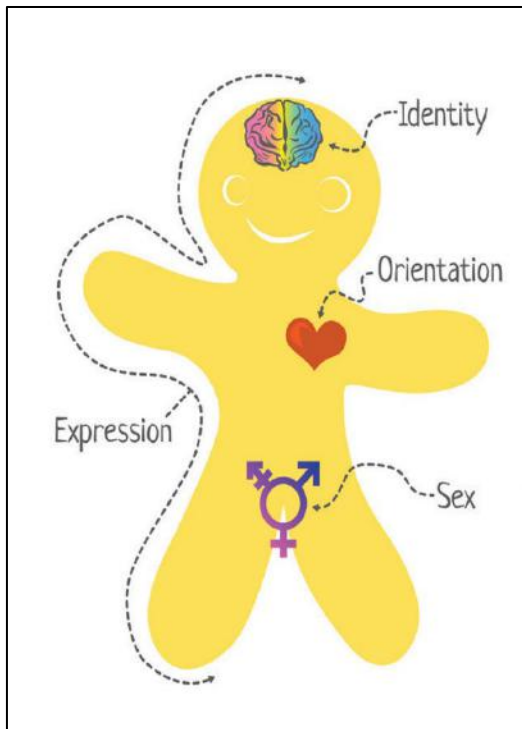
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**"TO ME,
BEAUTY IS ABOUT
BEING COMFORTABLE
IN YOUR OWN SKIN.
IT'S ABOUT KNOWING AND ACCEPTING
WHO YOU ARE."**

- Ellen Degeneres

Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation

We use the concepts of sex, gender and sexual orientation to categorize our bodies, our identities and our relationships with others. It is important to use the concepts of sex, gender and sexual orientation in ways that include everyone's uniqueness. It is also important to understand that sex, gender and sexual orientation are independent of one another; they are not necessarily connected.



Source: Killermann, S. (2013). *The social justice advocate's handbook: A guide to gender.*

Sex

Sex is a word that has many different meanings but it can be used to categorize people's bodies. Biological sex is usually split into two categories: male and female. People are said to be either male or female depending on the biological sex characteristics that they are born with and develop over their lifespan. These include the genitalia (vulva, vagina, penis and testicles) hormones, chromosomes, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, etc. Most people's bodies have only male traits or only female traits. Some people's bodies have a mix of both female and male traits and they are called intersex. 1 out of every 2000 people are intersex. That means that

there are actually three categories when referring to people's biological sex: female, male and intersex.

Gender

Gender is a concept that refers to our identity and self-expression, not our bodies. Just like sex, people usually only think there are two possible

categories for gender identity (boy/man or girl/woman) and two possible gender expressions (masculine or feminine). Also, people tend to think that because your sex is female, you must be a feminine girl or, that because your sex is male, you must be a masculine boy. This could be how you identify and express your gender but you could be different and that's ok! For example, you could be female and identify as a girl but chose to express yourself in a more masculine way, like a tom-boy. Or you could be a boy who likes to wear skirts. There are an infinite amount of possibilities for how someone could chose to identify and express themselves, and they are all awesome!

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is a concept that refers to what type of people you are attracted to. If you are attracted to someone you might want to kiss them, hug them, date them or just hang out with them. Many people don't develop attraction for others until they reach puberty. Some people never develop attraction to others, they may be called asexual. Even if you start feeling attracted to others, it doesn't mean you are ready to be dating. Talk to someone you trust to help you figure out if you are ready or not.

People can be attracted to others who are either the same gender or sex as them or of a different gender or sex than them. Gay is the word used to describe people who are attracted to the same sex or gender as them (e.g. a woman is attracted to a woman, a man is attracted to a man). Some people may use other words such as lesbian or queer to describe themselves. Heterosexual or straight is the word used to describe people who are attracted to people of the opposite gender or sex. People can also be attracted to all genders or sexes and may use words such as bisexual or pansexual to describe themselves. Some people are still questioning and exploring their sexual orientation and gender identity and this is ok too!

Healthy Relationships

Creating and maintaining healthy relationships is a very important skill to have. Relationships come in all different forms; friendships are a type of relationship. It is also important to be able to identify when a relationship is unhealthy or abusive.

Every relationship is unique but the skills and attitudes required to be a good friend or partner are similar.

Skills and attitudes that encourage healthy relationships:

- ♥ Good listener
- ♥ Non-judgemental
- ♥ Taking responsibility for your behaviour and feelings
- ♥ Treating others the way they want to be treated
- ♥ Honesty
- ♥ Willing to compromise
- ♥ Willing to talk things out respectfully when there is conflict
- ♥ Considerate of other people's feelings
- ♥ Learning what your boundaries are and learning how to say no
- ♥ Knowing how to distinguish from things you actually want to do and what you think your friends/partner want you to do
- ♥ Encouraging others to follow their dreams, and work towards their goals
- ♥ Encouraging others to accept themselves no matter what

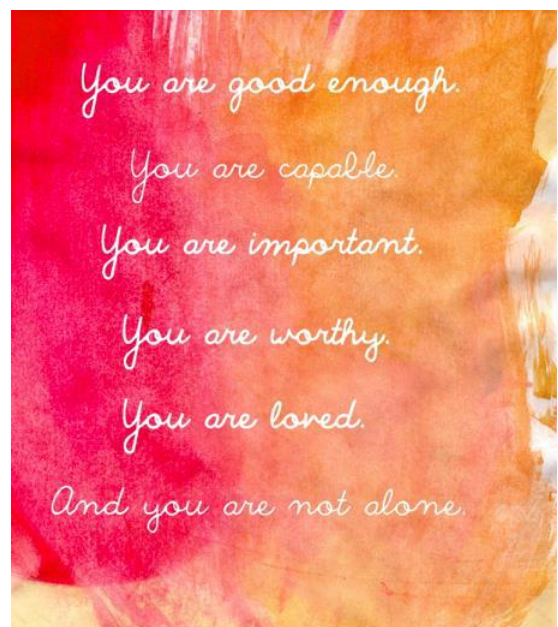
What does a healthy relationship feel and look like?

- ♥ We share how we feel.
- ♥ We tell the truth.
- ♥ We admit when we are wrong.
- ♥ We consider each other's opinions, feelings, and desires
- ♥ We respect each other's interests and identities
- ♥ We encourage each other to be the best we can be

- ♥ We encourage each other to have other friends and interests outside the relationship
- ♥ We respect each other's boundaries (physical, emotional, sexual)
- ♥ You don't feel like you have to do something that you don't want to do to maintain the relationship
- ♥ You feel good about yourself when they are around

What does an abusive relationship feel and look like?

- ♥ You feel forced to do things you don't want to do
- ♥ Embarrasses or humiliates you in front of others
- ♥ Calls you names
- ♥ Puts you down, may put your friends down
- ♥ Doesn't allow you to see your friends or family
- ♥ Hurts you in a physical way (grabs, pushes, slaps, etc.)
- ♥ You are often scared of saying the wrong thing around them
- ♥ Texts or calls you all the time, wanting to know where you are, what you are doing and who you are with
- ♥ They may accuse you of cheating or not liking/loving them
- ♥ They make you feel bad about yourself
- ♥ You cannot be yourself around them
- ♥ You cannot share your feelings with them



What is Self-Esteem?

- ♥ Knowing that you are worthy of happiness, love and respect no matter what
- ♥ Believing that you will be able to cope with whatever comes your way
- ♥ Accepting yourself just the way you are
- ♥ Being able to identify your strengths
- ♥ Taking good care of yourself
- ♥ Being your true self no matter what other people will think
- ♥ Surrounding yourself with people who care about you and treat you how you want to be treated
- ♥ Setting goals and believing that you can succeed
- ♥ Feeling confident that you have skills, talents and gifts to share
- ♥ Knowing that your opinions, thoughts and feelings matter

Remember that Self-Esteem is a Process!

Developing and maintaining self-esteem takes lots of practice; it is a lifelong journey. Feeling perfectly confident all the time is just about impossible, especially as we change and grow. The key seems to be accepting ourselves just as we are and recognizing that no matter what we're trying our best. Everyone makes mistakes and that is how we learn.

Why do people struggle with self-esteem?

Sadly, it is all too common for girls' to have low self-esteem, negative body image, and feelings of stress. Not every girl feels this way and not every girl feels this way all the time, but it happens to all of us sometimes. Society often gives people mixed messages and confusing messages, especially around sexuality.

Sexualization

- Sexualization is caused by the constant exposure to highly sexualized images of women and girls in the media (e.g. TV, movies, video games, magazine ads, Netflix).
- Women in movies are much more likely than men to show exposed skin, be dressed provocatively, and represent an unrealistic body ideal.
- Through constant exposure to sexualized images of women and girls, girls wrongfully learn that their primary value comes from their physical appearance.
- Sexualization occurs when a person's main value is believed to come from their appearance, rather than their intelligence or other qualities and when they are held to unrealistic standards of beauty.
- It causes girls to become extremely critical of their bodies, undermining their confidence and increasing feelings of shame and anxiety.
- It causes girls to focus so much on outward appearance that it makes it hard to concentrate on other things like school and friendship.
- Sexualization is linked to the three most common mental health problems facing girls: eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression.

Unrealistic Beauty Standards

- Many girls have trouble accepting their bodies because of society's emphasis on thinness as a measure of beauty.
- Girls are bombarded with images of women who are tall, skinny, white and have perfect skin. These images of women are artificially created, using computer programs like Photoshop to remove their natural imperfections.



These pictures demonstrate how unrealistic images of women can be. They show how much make-up and Photoshop can alter women's looks.



Learning to love and accept your body

Accepting your body just the way it is can be hard when you are being bombarded every day with images of women who seem “perfect”. But as those before and after images demonstrate, this “perfection” is fake! There is no such thing as perfection. And thank goodness for that – how boring!

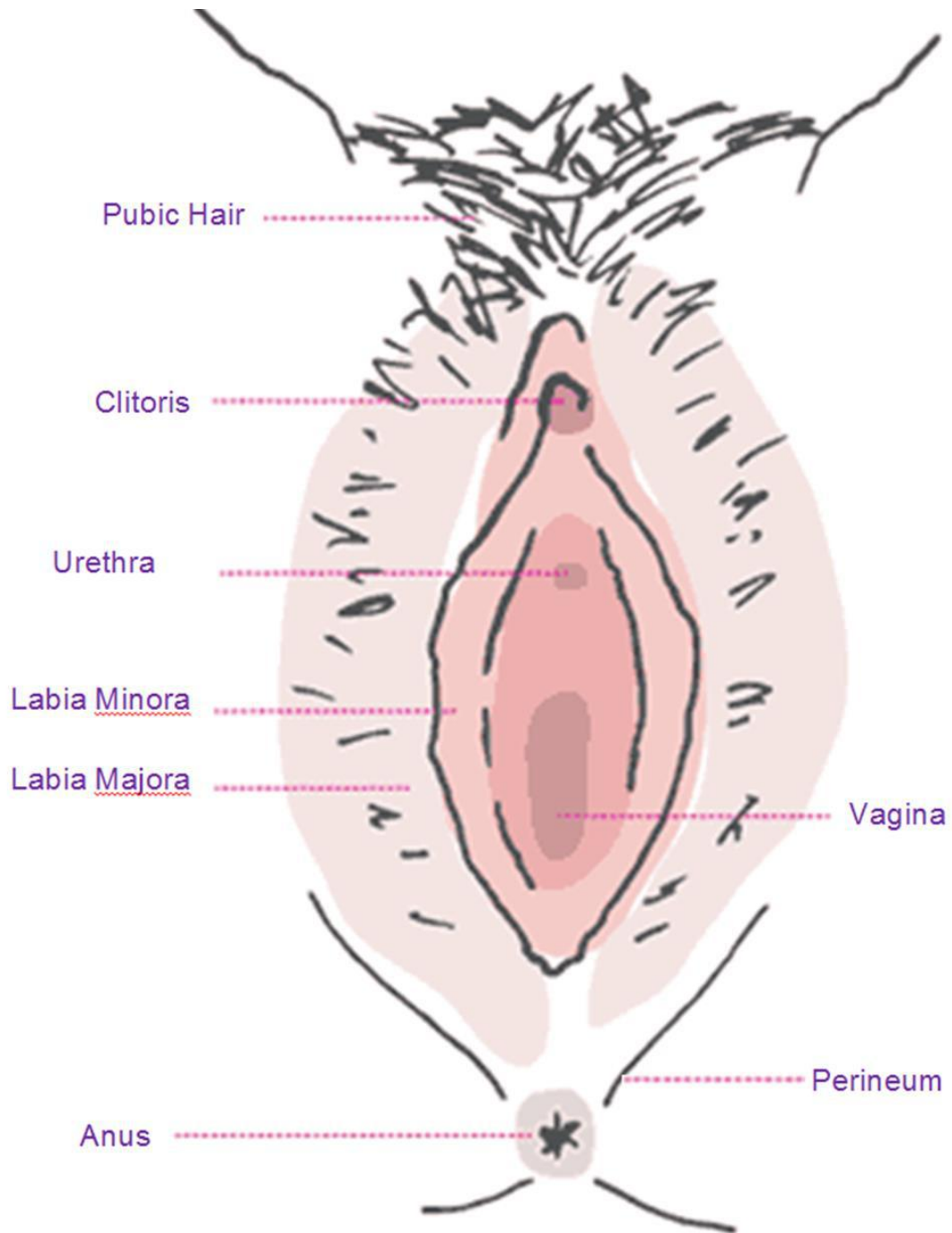
- Try finding role models that you admire for their accomplishments, open-mindedness, or generosity. You can also try finding images of people you think are beautiful who have a similar body type as you.
- Remember that you can find love, happiness and success no matter what your body looks like. Healthy bodies come in all different sizes. Skinny does not necessarily mean healthy.
- Do not judge or criticize other girls’ appearances. It will only make you feel more insecure and scared that other girls will be judging you.
- Don’t compare yourself to others.
- Make lists of the things you like about your appearance.
- Move your body. It is MUCH harder to dislike your body when it is directly responsible for allowing you to walk down the street, learn awesome dance moves, win a soccer game, play an instrument, etc...
- Take good care of yourself and your body. Eat balanced meals, drink lots of water, exercise, get plenty of sleep and spend time outside.

- Learn what feels good for your body: walks in the forest, swimming, sports, dancing, hoola hooping, building a fort, bike rides, baths, yoga, meditating, eating a good meal, drinking tea, having ice cream, taking a nap, etc...
- Remember that you are not alone; talk to your friends, family, teachers and communities about the pressures of fitting in, feeling good about your body and having healthy self-esteem. Support your friends to feel good about themselves no matter what.

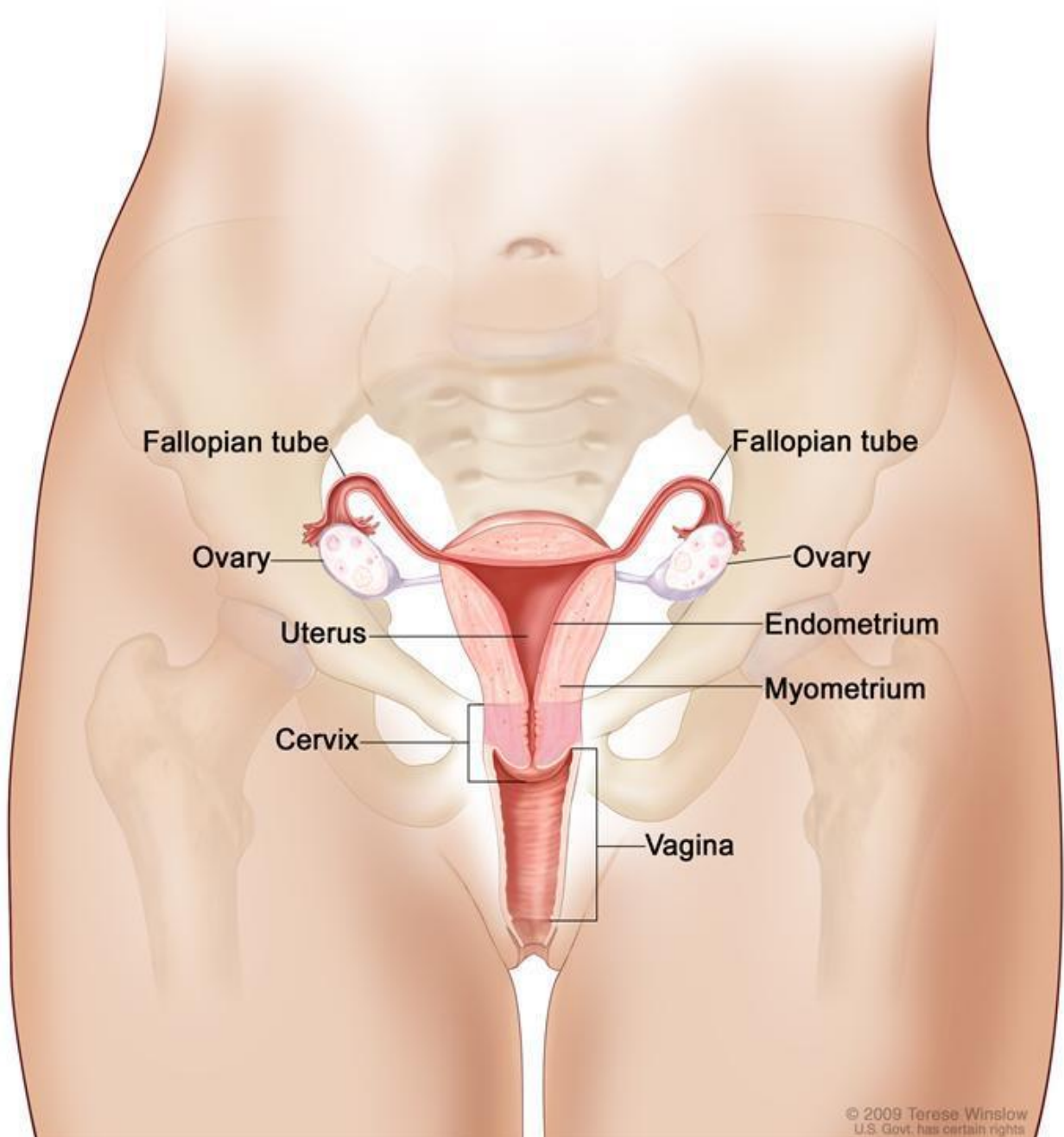


External Reproductive Anatomy

The Vulva



Internal Reproductive Anatomy



An Introduction to your Reproductive Anatomy

VULVA: The entire external genitalia. It includes the labia minora and majora, the clitoris, and the openings of the urethra, and the vagina.

VAGINA: The stretchable canal that leads to the cervix and uterus and is involved in menstruation, intercourse and childbirth. During puberty, the vagina starts to produce secretions, sometimes called discharge that can be white, clear, sticky or slippery. This is a sign of a healthy vagina.

LABIA: The word labia means lips in Latin. The outer labia (labia majora) are two folds of skin and fatty tissue that surround the rest of the vulva. They become covered in pubic hair after puberty. The inner labia (labia minora) are the folds of skin that go from the clitoris to below the vaginal opening. Sometimes the labia minora can hang outside the labia majora and sometimes they are hidden inside. The labia come in all different colours, shapes, sizes and lengths.

CERVIX: The lower part of the Uterus, contains the opening to the vagina.

UTERUS: The uterus holds and nourishes a developing fetus. The walls of the uterus are elastic to allow it to accommodate a developing fetus when a person becomes pregnant. The lining of the uterus, called endometrium, is what nourishes a fetus. Unless a person becomes pregnant, this lining is shed approximately once a month – this is menstruation!

OVARIES: The two ovaries are the size of an almond and contain all the eggs a person will ever have. The eggs are stored in follicles and most people are born with hundreds of thousands of them. During puberty, the follicles start releasing one egg per month – this is ovulation.

I ♥
ME

I ♥
ME

I ♥
ME

What words best describe me?	
What are the top 5 things I like about myself?	
What makes me special?	
What are my favorite things to do in my spare time?	
What makes me feel good about myself?	
What are my goals for the future?	
If I could do anything I wanted with my life, what would I do?	

Who do you admire?

Think about someone you admire or the person you would like to be.

1. What are their skills?

2. What is their personality?

3. What are their goals and accomplishments?

4. How do they treat others and expect to be treated by others?

5. What do they value in life?

6. What other things do you admire about them?

Resources

Websites

- ♥ www.sexualityandu.ca
 - ♥ *This web site is made possible with the guidance and collaboration of a team of distinguished Canadian medical organizations, and is administered by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.*
- ♥ www.scarleteen.com
 - ♥ *Scarleteen is an independent, grassroots sexuality education and support organization and website providing comprehensive and inclusive information about sexuality for teens.*
- ♥ www.ok2bme.ca/
 - ♥ *OK2BME is a set of free resources, information and confidential services for kids and teens wondering about their sexuality or gender identity.*

Books

Abdel-Fattah, Randa (2008). **Does My Head Look Big in This?**

***A novel about a young Muslim girl deciding to wear the hijab full-time*

Blackstone, Margaret & Haden Guest, Elissa (2006). **Girlstuff: A survival guide to growing up.**

Englander, Anrenee (2010). **Dear Diary, I'm Pregnant: Ten Real Life Stories.**

Harris, Robie H.; illustrated by Michael Emberley (2004). **It's Perfectly Normal: Changing bodies, growing up, sex and sexual health.**

Holmes, Melisa & Hutchison, Trish (2005). **Girlology: A Girl's Guide to Stuff that Matters, Relationships, body talk and girl power.**

Holmes, Melisa & Hutchinson, Trish (2007). **Girlology: Hang-Ups, Hook-Ups, and Holding Out, Stuff you need to know about your body, sex, and dating.**

Lavender, Missy & Donatelli Ihm, Jeni; illustrated by Jan Dolby (2015). **Below Your Belt, How to be Queen of your Pelvic Region: A Pelvic Health Handbook for Girls.**

Levi, Barrie (2006). **In Love and in Danger: A Teen's Guide to Breaking Free of Abusive Relationships.**

Macavinta, Courtney & Vander Pluym, Andrea (2005). **Respect: A Girl's Guide to getting Respect and Dealing when your Line is Crossed.**

Ryan, Sara (2001). **Empress of the World.**

***A novel about young lesbians and first love*

Silverberg, Cory, illustrated by Fiona Smyth (2015). **Sex is a Funny Word: A book about bodies, feelings, and YOU.**

Spinelli, Jerry (2000). **Stargirl.**

***A novel about peer pressure, fitting in, self-esteem and first love*

Weschler, Toni (2006). **Cycle Savvy: The Smart Teens Guide to the Mysteries of her Body.**

Weston, Carol. (2009). **Girltalk: All the stuff your sister never told you, no lectures, no sermons, no nonsense.**

Weiss, Marisa & Friedman, Isabel (2008). **Taking Care of Your "Girls": A breast health guide for girls, teens and in-betweens.**



BE YOURSELF
ACCEPT YOURSELF
VALUE YOURSELF
FORGIVE YOURSELF
BLESS YOURSELF
EXPRESS YOURSELF
TRUST YOURSELF
LOVE YOURSELF
EMPOWER YOURSELF

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For more information contact:

Stacey Jacobs, MSc

Community Sexual Health Education Manager

SHORE Centre

Sexual Health Options, Resources & Education

235 King Street East, Suite 130
Kitchener, ON N2G 4N5

Email: education@shorecentre.ca

Website: shorecentre.ca

Phone: 519 743 9360



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