EXPLORING CONNECTEDNESS AND SELF-ESTEEM IN A GIRLS SPORTS-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: HOW THE INGREDIENTS FIT TOGETHER

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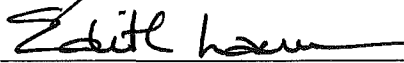
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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

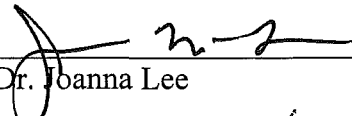This dissertation, "Exploring Connectedness and Self-Esteem in a Girls Sports-based Youth Development Program: How the Ingredients Fit Together," has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
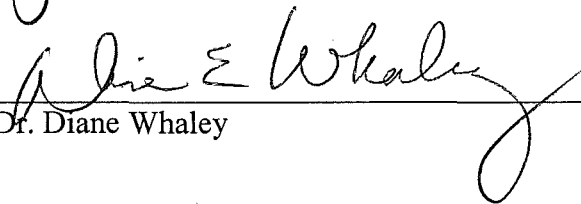
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ABSTRACT

Connectedness and self-esteem are significant developmental processes for adolescent girls. Moreover, both connectedness and self-esteem are complex, multidimensional, and difficult to measure. One context in which girls' experiences have not been explored at great length is out-of-school time programs, particularly those focused on sports-based youth development. To better understand the nature of connectedness and self-esteem for girls in sports-based youth development programs, a mixed methods inquiry involving ethnographic observations, participant interviews, relational maps, connectedness worksheets, and surveys of 13 ethnic minority high school females, ages 14-16, was undertaken.

Findings revealed a connectedness typology consisting of six overall ingredients that were present in relationship formation between girls and their peers, and program staff. These ingredients were: commonalities, physical proximity, collaboration, humor, talking and listening, and trust. These ingredients coalesced into a pyramid, referred to as the "dyadic pyramid" consisting of three levels: 1) shared environments, 2) shared experiences, and 3) shared emotions. At the first level, shared environments, girls reported commonalities or physical proximity as the key ingredients. Some relationships remained at this level, while many progressed to the second level, shared experiences. At this level, girls described stronger perceptions of collaboration, humor, or talking and listening with others. Fewer relationships advanced to the third level, where trust was the salient ingredient.

The program was a context for the development of many new relationships, with both peers and adults. Staff members played a prominent role in

participants' connectedness and self-esteem development. They supported the girls through instrumental and relationship scaffolding, as well as providing encouragement, support and validation to enhance participants' perceptions of competence. Girls reported increasing their skills and perceptions of competence. particularly in three domains: sports and fitness, career and future self, and global self-worth. They shared extensively about skills gained and how they used these new competencies in their lives after the program.

Findings support out-of-school time program relationships as fertile contexts for growing the ingredients of connectedness and self-esteem. Both connectedness and self-esteem independently and jointly contributed to girls' positive development. Implications for promoting connectedness and self-esteem in out-of-school time programs are discussed.

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DEDICATION

To the thousands of girls who have participated in PowerPlay's programs in the last 10 years, and to the thousands of girls who will discover their power through play, learn life skills, and build confidence and competence through PowerPlay in the future! And to the staff, volunteers and Board members of PowerPlay NYC, who work tirelessly, and passionately to level the playing field for New York City's girls.

Keep on playing it forward!

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To Mom and Dad: thanks for all my genes, and for all of the creative ways you show your love! Love love! And, guess what dad – I finished my dissertation!

To Grandpa Sam: While I could not be the first Ph.D in the family, I am thrilled to follow in your footsteps in some small way. To Dave, Kelly, Andy, Sue, Jonathan & Sam: Thanks for being my family through thick and thin. Sam and Jonny, I hope you find your passion in life and go for it!

To Lisa: you are the one and only, my doubles partner for life! Thanks for your understanding, adventurous spirit and willingness to relocate to Charlottesville. The next move is your choice!

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time of major changes and personal transitions. During this period, young people experience social, psychological, cognitive, and biological changes that can have significant effects on how they feel about themselves. Social changes include more time spent with peers, stronger peer relationships, and the formation of cliques (Steinberg, 1996). Psychological changes include reflective thinking, more self-awareness and thinking about the future (Finkenauer, Engels, Meeus & Oosterwegel, 2002). Cognitive changes include the ability to think more abstractly and in more relative terms rather than absolutes, and the development of metacognition (Steinberg, 1996). Biological changes are fueled by puberty, which brings a host of physical and emotional changes. Moreover, the complexity of each of these processes is compounded by their overlapping occurrence during early adolescence. How individuals negotiate these simultaneous changes influences the processes and outcomes of identity formation, considered to be one of the primary developmental tasks of adolescence (Erikson, 1968).

For girls, many of these changes are intensified because of the gendered world in which we live. Adolescent girls experience the aforementioned changes against a societal backdrop of restrictive gender norms and expectations, as processes such as gender role intensification are amplified (Hill & Lynch, 1983; Steinberg, 1990). This is a time when both girls and boys start considering how they are 'supposed' to act as women or men, while others in their lives begin reacting to them in gendered ways. Specifically, girls

may ingest many negative messages about femininity, and begin to fully absorb their less valued status in society (Basow & Rubin, 1999). Girls who try to step out of the gender boxes may struggle against these social and cultural forces. For example, in the traditionally masculine domain of sport, many girls confront the 'triple crown of disadvantage' (Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport, 2007), consisting of gender inappropriateness, lack of privilege, and constant surveillance and focus on girls' bodies and appearance. These forces may contribute to the dramatic decline in girls' participation in sport and physical activity at adolescence (Kimm, Glynn, Kriska, Barton, Kronsberg, Daniels, Crawford, Sabry, & Liu, 2002).

One of the barometers of how well adolescents are negotiating the variety of changes or conflicts they encounter in adolescence is self-esteem, singled out as an important measure of one's sense of well-being (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohns, 2003; Oishi, Diener, Lucas & Suh, 1999). A widely used concept in both psychology and mainstream media, self-esteem refers to an individual's favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self (Rosenberg, 1965), or a sense of value or worth, the extent to which a person approves of, appreciates, or likes him or herself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991).

Self-esteem is generally considered the evaluative component of one's self-concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). High self-esteem has been connected to productive coping strategies, enhanced motivation and a positive emotional state, while low self-esteem has been associated with negative

outcomes such as decreased school adjustment, and increased anxiety, depression and loneliness (Quatman & Watson, 2001; Scales & Leffert, 1999).

One change in self-esteem that has been well documented by researchers is the decline of self-esteem in white, middle-class girls during adolescence (AAUW, 1992; Birndorf, Ryan, Auinger & Aten, 2005; Klomsten, Skaalvik & Espines 2004; Quatman & Watson, 2001; Simmons, Brown, Bush & Blyth, 1978). In the blink of an eye, girls who were happy, outgoing, and energetic as elementary school students metamorphasize into shy, insecure, and sullen shadows of their former selves as middle schoolers. However, this phenomenon is not found with African American girls, who consistently report higher self-esteem than white girls and do not experience the same declines in self-esteem that white or Latina girls do at early adolescence (Biro, Striegel-Moore, Franko, Padgett, Bean, 2006; Brown, McMahon, Biro, Crawford, Schreiber, Similo, Waclawiw, Striegel-Moore,1998; Ward, 1996, Greene, & Way, 2005; Henriques, & Calhoun, 1999; Kimm, et al, 2002; Rotheram-Borus, Dopkins, Sabate & Lightfoot, 1996). Rather than a *loss* of voice that characterizes this period for white or Latina girls, black girls often experience a *rise* in voice.

This "rise in voice" has been called a strategy of resistance to cultural norms that are based on white girls (Ward, 1996). Girls who do not fit the mold of the white ideal of femininity may be less affected by that image (Roth & Basow, 2004). Thus, some African American girls who have different cultural norms, for things like size and beauty, may be immune to some of the sociocultural pressures that affect other girls, such as the 'culture of thinness.' Moreover, some Hispanic girls, who are more traditionally socialized to be dependent, obedient and submissive, also may not fit into the white ideal

of femininity because in Latina culture femininity may be equated more with behavior than with appearance (Roth & Basow, 2004).

Therefore, when discussing adolescent girls' development, it is clear that research about one ethnic group cannot be generalized to all groups. Moreover, one ethnic group label can never represent all girls who share that ethnicity because there is more within group variation than across group variation (Eccles, Barber, Jozefowicz, Malenchuk & Vide, 1999). Thus, there is a huge need for more research on how adolescent girls of different ethnicities feel about themselves and their lives, especially as they experience the transitions of adolescence.

Another increasingly popular barometer of how adolescents are doing is how connected they feel to themselves, to others, and to different contexts or places in their lives. Connectedness, "when a person is actively involved with another person, object, group or environment and that involvement promotes a sense of comfort, well-being and anxiety-reduction" (Hagerty, Sauer-Lynch, Patusky & Bouwesma, 1993) is increasingly recognized as a protective factor for adolescents in many developmental contexts, including home, peers, school, and community (Barber & Schluterman, 2008; Townsend & McWhirter, 2006). Youth who report higher levels of connectedness also report higher levels of self-esteem, less stress, less depression (Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman & Harris, 1997), less sexual risk taking (Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier & Shahar, 2006), and less deviant involvement (Dornbusch, Erickson, Laird & Wong, 2001). On the other hand, a lack of connectedness can contribute to low self-esteem, loneliness, depression and a general lack of meaning or purpose in life (Lee & Robbins, 1995; McGraw, Moore, Fuller, & Bates 2008; Townsend & McWhirter, 2006).

For adolescent girls, the challenges of creating and sustaining connections have been well-documented, including loss of voice, or low self-esteem for white girls (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Lyons & Hanmer, 1990) or rise in voice, or lack of respect for black girls (Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995; Robinson & Ward, 1991; Ward, 1996). Whether at the center or the margins, many girls struggle to remain connected, both to themselves and others, because of the aforementioned socializing forces such as gender role intensification (Hill & Lynch, 1983; Steinberg, 1990), increased emphasis on physical appearance (Brooks-Gunn, 1991), or racism, sexism, classism, or patriarchy (Pastor, McCormick & Fine, 1996). Because connectedness is so salient for girls, and has repercussions on self-esteem and risk-taking behaviors, it is critical for educators and practitioners to foster its healthy development in adolescent girls.

While the focus on connectedness is growing in research on adolescent development, connectedness itself is not a new concept. Similar constructs such as relatedness, belongingness, attachment and social support are used across disciplines of psychology, education, health and counseling, among others. However, the study of connectedness has presented several conceptual and methodological challenges. First, depending on the context, connectedness has been operationalized and measured in many ways (e.g., caring, closeness, relationship quality, support, or affect and involvement), due in part to researchers' own backgrounds and disciplinary paradigms (Kuhn, 1962). Second, the aforementioned concepts, such as attachment, relatedness, belonging and social support, have been used interchangeably with connectedness, leading to confusion on what distinguishes not only connectedness from each of them, but each of them from all the others. Third, researchers face ecological challenges because connectedness can

occur at many levels, including individual, dyadic, group or institution, or community, and in many contexts, such as home, school, friends or neighborhood. The increasing number of studies on connectedness across disciplines reflects researchers' recognition of the power of human relationships and of the association between connectedness, and health and well-being.

However, more research needs to be conducted to learn about connectedness, variations in connectedness across multiple contexts, and the role of connectedness as a mediator for adolescent girls' development. Even in theories that include connectedness (as relatedness), such as Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000), there is less empirical research on connectedness compared to competence and autonomy, the other components in the model. SDT is a theory of motivation that states that human beings have innate psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Competence refers to a desire to feel capable and skilled at an activity, autonomy refers to the need to actively participate in determining one's behavior, while relatedness refers to the need to care for and be connected to others. According to SDT, the more individuals are able to meet these three needs though an activity, the greater motivation they will have to continue participating in that activity, and the greater level of psychological well-being they will attain (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research using this model has focused more on the constructs of competence and autonomy than on relatedness.

The study of connectedness is particularly important for adolescent girls, for whom relationships are an important pathway for development. Researchers have documented girls' high need for connection and relationships since the 1970's and

1980's, when girls and women's voices were added to the developmental psychology literature (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1976). Research on interpersonal relationships in childhood and adolescence shows that girls demonstrate both an expectation of, and a greater need for emotional intimacy, characterized by higher levels of responsiveness to others, empathy, disclosure and interpersonal concerns (Benenson, 1996; Buhrmester, 1990).

One of the transitions of adolescence is a shift in reliance from parents to peers for social support and for the development of intimacy, social competence and well-being (Buhrmester, 1996). Girls' high needs for connection and relationship (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) are consistently visible within the context of peer relationships. Girls have reported high levels of peer attachment, empathy and prosocial behavior (Carter, McGee, Taylor, & Williams, 2007; Laible, Carlo & Roesch, 2004), attachment to best friends (Chipuer, 2004), and strong needs for trust and loyalty (Brown, Way & Duff, 1999). Compared to boys, girls also tend to talk more with friends and value the social support they receive, especially from close friends, teachers, and classmates (Frey & Rothlisberger, 1996; Malecki & Demaray, 2003). Moreover, in studies of friendships among minority youth (Way & Chen, 2002; Way, Cowal, Gingold, Pahl, & Bissessar, 2001), girls report higher levels of close friendship support than boys, and display a pattern of stable, close friendship with best friends over time. Girls are also more flexible in relationships than boys, and more willing to seek and maintain close same-sex friendships despite experiences of betrayal. While much has also been written about negative peer influences and relational aggression, even relationally aggressive behaviors reinforce how important interpersonal connections are for girls (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995;

Grotpeter & Crick, 1996). Interpersonal connections provide a backdrop for girls' development; girls develop in and through relationships.

To support adolescent girls' healthy development, girls need contexts and activities that foster self-esteem and positive connections with others. These elements are important features of what has come to be known as positive youth development (PYD). Positive youth development refers to a perspective that considers youth as assets or resources to be developed, rather than as problems to be fixed or managed (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001). It is a shift from a deficit to a strengths perspective, considering youth development through a framework of five key outcomes for youth, known as the '5 C's' of competence, caring, character, confidence and connectedness (Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg, 2000). As one of the 5C's, connectedness refers to positive bonds with people and institutions -- peers, family, school and community -- in which both parties contribute to the relationship. One context that is particularly important for positive development is out-of-school time (OST) learning, specifically sport and physical activity programs.

Out-of-school time programs are one possible setting in which positive youth development may occur. These programs can provide a valuable learning experience that complements and extends the traditional school day. As physical spaces, they are often school or center-based; as psychological spaces, they are referred to as "clubs," "safe spaces," or "home places," where adolescents can feel safe and comfortable, explore ideas and be supported in their identity development processes (Deutsch, 2008; Hirsch, Roffman, Deutsch, Flynn, Loder & Pagano, 2000; Pastor, McCormick & Fine, 1996). They have also been described as "intermediary spaces" (Noam & Tillinger, 2004), or

"bridges" (McLauglin, Irby, & Langman, 1994). Regardless of name, OST spaces can provide powerful developmental contexts for adolescents, featuring engaging activities such as sports, supportive relationships with adults, and the time to put relationships first (Noam & Fiore, 2004).

OST programs are as diverse as youth themselves, and there is no one perfect program that meets all the needs of every child (Roffman, Pagano, & Hirsch, 2001). Researchers (e.g., Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2002; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray & Foster, 1998) have noted the lack of a clear definition of "youth development program" and found that a wide range of approaches can foster positive outcomes for youth (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b). However, throughout these different approaches, connectedness consistently emerges as one of the most critical features that effectively supports learning and development in after-school or community-based organizations (National Research Council, 2002; Pittman, Irby, Ferber, Tolman, & Yohalem, 2002; Thomases & Smith, 2000). Promoting connectedness, particularly with peers and parents, has been found to be a priority of many after school programs (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b). However, while promoting connectedness has become a priority for both researchers and practitioners, few programs have actually used measures of connectedness to monitor or evaluate their progress, thus leading to a lack of empirical research in this area (Rhodes, 2004).

Within the world of out-of-school time learning, the most popular activity is sport (Larson & Verma, 1999; Theokas & Lerner, 2006). Research has shown that youth participate in sport for three main reasons: to have fun, to learn or improve skills, and to be with friends (Gould & Weiss, 1987). In line with PYD, a sports-based youth

development model consisting of three features -- context, external resources, and internal assets -- has been proposed (Petipas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). When these three elements are successfully integrated, positive youth development through sport may occur, leading to outcomes consistent with the 5 C's.

While there are still significant gender gaps in sport, particularly in urban communities, girls who participate in sports and physical activity can receive many social, psychological and health benefits (Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Organized sports are associated with children's general health and body esteem, healthy weight, popularity, quality of life and educational achievement. Female athletes often derive greater benefits from athletic participation than their male peers (Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Studies have shown that girls who participate in sport or physical activity have higher self-esteem and greater body satisfaction (Taub & Blinde, 1992), are more likely to graduate from high school and go to college (Marsh, 1990), and are less likely to suffer from depression (Nicoloff & Schwenk, 1995), or be sexually active or get pregnant (Dodge & Jaccard, 2002; Miller, Sabo, Farrell, Barnes & Melnick, 1998; Miller, Sabo, Farrell, Barnes & Melnick, 1999) than girls who do not participate in sport.

While there is a growing body of literature promoting connectedness as a protective factor, and it is well-established that higher self-esteem contributes to better coping skills and more positive outcomes, there is little research on the mechanisms of how these feelings develop. Many of these outcomes are linked to relationship quality (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002), and there is still more work to be done illuminating the processes or mechanisms by which these outcomes occur through relationships. How do relationships develop between girls and their peers, or between

girls and coaches, or between girls and a group of youth in an OST program or organization? Because relationships are at the heart of connectedness, researchers are grappling in earnest with how to assess relationship quality, or connectedness. For girls, connectedness has always been important, although both girls and connectedness were outside the dominant paradigms of psychology for many years. Now that connectedness is gaining popularity, it is time to look across disciplines and ecologies to come to consensus on how to operationalize and measure this complex, multidimensional construct.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of girls in a sports-based youth development program, particularly related to the development of connectedness and self-esteem. Specifically, my research questions are:

- What are the experiences of girls in a girls-only sports program? Does the program serve as a context for the development of connectedness, and self-esteem?

  o If so, what are the mechanisms or processes underlying the development of connectedness and self-esteem for girls in a sports-based youth development program?

  o If so, how does connectedness influence girls' experiences of and satisfaction in the sports program?

I will explore these experiences of participants in a summer program offered by PowerPlay NYC, a girls' sports-based youth development organization. PowerPlay NYC is a 10-year old, nonprofit organization that offers sports and life skill programs annually for more than 300 girls, ages 7-17 in New York City. During the summer, PowerPlay

runs an intensive, eight-week Summer Sports Leadership Academy for 25 high school girls. Typically, participants range in age from 13-17, are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and are mostly African American. The goals of the program are to use sports, fitness and teambuilding activities to develop self-esteem, confidence, competence and communication skills, and to provide an educationally interactive experience for high school girls to learn career skills and apply them. The Summer Sports Leadership Academy will be the research site for my study.

This project is significant for at least three reasons. First, the findings will help expand the small body of literature on girls' sports-based youth development programs and their potential impact on adolescent girls. In addition, the study will add to the growing body of empirical research on the experiences and feelings of girls of color in different contexts. Third, it will further explore the critical role of connectedness in the lives of adolescent girls, and how it might function as a mediator for other outcomes.

Whether participating in a sport or other after-school program, the more positively connected adolescent girls feel to the people in their lives, the more likely they are to accumulate developmental assets and initiate protective processes for their development. Being connected to significant adults who provide caring, closeness and support can help girls feel better about themselves, and build conduits for the safe expression of voice, feelings and resistance. Adolescent girls' identity process is one of self-differentiation within relationships (Steiner-Adair, 1990) and girls develop their sense of self based on how they experience themselves in relationships. Thus, relationships can provide 'hardiness zones' (Debold, Brown, Weesen & Brookins, 1999), or spaces for girls to stay connected to themselves and their feelings, to know and use their voices, or to experiment

with liberating strategies of resistance to oppressive cultural norms (Robinson & Ward, 1991). My goal in this study is to help inform practitioners and researchers about the processes of connectedness development in adolescent girls of ethnic minority backgrounds in sports programs, and how they may be associated with self-esteem processes. With greater understanding of the patterns and particulars, practitioners may be better able both to facilitate the positive evolution of these processes, and also to support the participation and retention of girls of color in sports and physical activity programs. In the next chapter I will review the literature upon which this study is based.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As there is a dearth of research on girls' sports-based youth development programming, this study intersects and connects several relevant theoretical frameworks and bodies of research including out-of-school time learning, positive youth development, sport and physical activity, girls' sports participation, and adolescent girls' development. Within these overlapping worlds, I am interested in the multidimensional constructs of connectedness and self-esteem, both as outcomes and mediators of other outcomes in adolescent girls. To inform my study, I will therefore rely on these areas of theory and research for my conceptual framework, along with experiential knowledge I have gained through years of work in the girls' sports-based youth development field. The overarching goal of this chapter is to review theory and research related to my work, to identify gaps in the literature where my study will potentially contribute to the field, and to create the framework for understanding how this study may help practitioners improve their programs. I will begin by presenting relevant theory and research in these key areas mentioned above, and then look at intersections between them.

Out-of-School Time

"Out-of-school time" (OST) programs can provide a valuable learning context that complements and extends the traditional school day. According to the Afterschool Alliance (2004), 6.5 million K-12 children participate in after-school programs

nationally. While this is a large number, there are at least 15 million more youth who say they would participate if there were a quality program in their community (Afterschool Alliance, 2004). There is a great need for OST programs, because they offer supportive contexts for youth development and opportunities for youth to develop skills in supervised, safe, and engaging environments (Partree, 2003). Indeed, OST programs have been found to help youth integrate their evolving identities and bridge the familial and nonfamilial worlds (Hirsch, 2005). OST programs are diverse in terms of their structure, program offerings and constituents; they can be school or neighborhood-based, offered by large, national multi-site or small community-based organizations, and serve elementary, middle or high school-aged youth. However, the number of programs and opportunities decline proportionately as youth age, with more programs available for elementary-aged children than for adolescents (Pittman, Tolman, Yohalem, 2005).

After-school hours, particularly when youth are on their own, can potentially be a time of increased risk for youth. The hours between 3-6pm, for example, have been found to be the peak time when adolescents find trouble or trouble finds them (Carnegie Corporation, 1992). It is clear that adolescents need supportive contexts that can help them build skills and explore their identities safely (see Mahoney, Larson & Eccles, 2005, for a review). Fortunately, the number of OST programs has grown tremendously in the last ten years, and through these programs teens are seeking and finding supportive environments filled with engaging activities, positive adult relationships and time to hang out with peers.

Research suggests that youth who participate in after-school programs can improve significantly in many areas: feelings and attitudes, engagement in learning,

behavior adjustment, which includes positive social behaviors and reduction in aggression, conduct problems and drug use, and attendance, school and achievement test scores (Afterschool Alliance, 2008; Durlak & Weisberg, 2007). In addition, youth who participate more frequently and over longer periods of time show increased benefits, and youth with higher risk levels show the greatest benefits (After School Alliance, 2008). Results from an analysis of 73 studies showed that after-school programs using evidence-based approaches produced improvements in personal, social and academic skills, as well as self-esteem (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007).

While there is a wide variation in the types of OST programs, there is a strong consensus about what setting-level features best promote positive development. These include physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school and community efforts (National Research Council, 2002). OST programs offer a range of activities from sports and fitness, to arts, music, drama, technology, community service and homework help. In addition, many of them refer to themselves as "youth development programs" and have goals aimed at supporting youth across developmental domains. Thus, I will discuss positive youth development next.

Positive Youth Development

OST programs are increasingly recognized as important contexts of development (Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003; Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005). Youth development is a continuous process that takes place across all the domains in which young people live and interact. For all youth, key areas of development include

social/emotional, cognitive, physical/biological, personal/cultural, vocational, civic and moral/spiritual. Rather than simply a static process that takes place *within* individuals, development takes place contextually, *between* individuals and the many contexts in which they interact. It is these reciprocal interactions of youth and their environments that provide the bases of human behavior and developmental change (Damon, 1998). Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) captures these interactions of systems and influences on youth. It also suggests that each context of an adolescent's life can be seen as a potential learning environment and developmental setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lerner, Brentano, Dowling & Anderson, 2002).

The term 'youth development' has been used in at least three different and related ways, referring to: 1) a natural process of development, 2) a set of principles or philosophy, and 3) the practices or application of these principles (Hamilton, Hamilton & Pittman, 2004). As a process, youth development refers to the natural progression of youth from childhood to adolescence. As a set of principles or philosophy, it refers to the idea that all young people have the potential for successful, healthy development, and that youth are resources to be developed rather than problems to be managed (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001). As the application of these principles, it refers to the conscious design of contexts or activities that embody the principles and support positive developmental outcomes (Hamilton, et al, 2004).

An important concept related to youth development is developmental regulation, referring to the mutually influential relations between an individual and his or her context (Lerner, et al, 2002). Developmental regulations that are mutually beneficial are considered adaptive. During adolescence, adaptive developmental regulations result in

positive psychosocial and behavioral outcomes, such as the '5 'C's' of Positive Youth

Development, or PYD (Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, Phelps, Gestsdottir, et al,

2005, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b). The '5 'C's' -- competence, connectedness,

character, confidence and caring, are thought of as a way of conceptualizing PYD, and

are linked to the positive outcomes of youth development programs (Roth & Brooks-

Gunn, 2003b). Competence refers to knowledge and skills, connection is feeling related

to others, character is the intention to do what is just, confidence refers to self-belief and

self-assuredness and caring means exhibiting concern and empathy for others. PYD

focuses on youths' strengths and on creating environments that foster competence,

connection, character, confidence and caring. The result is youth who are "thriving" and

contributing to their communities (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003; Lerner, Phelps,

Alberts, Forman, & Christiansen, 2007).

While PYD has grown quickly as a foundational philosophy of youth programs,

there are still several challenges with its operationalization and measurement. While the

'5 C's' summarize the goals of youth development, they lack specificity in terms of

outcome measurement. The National Research Council (2002) and The Search Institute

(Benson, 1997) have tried to clarify outcomes so that they could more easily be

integrated into youth programs. For example, the Search Institute's 40 Developmental

assets, 20 external and 20 internal, have become a valuable framework for community

initiatives (Benson, 1997). External assets include people and activities in the life of an

adolescent that provide support, empowerment, boundaries or productive use of time,

while internal assets are skills that adolescents internalize such as commitment to

learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

There have also been several attempts to operationalize PYD and the '5 'C's'. First, Catalano and colleagues (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002, 2004) described PYD as a program or approach that seeks to foster one or more of the following: resilience, social competence, emotional competence, cognitive competence, behavioral competence, moral competence, self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, clear and positive identity, belief in the future, recognition for positive behavior, opportunities for prosocial involvement, and prosocial norms. In an evaluation of 25 youth development programs (Catalano, et al, 2002), competence, self-efficacy, and prosocial norms were addressed most often. A second attempt at operationalization of PYD was the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (Lerner, et al, 2005). In this study of 5th graders, a latent construct of PYD correlated positively with a measure of youth contribution and negatively with indices of risk and problem behaviors (Lerner, et al, 2005). This study provided initial evidence about using the developmental systems model as a way of operationalizing the '5 'C's' of PYD and looking at the links between PYD, contribution and negative outcomes or behaviors.

While the number of "PYD" programs has increased, there is still a lack of empirical evidence demonstrating programs' effectiveness at promoting healthy outcomes such as the '5 'C's' (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b). Historically, positive behavioral outcomes were measured more by the presence or absence of *negative* behaviors, than by the presence of *positive* behaviors. This presents researchers with the ongoing challenge of identifying and measuring desired positive outcomes. More work needs to be done to measure the '5 'C's', not only as outcomes in and of themselves, but also as mediators and moderators of other outcomes. In addition, initial evaluations of

youth development programs (Catalano et al, 2002, 2004; Roth et al, 1998) noted the lack

of a clear definition of what constitutes a youth development program and found that a

wide range of PYD approaches can result in positive outcomes (Roth & Brooks-Gunn,

2003b). Moreover, the PYD approach can be applied not just at an organizational or

program level, but also contextually at an activity level. Next, I will explore PYD applied

to the sport context.

<center>Sports-based Youth Development (SBYD)</center>

Of all OST activities, the most popular is sport (Larson & Verma, 1999; Theokas

& Lerner, 2006), In line with PYD, sport psychology researchers proposed a sports-based

youth development model consisting of three features: context, external resources, and

internal assets. (Petipas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). First, 'context' means an

intrinsically motivating activity that is safe and engaging, and in which participants feel

accepted by peers and optimally challenged. Next, 'external resources' refer to

relationships with caring adult mentors such as coaches, and positive relationships with

other peers. Finally, 'internal assets' refer to the skills that youth develop within the

activity, such as setting and achieving goals, solving problems, and communicating and

cooperating with others. When these three elements are successfully integrated, positive

youth development through sport may occur, and is theorized to lead to outcomes

consistent with the '5 'C's'.

Two examples of evidence-based sports-based youth development programs are

The First Tee (USGA) and Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR; Hellison,

1995). The First Tee, a partnership of national golf organizations, uses golf as a context

to teach life skills. The external assets are the coaches and volunteers, along with

professional development and an in-depth, structured life skill curriculum, that promotes the acquisition of internal assets in the form of interpersonal, goalsetting and other skills. The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility program is a youth development model that uses physical activity to teach social skills and resilience. Again, the physical activity, whether basketball or martial arts, is the context, while the trained staff are external assets. The internal assets are the five levels of responsibility outlined by the program, including respect for self and others, effort, self-direction, helping others and leadership, and being a role model outside the gym (Hellison, 1995).

However, it must be noted that positive youth development through sport does not automatically occur simply because youth participate in sport. There have been many misperceptions about sport as an automatic context that teaches life skills. Sport has the *potential* to teach life skills, but only if life skills are *intentionally* taught.

Sports-based youth development (SBYD) programs are grounded in the premise that sport can be a powerful 'hook' to capture and engage youth, and intentionally foster youth development (Lemenestrel, Bruno & Christian, 2002). Using a sport environment to provide the supports and opportunities that youth need to be successful and healthy, these programs offer youth a context in which they can not only learn and master sport skills, but also life and leadership skills in a safe, supportive and challenging environment. Unlike many organized sport programs, sports-based youth development programs, such as The First Tee and Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility, conduct sport activities as a means to an end, and not as an end in itself. In this case, the end is the internal assets or life skills that youth develop, and not simply the sport skills. SBYD programs focus on applying PYD principles to sport, and map many of the

aforementioned features of PYD settings on to their programs, such as supportive relationships with coaches and teammates, skill-building opportunities, appropriate structure and recognition, to name a few.

Self-Determination Theory

Connectedness (relatedness), one of the '5 'C's' of positive youth development is also one of the pillars of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to the theory, individuals will choose activities that fulfill their three basic needs, for competence, autonomy and relatedness (connectedness) and the more these needs are met through an activity, the greater one's sense of pleasure, wellbeing and self-determined behavior. Conversely, if participating in a certain activity does not meet these three needs, then one's level of self-determination and intrinsic motivation will decrease. Considerable research across multiple contexts, including sport and physical activity, demonstrates support for the predictions of SDT that the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness have important implications for psychological functioning, motivation, and well-being (see Deci & Ryan, 2000; Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007).

Sport psychology researchers have shown a positive relationship between coaches' autonomy-supportive behaviors, students' need satisfaction and physical activity contexts (e.g., Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, 2000; Ntoumanis, 2001; 2005; Reinboth & Duda & Ntoumanis, 2004; Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2003; 2005). For example, Ntoumanis (2005) examined how personal and contextual motivational variables influenced male and female 15-year-olds' cognitive and affective experiences and participation in optional physical education programs. Results showed that physical

education teachers' support of students' psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy predicted student need satisfaction. In turn, need satisfaction was linked to greater self-determined motivation, which was linked to higher levels of concentration, effort and intention to participate in optional physical education classes the next year.

In a similar study, Standage, Duda, and Ntoumanis (2005) examined self-determination theory within the context of school-based physical education. Girls and boys, ages 11-14, were asked to what extent they felt their physical education teacher met their needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Researchers then combined each participant's score for all three needs into one score, labeled need support. In line with self-determination theory, results demonstrated that the degree to which students perceived that their teacher supported their three basic needs predicted their overall need satisfaction. Taken together, these studies suggest that coaches and OST staff can facilitate positive psychosocial and behavioral outcomes among adolescents. Because individuals will seek to fill their needs however they can, it is important to provide teenagers with opportunities to participate in out-of-school program contexts and girls' sports-based youth development programs that can positively enhance their psychological well-being.

Much research using SDT has explored the behaviors of socializers, such as coaches or parents, on participants' motivational orientation through the lens of Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), one of the four mini-theories of SDT (see Ryan & Deci, 2000). CET focuses only on the effects of competence and autonomy, and suggests that high levels of these two psychological mediators will lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation and self-determined behavior. Less research has been conducted on the

relatedness component of the model (Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005; Wilson, Rogers, Rodgers, & Wild, 2006). Because relationships are so important for adolescent girls, further exploration of this psychological mediator could help elucidate the social processes underlying the positive relationships between adult behaviors and participants' needs satisfaction.

The sport and physical activity context can be a powerful environment for enhancing self-determined motivation and fulfilling adolescents' needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. Going back to the SBYD model (Petipas, Cornelius, Van Raalte & Jones, 2005), if programs can recruit and train experienced, knowledgeable female coaches (external resources) and utilize skill-based, developmentally-appropriate curriculum (external resources), they can design and implement autonomy-supportive activities (context) that enhance skills and perceptions of competence, and bring girls together. The more an activity meets girls' basic needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness, the more likely participants will enjoy and be motivated, leading to higher levels of self-esteem and other life lessons learned (internal assets). Next, I will review research on the internal assets, or psychosocial outcomes, that can be developed by adolescent girls through participation in sport and physical activity.

<div align="center">Adolescent Girls and Sports</div>

The physical health of adolescent girls is an issue of increasing concern for physical educators, practitioners, parents, and policymakers. Physical activity levels decline sharply with age during adolescence and inactivity is more common among females (14%) than males (7%), particularly Black (21%) rather than White females (12%) (Centers for Disease Control, 1996). Among high school students, less than 30%

of girls participate regularly in 60 minutes of daily physical activity, while only 29% of

girls participate in a daily physical education class (Centers for Disease Control, 2005).

In fact, girls' participation in sport declines precipitously between the ages of 12 and 18

(Centers for Disease Control, 1996; Kimm et al., 2002). In addition, girls join organized

sports programs later than boys and drop out earlier (Seefeldt, Ewing, Gano-Overway, &

Branta, 2002). Thus, research clearly shows that teenage girls, particularly African-

American, are at a high risk for physical inactivity.

However, research also shows that participation in sport and physical activity can

enhance the physical competence, health and well-being of girls (Bowker, 2006; Gill,

2004; Greenberg & Oglesby, 1997; Pederson & Seidman, 2004; Richman & Shaffer,

2000; Wiese-Bjornstal, 1997). For example, girls who participate in physical activity

report positive feelings about body image and increased self-confidence, motivation and

mood states (Wiese-Bjornstal, 1997), as well as reduced symptoms of stress, anxiety and

depression (Greenberg & Oglesby, 1997). In addition, girls who participate in sports are

more likely to graduate high school and go to college (Melnick, Vanfossen & Sabo, 1988;

Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell & Sabo, 2005). Finally, sports participation has been

associated with lower dropout rates (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997), particularly for low-

income or at–risk youth (Fredericks & Eccles, 2006a), White females in suburban and

rural schools, and Latina athletes in rural schools (Sabo, Melnick & Vanfossen, 1989).

Because the sport context has the potential to provide so many benefits, it is important

that girls are given opportunities to participate and to receive these benefits.

On the flip side, a number of studies' findings suggest that sport participation can

lead to negative outcomes for some girls. Researchers have found negative correlations

between athletic participation and achievement (Miller, et al, 2005). In one study, female and African American adolescents who identified as 'jocks' reported lower grades than those who did not (Miller, et al, 2005). Moreover, research shows mixed results regarding adolescent females and alcohol consumption, with some studies showing that teens who participate in sport report lower alcohol use (Fredericks & Eccles, 2006a), while others report higher use (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Most of the research on girls' sports participation has been conducted on organized sport programs, and not on sports-based youth development programs, and especially not on girls-only programs. More empirical research is needed to measure the effects of programs that intentionally teach life skills to adolescent girls. In fact, according to the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport (2007), there are few to no evidence-based, empirically tested, developmentally-focused youth sport programs that are *girls only*. It comes as no surprise, then, that there are still wide gender and other participation inequities in sport, whether in SBYD programs, or more generally in organized youth sport. I will review these gaps next.

Gender Gap in Sport: Lack of Opportunities for Urban Girls of Color

Nationwide, at least 47 million youth participate in organized sport each year (Ewing & Seefeldt, 2002). However, a gender gap in involvement in sport and physical activity exists between boys and girls (Sabo & Veliz, 2008), and the gap is not uniform. Variations appear to be driven by economic disparities, race, ethnicity and family characteristics, and suggest that participation is shaped by access and opportunity. Of all geographic and socioeconomic configurations of girls, *urban girls of color* have the narrowest window of opportunity to participate in sports. First of all, girls enter sport

later than boys (7.4 years old to 6.8 for boys), and tend to drop out earlier and in greater numbers than boys (Sabo & Veliz, 2008). A longitudinal study of African American and Caucasian girls from ages 9-10 to ages 18-19 (Kimm, et al, 2002) found large declines for all girls related to physical activity, but a larger decline for African Americans. By age 17, 56% of the African American and 31% of the Caucasian girls reported no habitual leisure time physical activity (Kimm, et al, 2002).

Moreover, children from low-income backgrounds, particularly in urban areas, participate less in sport. In one recent study, 75% of children from white middle-class backgrounds participated in organized sports activities, while only 40-60% of low-income children of color did so (Simpkins, Ripke, Huston & Eccles, 2005). In addition, high school boys receive 40% more chances to play varsity sports than girls (National Federation of State High School Association, 2003). Whereas boys experience a 10% decline in sports participation from middle school to high school, girls experienced a 23% decline in participation (U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services & U.S. Secretary of Education, 2000).

While girls in suburban communities participate in sports at a similar rate as boys, girls from urban and rural areas, lower-income backgrounds, and immigrant families participate in sport at significantly lower rates than boys (Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Moreover, Asian American and Latina females are less likely to participate in sport than other ethnic groups (Darling, Caldwell & Smith, 2005; Shann, 2001). For some urban girls, this lack of participation may be because of other responsibilities, such as jobs, or caring for younger siblings, that become barriers to their participation in sport (Place, 2004). Another factor that has been identified as a barrier to sports participation for girls

is the stigma or stereotype associated with playing sport. For some girls, stepping out of their expected gender roles can cause conflict or make them feel uncomfortable.

Within OST programs, I have personally encountered these aforementioned structural barriers to girls' sports participation, as well as a few others. One of the most common reasons provided by directors and staff of programs for why there are not more sports activities geared for girls at their site, is that "girls just aren't interested in sports." My response is always the same: "They may not be interested in sports if you present them in the same way as you do for boys. Do you have female coaches? Do you make it girls-only space in the gym? Have you asked the girls what sports or fitness activities they might like to do?" The statement that girls are not interested in sports is simply not true (Erkut, Fields, Sing & Marx, 1996; Deutsch & Hirsch, 2005). In a sample of 362 racially and ethnically diverse girls from 12 different states in the East, South, Midwest and West, Erkut and colleagues (1996) surveyed girls about what activities made them feel good about who they were. Nearly half of the participants, 46%, gave answers that mentioned an athletic activity, such as basketball, swimming or gymnastics. This was by far the most frequently mentioned answer by the participants.

Often, sports for girls in out-of-school time programs are organized and delivered in the same way as they are for boys. While a minority of girls may still participate, a larger number will shy away, as this has historically been a male-dominated context in which they have not had access, nor been invited or felt welcomed to join. Especially at adolescence, girls may have developmentally different needs than boys, or may have similar needs (e.g., need for competence), but express them in different ways, or negotiate getting them met through different processes.

While there is increasing evidence about the outcomes of sport participation for girls, there is still less known about the processes that contribute to these outcomes (Rosewater, 2009). Given that adolescence is a heightened period of growth and change, next I will look more closely at two of the developmental processes that are most relevant for my study, self-esteem and connectedness.

<div align="center">Girls Developmental Issues: Self-Esteem</div>

Understanding how individuals feel about themselves has been a central quest for psychological researchers and theorists for more than a century. Early theoretical work by James (1890), stressed achievement, and suggested that self-worth is determined by the ratio of one's strengths to weaknesses. Later, Cooley (1902) addressed the role of significant others in the formation of self-esteem. He coined the term "looking glass self" to express the way that children use reflected appraisals of how they are being judged by others to evaluate themselves. Mead (1934) discussed how the child makes meaning of herself through self-interpretation within the social context in which she lives. This approach became known as 'symbolic interactionism' (Blumer 1969), referring to how individuals make and ascribe meanings based on interactions with others, and then act based on those meanings and the interpretative process they have applied to them.

Self-esteem refers to an individual's favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self (Rosenberg, 1965), or a sense of value or worth, the extent to which a person approves of, appreciates, or likes him or herself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). In a multidimensional model, it is composed of how one feels about oneself in all the domains of one's life. However, while self-esteem is independent and inclusive of all domain assessments, the relevant weight of each domain may not be equal (Harter, 1987). Some

domains are more important than others and individuals weigh different domains accordingly. Harter (1999) has shown that individuals with high scores on the self-worth scale are able to discount or devalue domains in which they have lower perceived competence (Harter, 1987). Conversely, if children are unable to discount an area in which they do not feel competent, this may result in a lowered sense of self-worth (Harter, 1999). For middle school children, physical appearance and social acceptance contribute more than other domains to one's overall self-worth (Harter, 1999). Therefore, if children do not feel as good about themselves in these highly-valued domains, the discrepancy has a bigger impact because these domains carry more weight, especially as children move from middle childhood to early adolescence.

The development of perceived competence and self-esteem are influenced by both individual factors and environmental factors. While global self-esteem is considered stable (Steinberg, 1996), domain self-esteem levels can change contextually and over time. For example, an individual can have a high level of family self-esteem, but a low level of academic self-esteem. Overall self-esteem, or global self-worth, is a composite of all one's sub-domain self-esteem levels, combined with the level of importance associated with each domain (Harter, 1990). The domains that have more relevance will be weighted accordingly, and scores in those domains mean more than scores in domains in which little attention is given. This combination of domains and values associated with them, makes self-esteem complex and hard to measure.

Entering adolescence, there are three developmental changes related to self-esteem that occur (Horn, 2002). These include changes in the structure of the self-system, in the relative importance of individual sub-domains, and in the cognitive processes used

to evaluate competence and ability (Horn, 2002). These changes are important because they can explain fluctuations that may occur in one's self-esteem. First, the number of domains increases as children get older. Entering adolescence, young people's sense of self becomes increasingly differentiated. In addition to the domains that were important in elementary school (family, friends, athletic competence, academic competence, behavioral conduct) new domains become important as well, such as peer acceptance, physical appearance, romantic relationships or employment. Secondly, adolescence is a time when peers become more important, and teens are often conflicted by concerns about what others think of them (Steinberg, 1996). They are starting to use peer comparison more than other sources of competence information to judge themselves and their self-worth.

Concurrent with these processes of differentiation and peer comparison, adolescents use a wider range of sources of competence information to determine their feedback in any one particular domain (Horn, 2002). In sport and physical activity, for example, young children under ten years old mainly use their parents' feedback and game outcome to judge their competence. Early adolescents might use peer comparison and coach feedback, while older adolescents use more sources, both internal and external (Weiss & Ebbeck, 1996). These may include coaches, peers, ease of learning skills, outcome/results, or internal comparison. These changes, of differentiation, domains and sources of feedback can be a lot for adolescents themselves to digest. For researchers, trying to understand processes and outcomes, it can be equally challenging. Another challenge for researchers is to understand how these individual and social factors interact

and contribute to self-esteem processes for girls from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

When exploring adolescent girls' self-esteem, researchers have found distinct variations and patterns. In addition to finding that many white girls experienced a drop in self-esteem in this period, researchers have reported that the self-esteem of Black girls is higher than Caucasian or Latina girls at adolescence (Baldwin & Hoffman, 2002; Biro, et al, 2006; Brown, et al, 1998; Carlson, Uppal, Prosser, 2000; Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000; Greene, & Way, 2005; Henriques, & Calhoun, 1999; Kimm et al., 2002; Rotheram-Borus, et al, 1996; Siegel, Yancey, Aneshensel, & Schuler, 1999). Biro, et al, (2006) explored the self-esteem of girls in a longitudinal study of a group of girls from ages 9 or 10 to ages 21 or 22. Results found that after age 11, Black girls had higher levels of global self-worth. For White girls, self-esteem began to decline at age 11 and then rose again in the mid-teen years. This is fairly consistent with Baldwin & Hoffman's conclusion (2002) that self-esteem drops at age 12 and starts to return at age 17.

There have been several meta-analyses exploring gender and racial differences in self-esteem (Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000; Twenge & Crocker, 2002). In a quantitative meta-analysis, Gray-Little & Hafdahl (2000) explored racial differences in global and academic self-esteem among Black and White children, adolescents and college students. Results showed that Black girls reported slightly higher self-esteem, which the authors attributed to the role of ethnic identity as a protective factor. Twenge & Crocker (2002) compared several ethnic groups on self-esteem including Hispanic, Asian and American Indians in addition to Black and White participants. The overall results showed that self-

esteem differed widely between racial groups; the order from highest to lowest was Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, American Indians and Asians.

One of the first reports to include Latino females was the AAUW sponsored survey, Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America (1991). This study of 3,000 students in grades 4-10 concluded that Hispanic girls showed the largest drop between elementary and high school in terms of feeling good about who they were. Among elementary school girls, 55% of white girls, 65% of black and 68% of Latinas reported being "happy as I am." But by high school, only 22% of white, 30% of Hispanic and 58% of black girls felt this way. While a lower percentage of White girls' was happy with themselves, the drop among Latina girls was the highest at 38%, compared to a 33% drop for White girls and only a 7% drop for African Americans.

Finally, Carlson, et al., (2000) looked at the sources of global self-esteem in White, Black and Latina (mostly Mexican) girls in Texas. Results included that Black girls had the highest mean level of self-esteem of the three groups. Black girls also reported the highest level of ethnic identity, while Hispanic girls reported high ethnic identity but lower self-esteem. Common to all three groups were the positive effects of authoritative parenting and perceived teacher support, and negative effects of family stress.

Researchers have suggested several possible reasons for the African American girls' generally high levels of self-esteem. One is that Black girls may be more immune to the cultural ideal of thinness and do not suffer the same hits to the critical domains of appearance and peer acceptance self-esteem that white girls, and perhaps Latina girls, do (Parker, Nichter, Nichter, Vuckovic, Sims & Ritenbaugh, 1995, Hesse-Biber, Howling,

Leavy & Lovejoy, 2004). Another reason could be measurement bias depending on which instrument researchers are using, or some form of response bias. A third reason which has been proposed is that African American girls may have strong ethnic identities that act as a buffer (Buckley & Carter, 2005). These are issues that need to be considered in exploring the ethnic and cultural variations of dynamic constructs such as self-esteem.

Overall, there are several themes that run across the research on ethnic variations in self-esteem of adolescent females who are Black, White, or Hispanic. Black girls consistently report the highest self-esteem levels of all three groups, while Latina girls report the lowest. In addition, there are challenges with measurement, and accounting for within group differences for all groups considered. In conclusion, self-esteem is a product of social interactions, is multidimensional, encompasses affect and emotion, reflects the personal meaning and salience of specific domains, and can motivate behavior (Weiss, 1987). In order to support adolescents in having high self-esteem, it is important to enhance their self-evaluations in the domains that are most salient to them. Next I will discuss connectedness, another critical developmental process for adolescent girls.

Girls Developmental Issues: Connectedness

Connectedness, a fundamental human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) has roots in attachment, relational and ecological theories. Attachment has been defined as an 'enduring affectional bond of substantial intensity' (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) with both behavioral and affective/cognitive dimensions. Attachment theorists (Bowlby, 1969/1988) focused on the dyadic relationship *between* infant and primary caregiver as the key to development, rather than on the infant alone. Attachment theory proposes that people are born with the need for close proximity to a caring, trusted adult who provides

a secure base from which to explore the world, and that this base contributes to the formation of healthy internal working models for future relationships (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969/1988). During adolescence, attachments shift toward other adults, or peers, who may assume equal or greater importance than parents. While physical proximity seeking is the hallmark of attachment in infancy, an emotional bond has been suggested as the manifestation of attachment in adolescence. Overall, attachment differs from connectedness in that it only focuses on one specific relationship, while connectedness is much broader. Thus, attachment reflects one's connectedness in a primary relationship.

A second lens for exploring connectedness is relational cultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of relationships to female identity during adolescence (Gilligan, 1982; Taylor, et al, 1995; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991; Josselson, 1992; Miller, 1976). Relational cultural theorists advocated for an expanded model of development, focused on the balance of individuation and connection, and the primary experience of self as relational, with the self-in-relation model emphasizing the importance of empathy and mutuality in relationships (Jordan, 1991). Brown and Gilligan (1992) described adolescence as a time marked by crises of connection for girls, claiming that an inner sense of connection with others is a central organizing feature in women's development, and that disconnections cause psychological crises for girls in early adolescence.

A third lens for exploring connectedness is ecological systems theory, described earlier (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As the engines of development, proximal processes are considered constant and enduring, and shape development over time. Thus,

understanding interactions between individuals, with others and their environments, can provide insights into the process and mechanisms of connectedness.

By using these frameworks, it is clear that relationships are a key component of connectedness and development, particularly for girls. Connectedness is rooted in the human need for attachment to others, is relational, bi-directional, and composed of continuous proximal processes. It is dynamic, complex and multidimensional, and has been defined in many ways across both ecological systems and across disciplines. For example, connectedness has been described as "when a person is actively involved with another person, object, group or environment and that involvement promotes a sense of comfort, well-being and anxiety-reduction" (Hagerty, et al, 1993), or as the disposition to care for and become involved with others (Karcher, 2005). In addition, Collins (1997) referred to it as the degree to which people affect and are affected by others, highlighting interdependence, intimacy, closeness, trust and communication as indicators. My definition for connectedness is that it is an "active involvement with a person, group or place, characterized by caring, closeness, and commitment."

There have been several calls for more conceptual clarity among the many overlapping terms that are used to reflect connectedness (Townsend & McWhirter, 1995). For example, connectedness has been used interchangeably with other words such as relatedness, belonging, and social support. I will now try to unpack these terms and describe how they are similar or different than connectedness. The term used most often is relatedness, so I will begin there.

Relatedness has been described both as a functional behavioral system rooted in early attachment (Hagerty et al, 1993), and as the integration of the individual to a larger

social whole, referring to the need to be connected (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Hagerty, et al

(1993), define relatedness as an individual's level of involvement with persons, objects,

groups or natural environments, and the concurrent level of comfort or discomfort

associated with that involvement. They use comfort instead of 'caring' and 'affect,' but

otherwise, the dimensions of involvement and comfort echo the definition of

connectedness. Moreover, in Hagerty's model (1993), higher levels of four competency

processes (sense of belonging, reciprocity, mutuality and synchrony) lead to an

experience of connectedness while lower levels lead to disconnectedness. Thus,

relatedness reflects connectedness in interpersonal connections, while the term

connectedness is more global in its use.

On the other hand, belonging has been defined as a feeling of acceptance within a

group (Karcher, 2001) or experience of personal involvement in a system or environment

so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system (Hagerty, et al, 1993).

Focused on involvement and fit, this term connotes place or environment, such as group

or school. In the context of schools, belonging has often been used synonymously with

connectedness, as have engagement, attachment, bonding, climate, involvement, and

teacher support (Libbey, 2004). Thus, belonging refers to one's connectedness on a group

level within a group of people, institution, or environment.

Finally, social support reflects an interaction between the self and social

environment, much like belonging (Lee & Robbins, 1995). Social support refers to

general support and/or specific supportive behaviors from others that enhance one's

functioning and/or act as a buffer from adverse circumstances (Malecki & Demaray,

2002). Research has shown positive relationships between social support and social skills

(Demaray & Elliott, 2001; Malecki & Demaray, 2002), self-concept (Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, 1982, Malecki & Demaray, 2002), and academics (Richman, Rosenfeld, & Bowen, 1998). Additionally, many studies have found significant, negative relationships between social support and delinquency.

Again, there is an overlap with connectedness, as some view social support, along with loneliness, as opposite poles of human connectedness (Newcomb, 1990). Research on social support has shown that young women report a greater number of supportive friends and receive more frequent support from their friends than do young men (Colarossi, 2001; Eccles & Colarossi, 2003). Social support can occur in different contexts such as home, school or peers, but it differs from connectedness in that it inherently involves other people, whereas connectedness can involve not only other people, but also places, or oneself alone.

Connectedness is increasingly recognized and promoted as a protective factor for adolescents in many ecological developmental contexts, including home, peers, school, and community. At home, secure attachments with parents in adolescence may be especially important for fostering identity and self-development during adolescence (Allen & Land, 1999). For example, Nada Raja, McGee and Stanton (1992) found that adolescents expressing strong feelings of attachment to parents had better psychological health and reported fewer negative life events and less distress than did adolescents reporting weaker attachments to parents. High levels of parental attachment have also been linked to social competence and best friend quality (Benson, McWey & Ross, 2006).

Connectedness to peers fulfills personal needs for social support and provides a context for the development of intimacy, social competence and well-being (Buhrmester, 1996). Within the peer literature, there is controversy about whether peer connectedness leads to positive or negative outcomes (Berndt, 1996). On the positive side, peer connectedness appears essential for healthy development in young people (Parker & Asher, 1987) as peers serve as important and influential attachment figures for adolescents, providing sources of emotional support and comfort (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Buhrmester, 1996; Laible, Carlo, & Roesch, 2004). Research has found that adolescents who express greater satisfaction with their peers or who have more intimate friendships experience higher self-esteem and lower depression (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Conversely, problematic peer relationships can lead to higher risk-taking, withdrawl, low achievement, learning problems, and more delinquency (McGraw, et al, 2008; Parker & Asher, 1987). In addition, high levels of peer connectedness have also been associated with an increase in smoking cigarettes, marijuana and sexual activity (Carter, McGee, Taylor & Williams, 2007; Karcher, 2005).

Based on this research, connectedness to parents and peers matters a great deal for adolescents. But, unlike self-esteem, which is assessed at both global and domain-specific levels, connectedness has been measured only at the domain level. Thus, there are several areas where more work is needed. First, most researchers explore connectedness in one particular domain, such as home, school or peers, but more research needs to explore connectedness across domains. For example, do higher levels of peer connectedness increase one's connectedness with teachers or other adults? Second, there has been little research on whether 'global connectedness,' or an evaluation of one's overall sense of

connectedness empirically exists. Is connectedness similar to self-esteem in its structure? In a multi-dimensional model of self-esteem, global self-esteem is at the apex, with domains underneath, followed by sub-domains, and then situations (Marsh, 1990). Overall self-esteem evolves through a fluid combination of one's perceptions of competence in a particular domain and that domain's level of importance. Is this process applicable to connectedness, whereby perceptions of connectedness, along with that domain's importance would contribute to an overall global connectedness?

<div align="center">Measuring Connectedness at a Setting Level</div>

While the '5'C's' of PYD can be considered as meaningful outcomes for youth, and the three needs of SDT can be considered as necessary ingredients of youth motivation, these are individual-level factors, or are measured only at an individual level. Because development is relational (Lerner & Castellino, 2002), and hinges on dynamic processes rather than individual outcomes, PYD and SDT also need to be located and linked together in an overarching ecological framework. As researchers are moving from looking at individual outcomes to looking at setting-level outcomes and interactions between individuals and settings, a systems framework (Tseng & Seidman, 2007) is helpful to contextualize these individual-level factors within social settings. The systems theory of settings consists of three elements: social processes, resources, and organization of resources.

First, social processes are transactions between two or more groups of people, and are an extension of Bronfenbrenner's proximal processes that drive development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In after-school programs, the most common social processes are those between youth, and between staff and youth. Social processes are shaped by

individuals' roles within settings, and form patterns over time. Next, resources refer to people, space, time and money, and organization of resources refers to the ways the resources are arranged in the setting. While all three elements can be targets of intervention efforts, social processes assume a central focus in the model because they are the key influences on both individuals and setting-level outcomes (Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Thus, social processes are a fitting lens through which to explore connectedness in programs and interventions.

But how do we measure social processes, or the connectedness of youth in settings? Until recently, there has been an overall lack of research and evaluation on OST programs, both on general outcomes as well as those specifically related to connectedness (Scott-Little, Hammann, & Jurs, 2002). Of studies conducted within the OST field, most were non-experimental, using pre- and post-test designs, with almost no on-site, direct observation of programs (Scott-Little, et al, 2002). Design challenges have included lack of randomization or comparison groups, transience of student attendance, diversity of programs, and difficulty accounting for youths' participation in multiple after-school activities (Riggs & Greenberg, 2004). Connectedness has most often been operationalized in only one way - as caring, closeness and support from adults. To assess it, youth are typically asked how close they felt to staff, if they had an adult to whom they could go for support, or how much staff cared about them (Grossman & Bulle, 2006).

Social processes are at the core of promoting adolescent girls' connectedness in after-school programs or interventions. Overall, while empirical research on adolescent connectedness in OST programs is sparse, there has been research on adolescent connectedness to adults, to peers and to one's culture. Therefore, I will next discuss how

OST programs facilitate connectedness in adolescent girls through fostering relationships with club or center-based staff, and promoting positive peer relationships. From a self-determination perspective, when social processes are enhancing the three basic needs, girls will have higher levels of participation motivation in the activities with which they are involved. Because after-school programs for adolescents are mostly voluntary, participation is critical; youth tend to 'vote with their feet' by either showing up or not.

While there is no single set of agreed-upon best practices for how to promote connectedness, positive relationships with program staff are a key strategy (Grossman & Bulle, 2006; Rhodes, 2004; Roffman, et al, 2001), and one of the eight features of a quality program (National Research Council, 2002). In their study of almost 300 black and Hispanic youths' program participation at a Boys & Girls Club, Roffman, et al (2001) found that club staff was mentioned as a major reason why youth attended the club, particularly by black girls. Other studies show similar results. In an evaluation of LA's Best (Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000), 91% of the participants described adults in the program as helpful, 87% thought adults cared about them, and 89% felt that adults had high hopes for them. One year later, 98% reported feeling cared about, indicating even stronger relationships with staff. Finally, participants in Girl Neighborhood Power Programs (Zweig & Van Ness, 2001), reported that staff was one of the most important parts of the program and the reason they returned each day.

But what is it about the staff, and the social processes between youth and staff that make youth feel this way, and how can they be measured? Researchers have noted that successful program 'wizards' see genuine potential in youth, are youth-centered, authentic, self-efficacious, and feel they are giving back what they owe (McLaughlin, et

al, 1994). It was not *what* these 'wizards' did, but *how* they did it. Staff behaviors such as showing respect, caring, responsiveness, flexibility and consistency, and spending time with and getting to know participants, are likely to instill feelings of connectedness and home-place in youth (Heath &, McLaughlin, 1993a; Deutsch & Hirsch, 2002).

Other strategies for building connectedness between adolescent girls and adults include providing guidance rather than instruction, and creating a space where girls can be authentic (Denner, Meyer & Bean, 2005). For the former, practices include allowing girls to make group decisions, promoting a safe environment, encouraging voice, and supporting a range of leadership styles. In interviews and leader logs from a girls' leadership program (Denner, Meyer & Bean, 2005), both girls and adults said group decision-making was key to building strong girl-adult partnerships. For the latter, practices included allowing all voices to be heard, creating norms of respectful disagreement, and talking about personal challenges and interests. In addition, in the sport context, sport coaches who employ 'positive approach' techniques such as providing frequent reinforcement for effort and good performances, encouragement after mistakes, general and mistake-contingent instruction, and a minimum of punitive or nonresponses, are more likely to have players who report positive psychological outcomes such as higher self-esteem, greater enjoyment, lower anxiety and lower attrition (Barnett, Smith & Smoll, 1992).

Peer connectedness has also been explored within OST programs. In a qualitative study of female participants at a Boys & Girls Club (Loder & Hirsch, 2003), researchers looked at how the club provided a space that promoted positive peer ties, and how peer networks contribute to program recruitment and retention. Girls reported that club

friendships were particularly salient, with 63% of the participants saying they like to spend time with club peers rather than non-club peers. In fact, 71% first attended the club with a peer, while 53% said that their continued participation at the club was due to these friendships, which were more of a draw than activities (35%) or staff (12%). Thus, peer interactions can play a critical role in getting and keeping youth involved in programs.

Peer relationships have also been emphasized in the sport context. Research has shown that adolescents with stronger friendships and group acceptance are more intrinsically motivated, have more positive self-perceptions and enjoy their experiences more (Smith, 1999; Weiss & Smith, 2002). In addition, the 5-level Responsibility model (Hellison 1995) is a sport intervention that emphasizes peer relationships. This program promotes personal and social responsibility in inner-city adolescents by teaching participants how to take more responsibility for their own life, and be sensitive and responsive to others. Youth who participated in this model reported development of concern for others, interpersonal skills, self-reflection, self-worth, and self-control (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; Cutforth, 1997). However, while there is evidence that peer relationships matter in sport, there is less empirical evidence of *how* these relationships influence beliefs and behaviors, and act as mediators for motivation or future participation. Again, more evidence is needed about the mechanisms and processes of social relationships in sport.

Fostering positive peer relationships is critical, particularly for girls, who have a high level of interpersonal concerns and often engage in relationally aggressive behaviors, perhaps as a less skilled way to fill their needs for relatedness (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Project Naja and The YES! Sisters of Nia Program, two Africentric

interventions for adolescent girls (Belgrave, Reed, Plybon, Butler, Allison, & Davis, 2004), address relational skills by utilizing role plays to enhance perspective–taking abilities, as well as group projects that allow girls to practice decision-making skills and assume leadership roles. Thus, creating a safe space, providing structure with room for all voices to be heard, utilizing rituals and inventing traditions are all ways to make the space more inviting and attractive to adolescent girls (Denner, Meyer & Bean, 2005; Fine & Mechling, 1993).

To summarize, the research on connectedness in OST programs has focused mostly on connectedness to adults and peers. Best practices to develop positive social processes between girls and adults include treating youth with respect, caring, responsiveness and flexibility, as well as consistently spending time together, providing guidance, and encouraging girls to use their voices. To support peers' positive relationships with peers, how program resources are organized makes a difference. Best practices include providing a balance of structure and autonomy, communicating clear expectations for behavior, and allowing youth choice in activities, as well as group projects and group decision-making.

While much progress has been made, there are still limitations in the research on fostering connectedness in after-school or intervention programs. First, connectedness is difficult to measure. Youth shift contexts rapidly, and it is hard to measure feelings or relationship quality, which can both be very internal and dynamic (Lowe-Vandell, Shernoff, Pierce, Bolt, Dadisman, & Brown, 2005). Second, there is little measurement of other forms of connectedness besides with adults and peers, and little-to-no measurement of transferability of connectedness across domains, that is, does feeling connected to

adults in an OST program increase youths' feeling of connectedness with adults in other domains? More research is needed, especially longitudinal studies that can track youth longer and measure these processes over time and across contexts. The shift in OST evaluation research from an early reliance on survey instruments to substantial on-site observation is a start. Social processes cannot be understood unless they are observed repeatedly.

Third, more diverse research designs and mixed methodologies are needed to capture youths' perceptions of connectedness or relationship quality. These might include relational maps, experience sampling techniques, logs, diaries, journals, photography or film projects, or other qualitative ways to better understand connectedness and what it means to youth and adults. Mixed-methods approaches that can assess adolescent connectedness, while also gaining triangulation through staff, peer, teacher or parent perspectives can provide a fuller picture of youth connectedness in multiple contexts. Thus, my study incorporated several of these elements into the design, which will be outlined in the next chapter

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

To explore the experiences of girls in PowerPlay's Sports Leadership Academy, I employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. While quantitative methods can provide a quick snapshot of information, qualitative methods allow for an in-depth exploration of complex phenomena, such as connectedness and self-esteem. A mixed-methods design assisted me with obtaining data on both the *outcomes* and *processes* related to girls' experiences in this program. Mixed-methods research is a way to leverage the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative designs (Bryman, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), and to explore both numbers and words together to better understand the complexity of developmental change processes (Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil & Way, 2008).

Through utilizing both methods, I hoped to develop a greater methodological integration and synergy, leading to a greater understanding of adolescent girls' developmental processes in a sports program (Day, Sammons & Gu, 2008). As a methodological framework, I used the model proposed by Day, Sammons & Gu (2008), in which the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analysis are integrated with hypothesis formation from the outset. Thus, emergent findings directed the methodological integration process and reconceptualizations of the associations between findings as needed.

Because I was interested in exploring girls' connectedness and self esteem processes, and what meanings girls make about their experiences, qualitative techniques assumed priority for this project. According to Maxwell (1994), qualitative research is the most appropriate methodology for understanding the meaning of social processes and interactions between individuals. Qualitative researchers aim to acquire an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the motivations for why people act the way they do. This research is better suited to investigate the *why* and *how* of human actions, rather than the *what*, *where*, and *when* (Wolcott, 1990). Moreover, a case study approach is one way to explore a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 1981). In my study, PowerPlay's Sports Leadership Academy served as the case for my foray into exploring adolescent girls' connectedness and self-esteem within the context of a sports-based youth development program.

Research Questions

My work was guided by three main research questions which explored the program as a setting for the development of connectedness and self-esteem in adolescent girls:

1. What are the experiences of girls in a girls-only sports program? Does the program serve as a context for the development of connectedness, and self-esteem?

1a. If so, what are the mechanisms or processes underlying the development of connectedness and self-esteem for girls in a sports-based youth development program?

1b. If so, how does connectedness influence girls' experiences of and

satisfaction in the sports program?

Hypotheses

While this was an exploratory study, I did have several preliminary hypotheses.

As a result of their participation in the program, I expected that girls would experience

increases in at least several domains of self-esteem and connectedness from pre to post-

program. Second, I hypothesized that girls who reported larger gains in connectedness, as

indicated by survey responses or the presence of Academy individuals on their relational

maps, would report greater gains in self-esteem than girls who did not report gains in

connectedness. For question 1b, my hypothesis was that the more connected participants

felt to peers, staff and/or the Academy, the higher levels of satisfaction they would feel

about the program.

Research Strategy

To explore connectedness and self-esteem in adolescent girls in a sports-based

youth development program, I used multiple methods, including surveys, observations,

semi-structured interviews, relational maps, and connectedness worksheets. Based on my

research questions, I used qualitative and quantitative methods to answer question #1.

Because the answer to question #1 was yes, qualitative methods helped me answer #1a,

regarding the mechanisms and processes of connectedness, and both qualitative and

quantitative methods were utilized to address question #1b, regarding how connectedness

influences participants enjoyment and satisfaction of the program. I used multiple

methods to try to assess and understand how girls experience self-esteem and

connectedness. While I recognized that there may be limitations to assessing these

multidimensional constructs quantitatively, I used surveys to gain a snapshot in time of where the participants felt they were, and then to explore their perceived change over time. Therefore, it gave me a baseline for analysis, and, in tandem with qualitative methods, a more complete picture of what was really going on for the participants. I envisioned a strong synergy between the questions and the methods, in that the mixed methods would complement each other, providing natural triangulation and stronger validation of the data.

Qualitative Theoretical Lenses: Interpretivism, Symbolic Interactionism

The qualitative part of the study was guided by an interpretivist paradigm, in which there were several ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Ontologically, my underlying assumption was that there were multiple realities, that "society and culture do exist, but not in a reified state" (Erickson, 1986). There was not simply one absolute reality, but multiple realities that were filtered through culture and the social world in which the participants live. Based on this grounding, my central research interest was in social meaning making, because individuals are inherently social and experiences are socially constructed.

Epistemologically, what counted for knowledge was the meaning that the participants ascribed to these social experiences, events, relationships, or activities that occurred in their lives. According to Erickson (1986), "humans create meaningful interpretations of physical and behavioral objects that surround them in environment." Then, humans take actions aligned with their interpretations of the world. There is a distinction between 'behavior,' meaning the physical act, and 'action,' meaning the behavior along with interpretation. Cause in human action must include the identification

of the meaning-interpretation of the actor. The assumption here is that what constituted

knowledge are the meaning perspectives of the participants being studied and how they

interacted with my conceptual framework. Therefore, from an interpretivist perspective,

knowledge was constructed through my interaction with the participants, and there were

multiple ways to make meaning of data (Erickson, 1986).

Methodologically, my research findings were co-constructed in the interactions

between the participants and me as 'researcher as instrument' in this process. Thus, data

collection, design and analysis were reflexive and overlapping. Methods could not be

separated from me as 'researcher as instrument,' as I examined sequences and patterns of

actions and behaviors to create meanings and try to understand the actions of the

participants. The research design was flexible in order to respond to the interaction and

interweaving of the design components. In addition, because interpretivists believe that

all methods are fallible, I used multiple methods in the data collection process.

Participant observation during the day-to-day lives of the participants while in the

program was helpful to better understand the meanings and motivations of actions, how

girls defined situations, and the processes by which participants constructed meanings

through their interactions.

Symbolic Interactionism

Given the importance of relatedness and socialization in adolescent female

development, one lens that was used to interpret their reality was symbolic

interactionism. From this perspective, the world of adolescent girls is a social one, and

girls are the central actors or agents in their own development. In this socially active

world, girls create a sense of self through their interactions with others. Based on those

interactions, the self is constantly in flux and adjustment. According to Blumer (1969), there are three main elements of this perspective. First, human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things. Thus, the principle of *meaning* is central to human behavior. Second, meanings are derived from, or arise out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society. This implies the use of *language* as the basis of social interaction. Third, meanings are made through an interpretive process used to deal with what the individual encounters. This interpretive process reflects *thought* as a way to interpret symbols and construct personal meaning. Thus, symbolic interactionism comprises a micro-level framework, and is a way of understanding social phenomenon that focuses on how participants construct their own reality through their interactions with others.

<div align="center">Research Site</div>

The project site was the PowerPlay Summer Sports Leadership Academy, an eight-week sports and life skill training program for high school girls offered by PowerPlay NYC. As mentioned earlier, PowerPlay NYC is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to educating and empowering New York City girls through sports and life skills training. The organization's programs aim to provide girls with opportunities to feel connected, competent and confident. Through partnerships with girls' and youth organizations as well as sports companies, teams, and New York City businesses, PowerPlay NYC uses the sport environment as a platform to expand the horizons of opportunity for girls and to help them learn life lessons for success.

Each year, PowerPlay NYC partners with schools and community-based organizations to offer sports and life skill training to more than 300 girls, ages 8-18 in New York City. Using the sports-based youth development model outlined in Chapter 2 (Petipas, et al., 2005), PowerPlay attempts to respond to the developmental needs of girls by synergizing context and external resources to develop girls' internal assets. First, the organization provides girls with access to gyms, creating girls-only spaces that are physically and emotionally safe (context). Next, external resources include trained female coaches, and a sports and healthy-living curriculum designed for girls -- the GoGirlGo curriculum created by the Women's Sports Foundation. PowerPlay coaches are trained not only in how to teach sport skills and teambuilding games, but also how to facilitate peer interactions and group discussions using a healthy living curriculum for girls.

Internal assets that PowerPlay hopes to build are connectedness, physical, social and career competence, confidence, and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle centered around physical activity participation. The organization builds connectedness with peers and adults through girls-only activities led by female coaches trained not only in sport skill development, but also in teambuilding activities and healthy living group discussion facilitation. In addition, PowerPlay promotes physical activity and skill-building opportunities in many different sports, not just one specific sport so that girls may try several new sports, such as football, lacrosse, tennis and rowing, as well as improve their skills in sports they are familiar with, such as basketball, volleyball and soccer. Now, with the escalating epidemic of obesity, it is even more important than ever for girls to be physically active and to find a sport in which they will continue to participate.

One of PowerPlay's main programs is the Summer Sports Leadership Academy ("Academy"). The Academy is an intensive, eight-week summer sports and life skill training experience for high school girls. The goals of the program are to build competence through sport, fitness and teambuilding activities, to teach career and workplace skills, and to develop self-esteem, communications, confidence and leadership skills. This year, the Academy took place from June 29-August 21. From June 29 until August 7, the participants were together every day, while from August 9-21, they were placed in internships with sports-related or other companies around the city. For this study, I focused primarily on the girls' experiences in the Academy from June 29 to August 7. The venue for the Academy was Branch College, in New York City. At Branch, the program used several classrooms as a base, while also utilizing other areas of the facility including fitness areas, gyms and computer labs.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

Each year, between 20-25 high school girls participate in the Summer Sports Leadership Academy. The primary selection criteria include an interest in sports and fitness, academic competence as reflected by at least a C average in school, interest in developing career and workplace skills, and a commitment to participating in the entire eight weeks of the program. Girls are recruited through local schools and community-based organizations, as well as through word of mouth or former participants' referrals. The participant selection process includes an application, written essays, personal interview, and a recommendation from school personnel or community-based organizational contacts. Typically, the participants range in age (from 13-17), grade (from 8th-12th), and socioeconomic status. As for racial and ethnic composition, the

group consists entirely of girls of color, mostly African Americans, with a few Latina and Asian Americans. Thus, this study will provide a much-needed opportunity to explore the experiences of an under-researched group.

This year, after the girls received their official program acceptance, I sent them information about the study, along with parent consent and minor assent forms. I then contacted all potential participants by phone to explain the study and answer any questions they may have had. The exception to this was that I did not invite two girls who were starting the Academy one week late. A total of 28 girls were accepted into the program; 26 girls were invited to participate in the research study. Initially, 20 girls agreed to participate and I collected parent consent and girl assent forms for all of them. Forms were collected by mail, in person at a parent orientation event, or via their daughter during the first few days of the program. All program participants were told that their participation in the Academy was not contingent in any way on their participation in the research study. During the first two weeks of the program, four girls in the study dropped out of the program for various reasons, including mandatory summer school, home situation, or grandparent illness. Another participant was uncomfortable about being interviewed and decided to withdraw from the study in the first week. A sixth participant, stopped attending the Academy after July 31, and was not available to finish the study. Finally, a seventh young woman was not accessible after the program to finish the research study. Therefore, the final number of participants in the study was 13, while the total number of Academy participants was 25, and the number of staff was eight. A summary of the participants and staff, including demographic information and scale

scores is provided in Tables 4 -7. The ethnic and borough backgrounds of participants' in the study mirrored that of the overall group of Academy participants.

Researcher Role and Access

In 1998, I founded PowerPlay NYC, and have been involved with the organization in various capacities since that time. During the process of implementing this study, I transitioned from my role as chair of PowerPlay's Board of Directors, responsible primarily for organizational fundraising, board governance and strategic planning to past president, responsible for fundraising and working with the advisory board. I was not involved in the recruitment and hiring of Academy staff, nor did I have any formal power over them. In addition, I was not involved in the selection and recruitment process of the program participants. Therefore, I had no connection with the programs or day-to-day management of the organization. However, my role as founder of the organization did provide me with a high level of access to observe the program and interact with the participants.

Data Collection Methods

To attempt to answer my research questions, and to gain as full an understanding of participants' experiences as possible, I utilized several methods. Qualitatively, I conducted observations and semi-structured interviews, and collected relational maps and connectedness worksheets. Quantitatively, I administered two surveys, one before the Academy began, and one in November, approximately three months after the conclusion of the program. I will now review these methods in turn.

Qualitative: Observations.

I was a participant observer during the Academy for three different weeks of the eight-week program, the first week (June 29-July 3), a week in the middle (July 13-17), and the last week at the Academy before the girls went out on their off-site career internships (August 3-7). These three weeks equaled a total of 15 days of observations, or 105 hours, since the program met from 10am-5pm each day. During these three weeks, I took extensive field notes of the goings on at the Academy, and spent time on daily reflections or analytic memos. My ethnographic observations provided me with an opportunity to step back and watch the lived experience of the participants. I was attempting to make the familiar unfamiliar (Erickson, 1986), thus allowing the participants' meaning making to rise to the surface. My field notes recorded interactions, social processes, actions and behaviors, and group activities, with a focus on the relationships between the participants, and between participants and counselors, as well as other aspects of the development of self-esteem and connectedness. To attempt to capture the nuances, feelings and emotions expressed, I recorded "thick description" to try to uncover webs of meaning (Geertz, 1973).

Qualitative: Interviews.

Interviews were conducted to complement the observations, and to provide a more focused collection of data on girls' experiences of connectedness and self-esteem. My research design included conducting a total of three interviews with each study participant: the first interview took place prior to the start of the program, the second one after the program ended, and the third one in November. The first and second interviews were conducted at the PowerPlay office or over the phone, while the third interviews

were conducted by phone in mid-November. Out of a total of 39 possible interviews, 37 were conducted. First and second interviews were completed with all 13 girls, while third interviews were conducted with 11 girls. Two of the participants did not respond to several phone calls and emails requesting to set up the third interview in November. First interviews (11 of 13) and second interviews (7 of 13) were conducted in person when possible, and all 11 third interviews were conducted over the phone. All of the interviews were semi-structured, recorded on a digital voice recorder, and transcribed by professionals.

The interview protocols were designed to help understand the experiences of the girls in the Academy, and to help illuminate any effects the program might have had on their lives. For example, in the first interview, participants were asked general questions about themselves, and various domains of their lives, such as family, friends, school and sports, or other activities. I guided them through the process of creating a relational map, and asked about their maps, who was in them, and about the levels of connection they reported in those relationships. A fuller description of this exercise is provided below and in Appendix B. Finally, another set of questions explored their decision to apply for the Academy and their hopes and expectations for the summer program.

In the second interview, I asked girls' about their experience in the program, what they learned, and how this experience influenced them. Another set of questions asked them to reflect on their weekly connectedness worksheets (described below) and how they may have changed during the program. The relational mapping exercise was conducted again during the second interview, and I again asked them about their maps, who was in them, and about those relationships and any changes from the first map.

Finally, I asked them about whom they felt closest to and most distant from during the program, their sports participation and overall satisfaction with the program.

In the third interview in November, I asked the girls if they were still using what they learned in the Academy, about their relationships with Academy participants since the summer, their current sport and physical activity participation, and to reflect further about the impact of this experience in their life. For all interviews, follow-up questions and probes such as "why," "how" and "in what way" were used to elicit more elaborate responses from the participants. For example, clarification probes, such as "can you explain what you mean by that?" and elaboration probes "can you give me an example of that?" and "anything else?" were used to increase the clarity and the depth of the responses. (See Appendix A for complete interview protocols). In addition, participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential, that they did not have to respond to any questions they would rather not, and that all identifying characteristics would be changed before the findings were reported. Moreover, one other thing that I did in every interview was to remind the participants that, although I was involved with PowerPlay in other ways, when I was interviewing them I was only being a researcher and nothing more. Thus, I requested that they share with me their feelings about the program, whether good or bad, positive or negative. Written consent was obtained from all participants before interviews commenced. Each interview lasted between 20 and 70 minutes and was subsequently transcribed and analyzed.

Qualitative: Relational Maps.

To better understand how the participants' see themselves in the context of their relationships and social network, I used a relational mapping technique (Hirsch, 1980).

Participants were asked to create relational maps three times, during the semi-structured interviews. First, I instructed participants to put their name in the center of a blank piece of paper. Then, I asked them to create a physical representation of how close they felt to others in their lives. To do this, they wrote the names of others nearer or farther from their own based on how close they felt to them. Therefore, the closer the names were to their own indicated more closeness with that person, while the farther away the names were from their own indicated less closeness. Then, I asked them to draw lines connecting the people who knew each other. After that, they completed a table that had a row for each person on the map asking for information such as age and gender of the person, age when the participant met that person, how the participant knew this person, that is, family, friend or other, closeness rating, change in closeness and any changes in closeness rating over time (A complete description of this technique is included in Appendix B). Overall, I collected 13 maps after the first interviews, eight maps after the second interviews, and 10 maps after the third interviews, for a total of 31 maps. If interviews were conducted over the phone, girls were asked to complete the maps on their own and send them to me in the mail.

After they constructed their relational maps, I asked them questions about who was on it, as well as the development and quality of those connections. I was also curious to see if and/or how the constructions of the maps changed from the beginning to the end of the program, and again three months later. My hypothesis was that when they started the program, they would not have anyone associated with PowerPlay on their map, while at the end of the program, their relational maps would have the names of specific

participants or staff from the program, or simply "PowerPlay" placed in close proximity to themselves.

Qualitative: Connectedness Worksheets

Journals have been used in diverse disciplines including physical education and outdoor education, and have been found to be an effective way for students to reflect on personal experiences, group dynamics, and program outcomes (Buell & Whittaker, 2000; Gregg, 2009). In this study, journaling, in the form of worksheets, was used because it provided for active learning through reflection, and it allowed participants to express themselves in a safe, confidential environment (Gregg, 2009). Developmentally, because adolescence is ripe with social, emotional and cognitive growth, this method also provided another way for adolescents' to express themselves, thus providing triangulation to the verbal interview.

Weekly connectedness worksheets were used to try to capture the social processes and mechanisms of the development of connectedness between individuals, and for individuals with the program. Similar to a diary entry, the connectedness worksheets, consisting of seven questions designed to explore the fluidity of connectedness development over time, were completed weekly by the girls. Of the 13 girls in the study, all 13 completed a worksheet for at least three different weeks. The worksheets, asked girls to report who they felt closest to and most distant from each week, rate each response between 1 (most distant) and 5 (most close), describe why they felt close to or distant from that person, and indicate what would make them feel closer to participants and staff, and to the program as a whole. The worksheet included both open-ended and Likert-scale questions and was created for this study. My goal with the worksheets was to

glean more information about the process of connectedness, and how it developed from week to week. The entries were then analyzed for higher and lower-order themes of connectedness. I was interested in exploring potential fluctuations or consistency of connectedness over time, both in how connected they felt to others, to whom they felt closest, and from whom they felt distant. Overall, I collected a total of 63 connectedness worksheets, six worksheets from three girls (18), five worksheets from six girls (30), four worksheets from three girls (12), and three worksheets from one girl (3). A copy of the connectedness worksheet is in Appendix C.

<div align="center">Quantitative: Surveys</div>

The surveys were administered at two different time points: at the beginning of the program, and three months later in November (See Appendix D for survey instruments, and Appendix E for pre- and post-program surveys). Thirteen girls completed the pre-survey during the first week of the program, and 11 girls completed the post-survey in November. Through quantitative data collection, I sought to understand if and how the girls' self-perceptions of connectedness, and self-esteem changed over time. The measures I used assessed the constructs of self-esteem and connectedness. Next, I will briefly describe the quantitative measures (See Appendix D for more complete description of each measure and its items).

<div align="center">*Self-Esteem*</div>

The Harter Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA) (Harter, 1988) is a self-report measure that was used to assess self-esteem. While the SPPA includes nine separate sub-scales for self-evaluation in eight domains, I used seven of the nine sub-scales: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical

appearance, behavioral conduct, close friendship, and global self-worth; I did not use the romance and job competence sub-scales. Although the Academy is focused on workplace and career skill development, I did not think the items were tapping these aspects effectively for this group, and was also not planning to focus on the internship experiences at the outset of the study. All sub-scales were five items, and worded in a structured alternative format in which adolescents were asked to read statements about two different types of teenagers, decide which one was more like them and indicate whether this is *"really true for me"* or *"sort of true for me."* This type of question is designed to eliminate socially desirable responses, by validating *all* of the possible answer choices. Examples of items include "Some teenagers feel that they are just as smart as others their age BUT other teenagers aren't so sure and wonder if they are as smart." Earlier studies have shown satisfactory levels of internal consistency with alphas ranging from .77 to .92 across subscales, with the exception of the behavioral conduct sub-scale. This sub-scale demonstrated lower reliabilities in several samples and was revised and yielded a reliability of .78 (Harter, 1988).

Connectedness

The Hemingway Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (Karcher, 2001; Karcher, 2008; Karcher & Finn, 2005, Karcher & Lindwall, 2003, Karcher, Holcomb & Zambrano, 2008) was used to assess connectedness across several domains. The measure is a self-report instrument with 15 subscales falling into three dimensions of connectedness: self, others and society. Connectedness to self includes self in the present and self in the future, connectedness to others includes parents, friends, teachers, siblings, and peers, while connectedness to society includes school, neighborhood, and reading. In

this study, I used the scales for parents, father, siblings, nonfamilial adults, and

neighborhood to explore participants' self-perceptions of connectedness in these areas.

Reliability estimates for the subscales ranged from .71 to .94 for social connectedness,

and .73 to .92 for connectedness to society.

A second instrument to measure participants' connectedness is the Instrument of

Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA, Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Based on attachment

theory, the IPPA assesses both positive and negative affective/cognitive dimensions of

relationships with parents and close friends. The instrument measures three broad

dimensions of mutual trust, communication quality, and anger and alienation. The IPPA

is self-report, with a five-point Likert response format, consisting of 25 items for the

mother figure, 25 items for the father figure, and 25 items for close friends. The IPPA is

scored by reverse-scoring the negatively worded items and then summing the response

values in each section. Reliability for the IPPA has ranged from .87 to .93 (Armsden &

Greenberg, 1987). Because mother-daughter relationships have been theorized as a

protective factor for African American girls, I used only the mother scale.

A third instrument that was used to assess connectedness was the Feelings of

Relatedness Scale (Richer & Vallerand, 1998), which asked participants to indicate the

extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about their personal relationships.

At time 1, I assessed participants' sense of relatedness to others in their lives. At time 2,

I assessed participants' sense of relatedness in two ways, to others in their lives, and to

those in the program using a modified version of this scale and changing the relational

context to be specific to the Academy. At time 2, participants responded to the statement,

"In my relationships will girls and staff *at the Academy*, I feel…The 10 descriptors were

1) "supported," 2) "close to them," 3) "understood," 4) "attached to them." 5) "listened to," 6) "bonded to them," 7) "valued," 8) "close-knit," 9) "safe," and 10) "as a friend." The response options ranged from *do not agree at all* to *very strongly agree*, and were scored on a 7-point scale. Higher scores reflected a higher sense of relatedness. Initial reliability and validity information were published only in France, but Standage et al., (2003, 2006) provided support for construct validity and reliability with physical education students.

Because ethnic identity has been proposed to play a strong role in the self-esteem of African American adolescents, I also used the Multi-ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992) to assess participants' connectedness to their ethnic identity. It has been used in dozens of studies and has consistently shown good reliability, typically with alphas above .80 across a wide range of ethnic groups and ages. In this study, I used the belonging items because I am interested in participants' sense of connectedness to their ethnic identity. These items included "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group," and "I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background." Given the role that ethnic identity may play as a protective factor for African American adolescent girls, I was looking at ways that the participants were supported (or not) in their ethnic identities and cultural expressions as they co-constructed a culture in the program this summer.

Developmental Experiences

To better understand how the Summer Leadership Academy program might contribute to the development of adolescent girls, I utilized The Youth Experiences Survey (YES) (Hansen & Larson, 2005). The YES was developed as a self-report instrument to assess high school age individuals' developmental experiences in organized

youth programs. The YES instrument assesses both positive and negative experiences. Positive developmental experiences were assessed in a total of six domains, three domains of personal development: identity, initiative and basic skills, and three domains of interpersonal development: teamwork and social skills, positive relationships, and adult networks and social capital. Negative experiences were assessed through five sub-scales of stress, negative influences, social exclusion, negative group dynamics, and adult behavior. Reliabilities for the scales were acceptable and ranged from .75 to .94.

Finally, one other assessment that I used was the Holmes Rahe Stress Scale for Adolescents (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). This checklist was used originally included to gauge the prevalence of stressors in the lives of the participants, with the rationale that high levels of life stress might impede or affect girls' abilities to form positive connections. For this study, I only tracked the number of stressful events that girls reported, but did not use a rating system to assign points per event. Additional analyses with this data could be conducted in the future.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

To analyze the qualitative data, I used aspects of different techniques, including analytic induction (Erickson, 1986), data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2004) to holistically search for patterns and categories and understand their meaning. In this approach, my goal was to discover and conceptualize themes to interpret the phenomena of connectedness and self-esteem for these girls. To analyze the quantitative data, I utilized descriptive statistics to evaluate change between pre- and post. Next I will further review these data analysis techniques.

Overall, I envisioned my qualitative and quantitative methods to be mutually informing and overlapping, developing in four broad phases. Phase I data collection took place between June 26 and July 3 and consisted of observational field notes (Academy week #1), first interviews (and relational map #1) and pre-surveys. Phase II data collection went from July 3 to August 7, and consisted of observational field notes (Academy weeks #3 and #5), and relational worksheets. Then, phase III data collection took place in late August until early September and consisted of second interviews (and relational map #2). Finally, phase IV data collection was in November with third interviews (and relational map #3) and the post-survey.

Data analysis occurred in similar phases. Phase I analysis and initial coding preparation took place from June 29 until August. By the end of phase I, I had created deductive coding schemes, analyzed connectedness worksheets and interview #1 data, and had all field notes ready to be loaded into Nvivo qualitative software. Phase II analysis went from August to November and overlaid on phase I analysis. By the end of Phase II, all field notes and first and second interviews were coded. Phase III data analysis ran from November until January. In phase III, third interviews were transcribed and coded, relational maps were analyzed, and descriptive statistics run.

Qualitative Methods

The analytic process consisted of reading, and re-reading data, noting themes and patterns, writing memos about meanings I interpreted, and keeping a methodological journal. To analyze the field notes and interview data, I began with a coding process that helped me to organize, retrieve and interpret the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Coding, according to Miles & Huberman (1994), is a process that

allows the researcher to identify meaningful data and set the stage for interpretation.

I also practiced what Tesch (1990) referred to as 'decontextualization and

recontextualization,' by segmenting data into comprehensible, meaningful portions

and then reassembling them based on concepts or themes. For my coding, I used

both deductive and inductive techniques. As suggested by Miles & Huberman

(1994), I began by reviewing the literature to establish "start lists" of codes for the

two primary constructs of interest, connectedness and self-esteem. For example,

connectedness start codes, based mostly on relational cultural theory and attachment

literature, included "closeness," "communication," "companionship," "caring,"

"trust," "social support" "empathy," and "mutuality," while for self-esteem my start

codes were based both on theory and Harter's self-worth model, and included "self-

perceptions," "athletic competence," "scholastic competence," "close friendships,"

"social acceptance" "physical appearance competence," "significant others," and

"skill development." A full list of codes is included in Appendix E. After using

theory to develop these two theoretical sets of micro-codes, I began the process of

organizing and chunking the field notes and interviews based on these initial codes.

Coding was a dynamic and iterative process, and, while my coding structure

started with theory as a guide, I left room for emergent themes to arise from the data.

While I began with 17 codes for connectedness and 16 for self-esteem, I finished the

coding process with 75 total codes. Because the constructs I was exploring are so

complex and multifaceted, I began by coding only for connectedness. Within this

process, I added codes as new themes emerged. After I finished coding all of the

first interviews and field notes for connectedness, I had an expanded set of codes. I

then went back and re-coded all of the first interviews and field notes using the full set of codes. After that, I coded the rest of the interviews with the full set of connectedness codes. Once all the documents were coded for connectedness, I then searched for patterns, sequences or themes among the microcoded categories. This process involved examining all of the instances or references within each microcode, and looking for themes both within codes and across participants. I also created narrative summaries after each girl's first and second interviews; reading these narratives during analysis allowed me to better process and make links holistically about the nascent themes across girls. Thus, as themes arose, I tracked them across both microcodes, and across girls. This method is reminiscent of a grounded theory approach, where I was starting with the data and remaining close to the data (Charmaz, 2004). According to Charmaz (2004, p. 497), grounded theory methods are "suitable for studying individual processes, interpersonal relations, and the reciprocal effects between individuals and larger social processes."

After analysis of the patterns and themes related to connectedness, I shifted to focusing on self-esteem. Here the process of coding and organizing was similar, in that I began with a list of start codes and added more during the coding process. However, my overall analysis process was slightly different, in that I used Harter's self-worth model, particularly the antecedents of perceptions of competence and social support, as a framework for organizing, interpreting, and generating themes about what was occurring with these processes.

To analyze the relational maps and connectedness worksheets, I compared and generated themes based on a combination of participant responses and ratings.

For the maps, I compared the three maps, noting details such as how many contacts there were, who they were, what the closeness/distance ratings were, if there were changes over time in closeness with the same individuals, or changes in who was listed on the maps. Similarly, for the worksheets, I looked at patterns of responses over time, such as who they mentioned, how often they mentioned the same people over time, what the closeness or distance ratings were, or how they rated their closeness to the Academy.

As mentioned earlier, data collection commenced in late June and ended in late November, while data analysis took place from July, 2009 through January, 2010. As per Day, Sammons & Gu's model (2008) for mixed method analysis, quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis took place concurrently and synergized each other. For example, I added questions to my second and third interview protocols based on observations during the program and survey responses from the pre-survey. I utilized Nvivo software for coding all of the observational field notes and first and second interviews, while third interviews were coded by hand.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed with simple descriptive statistics. I used descriptive statistics to examine what happened over time with regard to participants' self-reports of perceptions of self-esteem and various domains of connectedness, such as connectedness to peers, parents, neighborhood, or ethnic identity. Because of the small sample size, my options for analysis were limited. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the basic features of the data. Unlike

inferential statistics, which can be used to make inferences from the data to more general conditions, descriptive statistics simply describe what is going on in the data. Questions of interest included whether or not the participants' reported changes on self-esteem and various domains of connectedness from time 1 to time 2 (pre- to post-program).

Ethics

When engaging in research with youth, maintaining ethical standards is critical. Data such as field notes, surveys, interview files and digital recorders were kept in a locked bag while traveling. The field notes were written up and transferred to a secure server, with all hard copies stored in a locked cabinet. To ensure confidentiality, all participant names were changed and any identifying information removed. Interview transcripts used pseudonyms to de-identify the data.

While I have great concern for the participants' welfare, and did all that I could to ensure their safety, there was a risk that participants felt uncomfortable at certain times during data collection. All participants were advised that if they did not feel comfortable answering a question on a survey or during an interview, they did not need to do so. In addition, if they chose not to participate in the study, this would not affect their participation in the program. In addition, I was very conscious of separating my role as PowerPlay's founder and board chair from my role as researcher when I was with the participants.

Validity

To guard against threats to the validity of this study, I utilized several methods called for by various qualitative researchers (Erickson, 1986; Mathison, 1988; Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Although methods cannot guarantee validity, they can

assist with ruling out threats to validity and increasing the credibility of a study

(Maxwell, 2005). The criteria that I used were time in the field, collection of rich data,

and the triangulation of methods. I spent a significant amount of time in the field

conducting observations and gathering thick description of the research site and sample.

For triangulation, I utilized a variety of methods for data collection, including the

surveys, observations, interviews, maps, and worksheets. Triangulation with multiple

data sources offers perspectives that may be converging, inconsistent or contradictory,

but, more than that, it allows the researcher to process the data fully (Mathison, 1988).

This process of triangulation was a way to check the data from different angles, not only

providing trustworthiness to the reader, but also allowing for a more in-depth analysis of

the data.

To further support the validity of my study, I attended to other important elements

such as credibility, dependability and confirmability. I will briefly review these in turn

and how I used them to build trustworthiness for my study. Credibility is essential to

enhance internal validity (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and requires intellectual rigor,

professional integrity and methodological competence (Patton, 2002). Some of the ways

that I built credibility were to use thick description during data collection, and utilize peer

reviewers at different points of the analysis process. For this, I worked with several

colleagues who periodically provided feedback on my interpretations and analysis. This

helped to ensure that I was interpreting data from the participants' perspective, rather

than from the perspective of my own biases.

Dependability has been referred to as how qualitative researchers account for

changes in the phenomenon of interest, or shifts in design brought on by an increasingly

complex understanding of the setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I used techniques such as analytical memos, methodological journal entries and a peer review process to strengthen the dependability of this study. Analytic memos were used in several ways: to help organize my thoughts and ideas both when I was in the field and during analysis, to make connections between quantitative and qualitative findings, and to further clarify and refine themes and patterns. The methodological journal provided an additional outlet for reflexivity and awareness of biases. Finally, the peer reviewers provided external validation of the data and initial findings.

Confirmability relates to the researcher's quest for neutrality. Within a mostly interpretivist qualitative study, I acknowledged the challenge of my role as being a conduit for the experiences of the participants. As an interpretivist researcher, my goal was to make meaning of the participants' experience, while recognizing that I was also a significant part of the meaning generation process. The dynamic relationships of my conceptual framework, research design, and role as researcher contributed to the organic process of meaning making. According to Wolcott (1990), sensemaking is a human activity that includes intuition, past experience, emotion and other personal attributes. Similarly, Charmaz (2004) describes how a researcher is influenced by her background, world view, disciplinary assumptions, and theoretical understandings, and that these elements collectively serve to sensitize the researcher to look for certain issues or processes. I was embedded in the research process through collecting, interpreting and acting as a conduit for meaning generation. Therefore, I engaged in tasks like those discussed above to examine my assumptions, and make conscious choices not to impose those assumptions on the study.

For the last 15 years, I have worked in the field of sports-based youth development. Since 1996, I have focused specifically on girls sports-based youth development programming to provide more opportunities for girls to be active and healthy, and learn life skills through sport participation. As a practitioner, I worked closely with adolescent girls through my involvement with PowerPlay NYC. As the founder of the organization, I held multiple roles, from Executive Director, to program director to coach. In addition, I worked with other girl-focused organizations such as Girl Scouts of the USA, developing and implementing a national sports program to increase the opportunities for girls to participate in sport and physical activity within Girl Scouting. I am a lifelong athlete, who benefited greatly from my sport participation, both on and off the court. In my professional career, I have been passionate about providing opportunities for girls to participate in physical activity and learn positive life skills. Therefore, while I was embedded in the research process, I have worked hard to be aware of my position, biases and assumptions, and put in place tactics such as thick descriptive field notes, triangulation of multiple methods, analytic memos and peer reviews, to ensure that I was not letting my biases get the best of me as a researcher.

Overall, through utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, I aimed to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the processes and outcomes related to the possible development of adolescent girls' connectedness and self-esteem in a sports-based youth development program. Through exploration of these contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context, I hoped to accomplish several goals, including expanding the small body of literature on girls' sports-based youth development programs and their impacts on adolescent girls, adding to the growing body of empirical

research on the experiences and feelings of girls of color in different out-of-school-time

contexts, and exploring further the critical role of self-esteem and connectedness, in the

lives of adolescent girls. On a personal level, my goal was that this study would complete

my full-circle journey from practitioner to researcher.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

We live in a universe where relationships are primary. Nothing happens in the quantum world without something encountering something else. Nothing exists independent of its relationship. We are constantly creating the world – evoking it from many potentials – as we participate in all its many interactions. This is a world of process, the process of connecting, where "things" come into temporary existence because of relationship. (Wheatley, 2006, p. 69)

Introduction

The overarching goal of this study was to explore the experiences of girls of color in a girls' sports program, and to understand whether the program served as a context for the development of connectedness and self-esteem. Moreover, if the program did promote these developmental constructs, my next goal was to elucidate some of the underlying processes and mechanisms of connectedness and self-esteem development for adolescent girls in sports programs.

In this chapter, I will briefly address the second part of my research questions, "Does the program serve as a context for the development of connectedness and self-esteem?" After this, I discuss the themes that respond to the first part of the first research question, "What are the experiences of girls in a girls sports program," along with both parts of my second research question, "If so, what are the mechanisms or processes underlying the development of connectedness and self-esteem for girls in a

sports-based youth development program?" and "How does connectedness influence girls' experiences of and satisfaction in the program?"

Summary of Findings

Overall, there was significant evidence that girls' experiences in the program contributed to higher levels of connectedness and self-esteem. Results, particularly from a variety of qualitative data sources, revealed that the program was a powerful developmental context for the adolescent female participants. First, during *interviews*, the girls rated the program as an overwhelmingly positive experience in their lives. They repeatedly shared that they felt more connected to peers, staff, and to the group as a whole. In addition, participants also spoke extensively about the many skill-building experiences and life lessons they learned in the summer program, which helped contribute to their global self worth. Second, during *observations*, I watched as the girls interacted both individually and as a group. I saw how girls became closer to other girls and staff, and how they developed athletic, communication, and networking skills. Third, the *connectedness worksheets* revealed distinct patterns of relationship development. The worksheets painted a vivid picture of who girls felt close to over time and how they bonded with new girls. Fourth, the *relational maps* indicated that PowerPlay people were more significant in participants' constellations of relationships after the program. Nine of the 12 girls listed PowerPlay people on their second map, a dramatic increase from the three who did so at the start of the program. This suggested that the girls viewed PowerPlay peers and staff as significant relationships in their lives.

Overall, the girls described their PowerPlay experiences as "life-changing" in at least five ways. The participants reported that the program helped them to:

- Feel prepared for the future;

- Try new things and meet new people;

- Open their minds up in new ways;

- Learn networking and communication skills

- Take initiative or display agency

When asked to rate the Summer Leadership Academy experience on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), 12 of the 13 participants (92%) rated the Academy as an "8" "9" or "10." They provided reasons such as how much it helped them improve their skills in different areas of their lives, particularly in sports, relationships with peers, communication and networking, and career and future. For example, Anastasia said she rated it so highly "because it was awesome, like, the whole program. It's like one of those things where it's too much to name." Selena commented on what she learned that will prepare her for the next phases of her life, saying "it was a lot of things I learned from it that I will take with me for life, and a lot of things I gained from it, like sports and my resume and my business card and my cover letter. All the things I've done will help me, not just for high school or college, but for life. I think it's just a great overall program." Moreover, several of the girls who rated it a 10, answered the question by saying they would have rated it an '11' or a '100.' Aliann said, "I think I got out of it everything you guys wanted us to get." The high ratings from the participants reflected their overall feeling about the program, and the expressions of positive affect related to their sense of themselves and their perceptions of connectedness to the group.

In addition, girls' responses on The Youth Experiences Survey (Hansen & Larson, 2005) indicated positive experiences in the Academy. On the positive

experience scales, all but one of the group means was above 3.1 (on a 4-point scale).

The Adult Networks & Social Capital mean was a 2.8. The highest scores were for the

Initiative (3.55), Teamwork (3.49) and Interpersonal (3.44) scales. For the negative

experience scales (i.e., stress, negative influences, social exclusion, negative group

dynamics, and negative adult behaviors) the collective group mean for all scales was

1.21 (on a 4-point scale), indicating that girls reported a low level of negative

experiences in the program.

In summary, for research question 1b: "Does the program serve as a context for

the development of connectedness and self-esteem" the answer was "yes." There were

individual differences in the types and levels of growth, however. In the rest of this

chapter, I present findings related to the processes and mechanisms of connectedness

and self-esteem. I explore how connectedness influenced girls' experience and

enjoyment of the program, *how* the program served as a positive context for the

development of these critical processes.

<div align="center">Mechanisms/Processes of Connectedness</div>

The following vignette describes an activity that captures many of the

connectedness themes and ingredients that I observed. On the last day of the six weeks at

the Academy before they went off to their internships, the very last activity was called a

"web of appreciation." This activity was a way for people to acknowledge and share why

they appreciated others in the group. The 'web' was actually a frayed rope that went back

and forth across the circle, grabbed and held on to by a new set of hands each time

someone was appreciated. By the end, the rope was twisted and turned into an actual web

that connected the group because every single person held a portion of the rope. The

group was literally and metaphorically connected through the web that they created.

> The group stood in one large circle. Delila (Life Skills Director) held the frayed, twisted rope in the middle of the circle. Shauna, a junior counselor, went first. Delila asked her who she was appreciating. She said Adriana, who was standing right next to her. Delila announced, "Shauna's passing it to Adriana, she'll have to hold it with you." Shauna started talking, stumbling with her words a bit. "Adriana, basically, I wish I could trade my little brother, give him to your mother and you could be my little sister....but like, you're very special and you're very artistic and such, and I love you." Adriana smiled broadly and put her arm around Shauna's shoulder to give her a hug. The girls said "awwww" and it got louder and louder. Delila said, "we cannot "aw" on every one, we gonna have to save the "aw" til the end."

> When Sezen gave the string to Nene, there was lots of noise and 'awws,' including 'aww grandpa!' [this was one of Nene's nicknames]. Anastasia yelled out, "I'm jealous!" Sezen started talking in her clipped accent. "I miss you grandpa," she said. Delila said, "Nene go ahead," and Nene gave the rope to Akila, her 'grandma.' Girls laughed and Maya commented, "the whole family tree right there" and chuckled. Nene said to her, "you're a fun person and a good grandma. I appreciate you because you're a good person to talk to." Grandma then said, "I'ma pass it to my other grandchild." This elicited laughter from the group and more family jokes. "I appreciate Janet because Janet is just a bright person and if you want a smile you could go to Janet, and you can always count on her to do whatever you want, like with the newsletter, like we could have said come her at 7am and she would have been here so, that's what I appreciate about Janet. Janet is looking to her left, looking at Maya. "I'll pass it to Maya," she says. "Um, I appreciate you because you made the program better, and you brought joy to it and if you weren't there as a counselor then it wouldn't be as much as it was."

> After a few more people it was Anastasia's turn to be appreciated. When she heard her name, she shrieked "eeee, tell me what I wanna hear!" Then it was her turn. "Okay, lemme see"....she taps her chin. "To be honest, um, first of all, I just wanna say I appreciate all the girls in PowerPlay, cuz I don't know, this is like...okay, but I'm gonna have to give this one to my big sis, Sydelle," drawing her name out into three or four syllables, Sy-de-ll-ll-y. "I appreciate Sydelle because she's understanding and she like, Sydelle's understanding... and I think all the counselors are poppin – I love you too Jade (she points to Jade) and so yeah, so Sydelle, like of course that's why I'm passing her the string, she's my big sister, because

we have a connection." She uses hand gestures as she says this. "So I love you Sydelle," she adds in a high-pitched voice.

Sydelle says, "I'm gonna pass the string to LaToya." Anastasia yells out, "how I knew!? Like, we have this love triangle!" Sydelle continues. "I appreciate her because she's just a cool person and her personality and I like that. I just appreciate you." LaToya looked touched and was standing there with her hands clasped under her chin. "ooh, thank you," she said to Sydelle. "Like Anastasia, I'm gonna pass it to my big sister." "I appreciate you because you're like mad cool and mad easy to talk to." Jade then passed the string to Aliann. Aliann smiled. "I appreciate Aliann because she is very athletic." At that, Anastasia, who was standing next to Aliann, grabbed her left tricep and squeezed it. "She's easy to talk to, she's very outgoing, and she doesn't give me any trouble." Aliann was smiling from ear to ear.

A few minutes later it was Nakeeba's turn. "I appreciate Venus," says Nakeeba. "Yeah, I appreciate Venus, because she's funny, she makes me laugh. Yeah, and we have like those eye connection moments sometimes." Venus was laughing. "Yeah, that's it," finishes Nakeeba. Towards the end, it is Delila's turn. "I want to appreciate Iris. I appreciate you because in the beginning you were like very shy and quiet and you stuck with Lia a lot and I said oh no, I hope they don't just stay together and not talk to anyone else and slowly over the six weeks I saw you open up and you have a very fabulous personality and I'm so glad that I got to see your personality over the six weeks." There were a few "awwws" in the circle. At the end, there were claps and cheers as everyone realized they were finished. Maya commented "that's a busted up looking web but we got it!" There were more cheers and screams as girls dropped the rope.

The web activity was a literal and figurative metaphor for connectedness. From the beginning of the summer, the web had been invisibly growing, as girls started to get to know each other. Some connections were stronger than others, but somehow the threads were connecting everyone in the group. Even those who might be perceived as outcasts or loners were close with at least one other person. Thus, the web was a visual demonstration that each girl felt more connected to at least one person in the group, and

that everyone felt more connected to the group as a whole. Their experiences of connectedness will be discussed in-depth later in the chapter.

Several themes that arose from the data related to the phenomenon of connectedness. Because connectedness is complex and hard to measure, I will start in by breaking down connectedness into its constituent parts. Then, I will take a more macro approach and reassemble the parts to see how they fit together in different ways. Three aspects of connectedness emerged from the data:

- **Ingredients**: basic elements that were more likely to be present in interactions between people, and the presence of which fostered connectedness;

- **Types**: ways that participants felt connected. The types that I saw most were:

  1. **Proximal:** spending time together, being physically near or close to another by sitting or walking together, riding the train, or being on the same team; physical contact such as high fives, or hugs.

  2. **Emotional:** sharing one's thoughts and feelings with another, being vulnerable, or understanding another's emotions

  3. **Kinship:** feeling close or more comfortable with certain individuals because they remind one of one's family, are "family-like," or treat others like family

  4. **Informational:** sharing common interests or feeling close to others through discussion and information gathering about topics or activities such as music, movies, sports, or school.

- **Levels**: describing who was involved in relationships:

1. Peer-peer connectedness: how connected girls felt one-on-one with other girls;

2. Youth-adult connectedness: how connected girls felt with counselors or other adults in the program;

3. Youth-group connectedness: how connected girls felt to the group as a whole

In the next section, I will begin by outlining what I call the "ingredients of connectedness," those elements that seemed to facilitate connectedness. While not every ingredient was needed in order to develop closeness between individuals, some combinations of these elements were always involved. After reviewing the ingredients of connectedness, I will use them as the framework to understand the various types of connectedness that appeared most often for the participants in this study. The second half of the chapter will focus on the self-esteem findings.

<div align="center">Ingredients of Connectedness</div>

Overall, girls felt closer to other girls and staff through processes that involved some or many of the following ingredients:

- *Commonalities: having things in common*
    - Neighborhoods, backgrounds
    - Schools
    - Prior experience in PowerPlay
    - Sports
    - Friends

- *Physical proximity: being nearby or spending time together*
    - Opportunities for contact
    - Physical presence or absence
    - The capacity for emotional abstraction

- *Collaboration: working together to achieve a common goal*

- In the gym
- Teambuilding activities
- Group projects

- *Laughing & humor: having fun, amusement with others*
  - Laughing at themselves
  - Friendly teasing
  - Nicknames

- *Talking and listening: verbal communication*
  - Hanging out (instrumental)
  - Sharing emotions (developmental)
  - Staff as a scaffold for emotional connectedness
- *Trust: reliance or belief in another*
  - Feeling accepted, and not judged

The way that these ingredients appeared and interacted can be represented by

what I call the dyadic pyramid, shown in Figure 4.1. The dyadic pyramid of relationship

formation shows how I saw the ingredients coming together in the processes of

connectedness occurring between girls and other participants and girls with staff. The

pyramid consists of the six ingredients of connectedness across three levels of

relationship formation: shared environments, shared experiences and shared emotions.

The first level is shared environments and represents the ingredients of commonalities
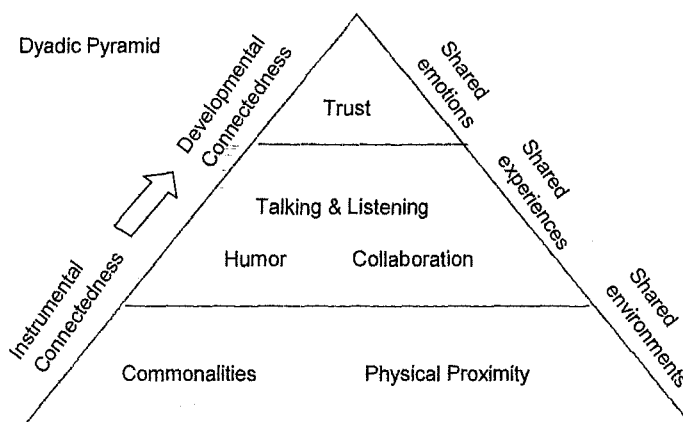
Figure 4.1

and physical proximity. The second level, shared experiences, represents relationship development through the presence of additional ingredients, specifically collaboration, humor and talking and listening. Finally, the third level of the pyramid, shared emotions, represents a higher level of closeness. The salient ingredient here is trust. Below, I use the pyramid as a framework to discuss the ingredients in more detail.

Commonalities

Of the girls in this study, seven were from Brooklyn, five were from Queens and one was from Long Island. Overall, of the girls in the program, 15 were from Brooklyn, eight were from Queens, one was from Long Island and one was from Delaware. In an urban environment such as New York City, youth often feel a strong sense of attachment to their neighborhood or borough. In addition, for many youth of lower socio-economic backgrounds, most of their lives are spent in their immediate neighborhood, going to public school nearby, and staying in the same general area for other activities. For many of the participants, traveling to PowerPlay's Summer Leadership Academy was the first time they left their neighborhood or borough, or traveled so far on the subway. One of the ways that participants engaged with each other or found common ground for relationship development was that they discovered they were from the same area, or shared geographic experiences. For example, when asked why she started getting closer to Jackie, Jaz responded, "because she like, she lived right down the block from my grandmother house. Marquita lives right around my aunt, and Jackie lives by my grandmother. It's a small world. Like we just, like, we know the same people."

Another basic touchstone that helped girls feel closer to others was the topic of school, either attending the same school, or knowing about each others' schools. Five of the PowerPlay participants hailed from the same school, and four of these girls (Anastasia, Nakeeba, Nene, and LaToya) were in the study. Because they all knew each other prior to the program, they stuck together in the beginning, sitting and talking together in the back left corner of the room. Nakeeba acknowledged that they hung together, saying "I hung out more with Akila, Nene and stuff. They're in my school. I think people who come from the same schools who knew people hung out more together." Esme noticed that schools was the source of how mini-groups formed, "Well, every high school, every kid, like they know each other from the same high school, so because they knew each other, they will stay in their high school group. Like me and Samantha, we will stay in the same corner because we didn't know anybody else but each other."

The commonality of school was also evident on their relationship worksheets. Nakeeba listed her school peers at the Academy as the people she felt closest to until the fourth week of the program. Similarly, Nene listed only two Academy participants as the ones she felt closest to until the fourth week when she had someone outside of her school for the first time. For LaToya, four of her five worksheets had someone from school. Anastasia was the exception, listing one classmate (LaToya) in week one before adding new people in week two.

Ironically, however, while the four girls from the same school sat together in the beginning of the program and looked like a clique to the other participants, they all admitted that they did not know each other well, or were not particularly close to each

other before coming to PowerPlay. Through the program, they ended up becoming much closer to one another. Anastasia, for example, described becoming closer to LaToya, while LaToya said that Anastasia was now her "besty." Nakeeba also mentioned becoming closer to LaToya than they had been at school. "I didn't really talk to her much last year. Like once every month, probably just a 'hi.' Now we talk every day." Nene agreed that she started to know her school peers better. "Because I already knew them from school so it was just knowing them more…I just knew them from my gym class, so now I actually talk to them." Thus, having the commonality of school served as a foundation for connectedness. Then, during the summer program, the context of the Academy allowed commonality to grow and flourish in a new way.

While most of the girls did not go to the same school, the topic of school was something that they all shared and therefore it was a safe topic of conversation for girls in the 'getting to know you' stage. So for girls who did not know each other before, discussing school experiences served as a foundation for a new friendship. For girls who shared school experiences, the Academy served as a context that strengthened those existing relationships.

Another shared characteristic that led to closeness was prior experience with PowerPlay. Three of the girls in the study (Selena, Shakina, and LaToya) had participated in the Academy the previous summer. Each of these girls expressed a comfort level with girls who had been in the program with them last year. When asked how she got closer to Jackie and Cynthia, Selena responded that "I guess because they were there last year, so it's kinda like you sit together, and you talk a lot more versus you being in the new group. So I talked to them a lot faster definitely. Yeah, I got closer

to them too." LaToya felt closer to the returning girls "because we were together last year." Finally, Shakina was closer to the former participants who were now junior counselors.

This trend that returning girls felt close to each other was also evident in their relationship worksheets. Two of the three returning participants listed girls from the prior summer's Academy as the people they felt closest to on their first two relationship worksheets. The exception was Shakina, who listed a different person each week. Similar to having school as a common context, the fact that girls had participated in the Academy the year before gave them a common ground, or a baseline from which to grow their relationships.

Because the Summer Sports Leadership Academy focused on sport and physical activity, sport was another common ground for participants. Sport created opportunities for connectedness in at least three ways:

- Girls who played the same sport felt connected;
- Girls who were more athletic or higher skilled felt a bond:
- Girls felt connected through the shared experience of being on teams

Many of the girls had a strong attachment to their favorite sport. Thus, one way that sports made them feel closer to others was when they found others who participated in that same sport. For example, girls mentioned becoming closer to other girls because they shared a bond through sports. Aliann said about several other girls, "we learned a lot more about each other and we realized how much more we have in common. We all run track." Jaz felt that she and Nakeeba bonded because of basketball, "we played ball together, so, like, we have that bond."

During gym time, girls who were more proficient at a sport typically gravitated towards each other or practiced together and this playing time seemed to foster closeness between the girls. For example, when I was there the first week, the sport was volleyball. When I watched the girls practice and play, Esme, Jaz, Aliann and Jezel were often practicing or doing drills together. As reported in my field notes on June 30:

> While other pairs were getting their ball caught in the ceiling netting, chatting more than playing, or casually trying to bump, these four were having very competitive exchanges, almost diving to keep the rallies going. Every time I looked over, Jaz or Esme was flying or lunging for the ball. When the points ended they always smiled and laughed, and periodically, Jaz would get down and do pushups.

Although they did not know each other before PowerPlay, their high level of volleyball skill led Jaz and Esme to partner up often for drills. In addition, approximately six of the girls were more athletic than the others, and accorded each other a mutual respect for their athletic abilities. For example. Aliann said about Jaz, "we sat next to each the first week and we had a lot in common. We're both very into our sports." Although Jaz plays basketball and Aliann runs track and plays tennis, they recognized their respective passions for their favorite sports.

A third way that sport was a connector was the shared experience of having been on teams that girls brought with them to the Academy. Nine of the 13 participants had participated on a team before. Overall, for a "sports" program, the participants in the program exhibited a wide variety of sport backgrounds and skill levels. As mentioned above, only a small number of the girls were highly skilled, competitive athletes, or what might be referred to as "jocks." Most were recreational athletes, who might have played on a team, but would not consider themselves, nor be considered by others as a

"jock." Some girls attend very small high schools that do not even have sports teams. However, most of the girls had prior experiences of connectedness through teams on which they had participated, giving them a common language. Even though their individual sports may have been different, they understood what it meant to be on a team and work together to achieve a common goal through sport.

Many of the girls expressed feeling close to teammates from these other sport experiences. Jaz talked about how her teammates became close to her, like sisters. She said everyone became so close they were like a family and her coach did what she could to instill this sense of family in them. "She always tries to push us. She wants us to come together like no arguing, nothing like that." Esme described spending so much time with her teammates, eating and going to the mall, that her friends started complaining to her about it. In addition, Aliann was so comfortable on her teams that she considered them like family. "They're like my second family, especially track cause we're with them, I'm with them all year and they have this little section in my school." Because they had had similar experiences of participating on teams, they were able to relate to each other and were thus predisposed to behaving in ways that a team context encourages.

Girls felt connected through sports for a variety of reasons. Whether participants understood the common language of sport, played the same sport, or felt connected through teamwork experiences, sport commonalities brought girls together and helped them establish feelings of connectedness to individual girls or to the group as a whole.

The last basis for commonality was having friends in common. As early as the first week, it was obvious that girls were gravitating towards other girls and spending more time with some girls rather than others. The inevitable "cliques" were forming,

representing commonality of friends. When I use the word "clique," I mean a group who tend to "click" with each other, or share common interests, habits, or activities. I use the word simply as a descriptor of group dynamics, not as a value judgment of whether the group or its individual members' behaviors are positive or negative. The word itself has become problematized, and is often seen as inherently negative. But for the girls in the program, cliques were a part of the process of connectedness, often stemming from commonalities shared between group members. In this way, and for this context, cliques were more inclusive than exclusive. When asked during the second interview, most girls expressed that there were cliques in the group, and consistently identified the same groups of individuals who hung together. Moreover, they often identified or described them based on commonalities, such as schools, boroughs, geographic proximity, or if they knew each other before. Schools were mentioned most often as the source of a clique. Zelda thought that there were cliques, but that basically everybody talked to everybody:

> Everybody talked to everybody, but of course, everybody has their people that they're going to automatically click with, like for Anastasia, it was LaToya. I think Nakeeba, Akila. They formed their clique because of their school. They had more gossip to talk about with their school. I know Darlene was always with Venus, so they formed a clique, and Iris with Lia. Everybody talked to each other. It was just little cliques here and there.

Interestingly, some of the girls mentioned the girls that they hung around with as a clique, but did not include themselves in it, as if they did not want to be associated with a clique because of the connotations of the word. For example, Aliann, Anastasia, Zelda, Jaz and Selena did not mention themselves as members of a clique. Selena mentioned the

girls from another borough being a group, "I know some girls in Northside, so that I guess they went home together and everything. So when it comes to the program, they stuck together, so they always talked." While acknowledging that she herself would be part of a different borough group, she also said she makes it a point talk to everybody. Most girls saw the cliques as pairs or small groups, except LaToya, who saw them as large clusters.

While the girls mentioned schools and boroughs as sources of cliques, one characteristic that they did not identify was the influence of ethnicity on friendship attraction, or clique formation. From my vantage point, it seemed that boroughs and geographic commonalities did, in fact, have a strong impact on girls' forming relationships with other girls. Overall in the program, there were 17 African American girls, four Latina girls and four Asian girls. It would be understandable if the Latina or Asian girls, the two "minority" groups, might bond, or gravitate towards one another. However, while this did happen with the Asian girls, it did not happen with the Latina girls. There could be many reasons for these dynamics, related to individual differences, or the fact that all of the Asian girls were on a project team together. I will touch on that more in the collaboration section.

While the word "clique" may have negative connotations, most of the girls did not think the cliques were negative, but more of a natural process that happens when people come together in a group setting. The cliques were based more often on external qualities that girls shared such as schools, neighborhoods or proximity, rather than internal qualities. Esme thought it was how things go until the icebreakers start. "Yeah, that was the beginning that everybody just hangs around with the people that they knew until they

started the ice breakers, and everybody started mixing around, and changing seats, and

talking to each other." Only two of the girls, Aliann and Jaz, thought that the cliques in

the program were negative, although Aliann also said that in the end "everybody was

friends so it was cool. In the beginning, I guess people were kind of intimidated by the

other groups, but as time went on, I guess they felt more comfortable so it didn't really

matter as much."

From an attachment theory perspective (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969, 1988),

the cliques served as a safe space for girls. Because they had a "secure base" in which

they felt comfortable, they could then venture out, meet other people, try new things, or

speak their mind (Bowlby, 1969). In this way, I saw cliques as way stations or subway

trains in the connectedness process. Initially, they were based on superficial markers or

commonalities. Over time, some cliques changed or increased in size as girls learned

more about others and reconfigured their social networks. Although cliques formed

early and were based on external factors like schools or boroughs, they were also

flexible enough to change or expand. Thus, cliques were like subway trains, in that girls

could hop on and off of them when they wanted. Sometimes the different cliques would

cross or intersect like multiple train lines that stop at the same central stations.

Physical Proximity

Another main ingredient of the first level of the dyadic pyramid was physical

proximity, which related to the idea of girls' spending time together, being in the same

space, or being near each other. Examples of physical proximity were when the girls rode

the subways to or from the Academy together and had train time bonding, when they

were on the same team or group for sports practice, or when girls were on the same project group, or placed for an internship together.

The aforementioned commonality of neighborhood led to girls becoming closer through taking the train home together. Often, the train rides took an hour or more, providing ample time for one-on-one interaction. Esme said she and three other girls became travel buddies. "We started riding home together. So the relationship became more." Iris felt closer to Sezen because of the subway, "yeah, we'd take the train home together because she showed me another route to get home." Commuting to and from the program became an opportunity for girls to talk and bond with each other, an example of unstructured time that promoted social interaction.

Another way that physical proximity promoted connectedness was during the two-week internships, where most girls were placed with a second PowerPlay participant. While focused on working, the internship experience was described by several of the girls as a way that they became closer to the other PowerPlay participant with whom they were paired. For example, Iris and Akila were placed in the same company for their internship. They worked in the same room, doing tasks such as typing up contacts, calling people to update lists, and faxing and copying for a special event. Iris said, "I only got close to her (Akila) towards the end of PowerPlay, and then we had the same internship so we got closer." Similarly, Nene got closer with Lia through working together at a small law firm. "She's funny actually, she had me laughing. It was on lunch breaks and things. So it was fun to get to know her." The most startling example of girls getting closer through the internship was that of Shakina and LaToya, two second-year

PowerPlay participants who had never been close before. I will discuss this relationship more in depth later in the chapter.

The theme of physical proximity appeared while examining the participants' connectedness worksheets. Over and over again, the girls indicated feeling distant from other girls not for active reasons of dislike, conflict or distrust, but simply because they did not spend time with them or talk to them. Of the 13 girls in the study, only two girls indicated other reasons why they felt "most distant" from someone in a particular week. Jaz mentioned that one girl was "not my cup of tea," while Venus said of someone, "she's annoying, she tries too hard." All of the other responses over the course of the six weeks and 63 worksheets were about lack of communication and lack or physical proximity with that person. Whether spending time led to more interactions, or interactions led to an increased desire to spend time together, physical proximity was an ingredient that led to increased closeness.

There were reverberations and extensions of this theme across the data. During the second and third interviews, girls mentioned feeling less close to people in their lives with whom they had less contact, or saw less over the summer. For example, Aliann said she felt less close to her parents and brother because she was spending so much time at PowerPlay this summer. Nene said the same thing about her best friend from school. "Yeah, I didn't talk to her all summer, so it was like, she was my best friend at school but I didn't talk to her at all this summer, so it's like it kinda decreased." Meanwhile, in November, Esme said that she and her coach, who was like a father to her, were not as close right now. She did not see him as much this fall because she was injured and

unable to play volleyball. She only saw him occasionally in the hallways at school, where they exchanged quick greetings.

On the other hand, at the end of the program, participants expressed feeling closer to PowerPlay participants, with whom they had just spent six weeks. This was reflected both quantitatively, on the Relationships in the Academy scale, where the group mean was higher for their Academy relationships than for their life relationships, as well as qualitatively on their second relational maps, and during interviews. As discussed in Chapter 3, the map is a type of a social networking tool to highlight those who are significant in one's life and how close one feels towards them.

One of my hypotheses before the study was that from the beginning to the end of the program the number of PowerPlay individuals that girls mentioned on their maps would increase. This is, in fact, what happened. On the first map, three girls listed PowerPlay individuals, because they knew someone from the Academy prior to the summer. On the second map, this number jumped to nine. The most striking change was Jaz, who went from zero PowerPlay people on her first map to seven on her second map. Jaz had shared in the first interview that she had a major trust issue, and scored a mean of 1 (on a scale of 1-7) on the connectedness with others scale. After the program, her mean score on that scale was slightly higher at 2. Yet, for connectedness with Academy participants it was a 6.3, reflecting what she reported in her relational maps.

The most common pattern, present in four girls' maps, was for girls to list zero PowerPlay people on the first map, one or more PowerPlay people on the second map, and fewer or zero people on the third map. This reflects the increased primacy, or *physical proximity*, of PowerPlay people in a girl's life during the summer. Two girls

demonstrated a second pattern, listing no PowerPlay people on their first or second maps, and then two or three on the third map. Three girls displayed continuity from map #1 to map #3.

The increased number of PowerPlay contacts on girls' second maps represented the way that physical proximity made participants feel closer to one another. The decrease in November, after several months of not seeing each other, indicates that girls felt closer to others while they were in the program, but that this changed when they were not seeing each other every day. One reason could be that, like cliques, PowerPlay became a source of attachment, or a replacement for the family. Perhaps the girls were starting to develop the capacity for emotional abstraction. Emotional abstraction is the ability to carry the internal working models of one's primary attachments with one mentally and feel the same level of closeness even if those people are not physically present. In the meantime, by being together day after day, the girls built up a comfort level with each other and may have transferred family attachment feelings to select PowerPlay relationships or to the group as a whole. The fact that the number of PowerPlay contacts decreased on the maps in November suggests that the girls are still developing this ability to hold others close in mind when not physically present.

Collaboration

After a foundation of commonalities and/or physical proximity was in place, many relationships grew closer, or moved to the shared experience level of the dyadic pyramid, through the presence of additional ingredients. The third ingredient that fostered connectedness for girls in this study was collaboration, or working together to achieve a common goal. The girls experienced collaboration by working together

through sports, teambuilding activities, and on group projects that lasted the entire six weeks.

Collaboration occurred both on and off the court, in and out of the gym. In sports activities, collaboration is more commonly known as 'teamwork.' Many girls reported learning more about teamwork by participating in sports at PowerPlay, or feeling that the PowerPlay group was like one big team. This was reflected in the way the practices, clinics, or drills were set up, with group stretching that involved responsive counting so everyone was actively participating. At the end of practices, Maya, the Sports Director, would gather all of the girls together in a huddle for a final cheer. These rituals helped to create a context of teamwork.

The girls also learned teamwork from participating in a different sport each week. One of the benefits of offering multiple sports was that each week the skill dynamic of the entire group changed based on a combination of what sport was being taught and each girl's individual background and skill level in that sport. Different girls emerged as leaders or demonstrated higher skill levels each week. Thus, the multiple, rotating sports served to equalize the playing field.

During the first week, the sport was volleyball. Each day, the girls were paired up together for skill practice and mini-games against the wall. They also were divided into groups of three to learn skills in a group circle. Placing girls in smaller groups or in pairs allowed them to not only have more practice but also to interact more with each other. One day, the group had a game of girls against staff. Typically, this can end up in a disorganized mess, especially on the camper side of the net. Yet the girls were under control and orderly, as my field notes demonstrated: "There was no fighting about who

would serve, and the order seemed to naturally follow the order of strength of the players. Esme, the strongest player, went first. Everyone was cheering each other on." The girls were really excited about competing against the staff, and did that again during other sports. This was another way to bring the girls together.

One of the highlights of the program reported by the participants was this sense of teamwork they felt through sports. For example, Janet said, "For me, probably just working with the team, and just like, when you make a good shot or something, and you do really well, you just get really happy." She said she really liked volleyball a lot because it is all teamwork. Shakina commented that teamwork was a good skill to learn "trying to guess with everyone is thinking, especially with team sports like volleyball, you have to kind of think on your feet, you have to be there before the ball actually hits, and you have to guess your move and predict everyone else's and then try to convey that to everyone else while they're doing their own things." Even for Iris, the least athletic of all the girls, who had never been on a team before, the experience at PowerPlay was one that reminded her of how she perceived a team to be and what it would feel like to be on a team. She saw the group as one big team because "We stuck by each other, and we worked together.....and we played sports with each other."

From the beginning of the program, the staff worked hard to promote teamwork. Even on the very first day, when the group created their ground rules, or expectations that they would have about how they would work together for the summer, the staff encouraged collaboration. Constructing ground rules was a group process, facilitated by one of the co-directors, with girls suggesting different things they thought would be important for everyone to remember. "Respect everybody," "treat people the way you

want to be treated," "be on time," and "one mike" (one microphone), were a few of the

ideas that girls suggested. Later on in the conversation, Maya mentioned that because

this was a sports program, girls were not allowed to take the escalator up to the second

floor where the classroom was located. The following vignette describes how the group

discussion about consequences helped the girls to begin to create a group or team

identity:

> Sheree (counselor) asks if it should be a consequence for one person or the
> whole group together. They discuss that aspect for awhile. A few people
> think it should be all together because when they are on teams, the whole
> team will do things together. They pull out the talking ball and start to use
> it. "If we have a rule, then we need to stand by it," says Saida. She passes
> the ball to Esme. "I agree, if we're mature enough to not do it." Shakina
> makes her point that she thinks it should be a group consequence and she
> agrees with Selena. Samantha says they should do it together. Frankie
> agrees, saying "I think it will scare us more if we say group." Someone
> says they should take a vote if the group thinks it should be a group or
> individual consequence, before they decide what it is. Delila (Life Skills
> Director) asks who thinks it should be an individual consequence.....only
> LaToya, Akila, Nakeeba and Nene raise their hands. Everyone else raises
> their hands to vote for a group consequence. Including staff, 24 people
> vote for group, and five for individual.

Through this discussion, and with staff support and encouragement, participants

began to develop a group or team identity, rather than simply acting like a collection of

individuals. They began to think about how the consequences of their actions would

affect the group, and the differences between how motivated they would be if their

actions were considered individually or as part of a team.

During the program, the staff regularly facilitated teambuilding activities such as

the name game, human knot, or trust fall, to stimulate social interaction and group

problem-solving skills. Through these activities, many girls felt like they became closer

to other girls. By working together as a large group, girls said they learned important

skills about cooperation, leadership and listening. For example, during the human knot activity, girls took turns taking leadership roles or offering suggestions for how they could move to try to untangle themselves. Venus felt like this activity brought them closer together as a group." It looked hard, but the first time we did it, we did it like 11 minutes, and the second time, we chopped the time by like five minutes. So it was really cool to see us, actually, bonding together." Similar to sports in the gym, the teambuilding activities allowed girls to share leadership with one another.

The second teambuilding activity that appeared to increase girls' feelings of connectedness to the group was the trust fall. Some girls expressed a fear or nervousness about falling during the activity. Zelda described that she did not want to fall because "I thought I would fall through the girls' arms, like somebody would let go, and it would just be like dominoes." What made a difference for her was that girls who were sitting down got up to get in the line to help her out. "I thought, I might as well because if they think so much of me as to get up and join the line, then I should fall." Jaz, who said from early on that she had a big trust issue, described that part of her was scared and part of her was not. "But I just did it and they had to catch me." For Venus, who found it very hard to fall, she was able to convince herself that they would catch her. "I just had to trust them that they're not going to drop me. That's pretty much it." Finally, LaToya describes her hesitancy in the trust fall.

Interviewee: I didn't want to jump for nothing. Delila was helping me to do it.
Interviewer: Why didn't you want to fall?
Interviewee: It was too high.
Interviewer: What made you do it?
Interviewee: She was holding my hand, so if I went down, she'd go down with me.

For each of the participants in this activity, there was a moment of letting go and practicing trusting other people. Although they were nervous, they all reflected back on the experience as a positive one. I will expand on trust as an ingredient of closeness later on in this chapter.

Another structured teambuilding experience in the program was the group projects, consisting of the Newsletter, the Talk Show and the Video groups. The Newsletter group wrote and edited a PowerPlay Newsletter recapping their summer, the Talk Show group produced and directed the culminating event performance for the parents and guests, while the Video group shot, and edited a ten-minute video about their summer at the Academy.

Girls felt like the projects were valuable for improving skills and building relationships with others. According to Selena,

> Well, I think you get to meet new people. You get to hear different ideas. You get to hear different personalities and work with them, and it's helped me. Like I was able to work with different personalities, that this person does this or they're moody or whatever. I think that helps you definitely to relate yourself to other people, change, adapt to different settings.

Through working on group projects, girls developed a greater sense of connectedness with others and with their small group. This was evident from observations, interviews and relationship worksheets. From my vantage point of dipping in and out of their experience, I was able to distinctly observe the evolution of the groups and how they interacted over time. The groups seemed to bond and girls reported feeling closer to one another through the project experience, particularly the newsletter group and the talk show group.

The newsletter group seemed to be the group that bonded the most. Of the 8-10 girls in the group, three were from the same school, while another four were the only four Asian participants in the Academy this year. Therefore the newsletter group was essentially a merging of two cliques, the peers from one school, and the Asian girls. However, what started as two separate cliques working side by side ended up as a complete integration of the two groups. As the weeks went on, they blended more and more. The girls seemed to have an easy rapport and get along well. They were able to joke around and tease each other, as is evident in this excerpt from my field notes about Akila and Janet fighting over a chair. "Get off,' they yelled between giggles, 'get off my chair.' They were yelling and laughing, then giggling and sitting on each other, trying to squeeze themselves under the other's leg on the chair and edge the other one off."

The closeness was also demonstrated through their worksheets. In Nene's final worksheet, she listed two of her school colleagues, Nakeeba and Akila, and two of her newsletter colleagues, Janet and Sezen, as those she felt closest to, rating them all a '5.' Similarly, Janet reported that she felt closest to Sezen, Nene and Akila on her final worksheet. Finally, during the web of appreciation vignette, these same participants were appreciating each other and showing how they had become like a little family. First Sezen appreciated Nene. Then Nene appreciated Akila, who went on to appreciate Janet. It was clear to see literally and figuratively how the threads were tightly connected between these four.

Girls in the Talk Show also expressed that they grew close to other girls through their experience on this project team. Selena mentioned that it was because of the Talk Show that she felt closer to Zelda because they worked together a lot in the last week.

Meanwhile, on her last worksheet, Zelda put her colleagues in the Talk Show group as those to whom she felt closest to that week. However, the video group did not appear as close or connected as the other two groups. Overall, I did not see them as much because they usually met downstairs in the cafeteria, while the other two groups met in the main PowerPlay classroom. In addition, only two participants from my study were on the video team. As a researcher, I followed girls who were in my study more often, especially if more of them were involved with an activity at one time.

Overall, girls felt like cooperation was the most important thing they learned on the projects. Janet describes her biggest lesson as how to cooperate with others. "I'd say cooperation with other people was a really good lesson. When you get older and going for a job interview, or you're working and someone has a problem with you, you have to take it in a respectful way." Shakina also learned that cooperation led to more productive results.

> It was like everyone wanted to talk at once. Some people, they would get frustrated and go off on – the group would just kinda break down into smaller groups, and nothing would get done. But then once we started getting used to each other, we were like okay, I'm gonna wait until she's finished, and then we started voting and stuff like that. So we got a lot more done that way.

By working on the projects, some of the girls learned how important teamwork was, both on and off the court. Because of their athletic backgrounds, a few of them had previously associated teamwork only with sports. Through participating on the group projects, they learned how important teamwork could be *outside* of sports. This was especially pronounced for Esme:

When you're in sports, you do things together because it's a team. But then right here, in this program, you actually get to participate as a team because in order for you to do the video, everybody needed to import something. When you needed to do this, everybody needed to chip in in some sort of way in order for it to work because otherwise, it was not gonna work. I guess it's kinda similar as a team, but it kinda different besides. Because I know that is a team, and that it's supposed to be a team. But in this program, it's a program, so you don't have to be a team. You don't have to, but you want to. It's something that you wanna do. It takes a team in order to accomplish something different than just a sport.

Nakeeba learned a similar lesson about teamwork. "An example is the project I had to do because I was on the newsletter. If I didn't bring my stuff in on time, it would set the whole group back." Whether through participating in sports, teambuilding activities, or group projects, girls learned and practiced the skills necessary to be successful, including cooperation, listening, and leadership. Some of them also became more connected to others or to the group.

Laughing & Humor

The next ingredient of the shared experience level of the dyadic pyramid was laughing and humor. Every day that I observed the program, I saw and heard multiple instances of jokes, laughing and humor. In addition, during interviews, girls mentioned that they laughed and joked with their friends, had funny family members who made them laugh, or joked around more when they felt more comfortable. Thus, the ability to laugh and appreciate funny moments seemed to be part of how girls might become or feel connected to others. More specifically, laughing and humor seemed to contribute to girls' perceptions of connectedness through their willingness to laugh at themselves, through friendly teasing, or creating or using nicknames.

During the program, the girls were able to laugh at themselves when funny things happened. The gym was a place where many funny things happened, according to Anastasia, who described one such incident when she was running and trying to fix her nametag at the same time: "And Fantasia was running and I guess she was looking somewhere else, and we just, like, bumped into each other. So everybody was laughing. That was kind of funny." Even minor falls or potential injuries ended up being sources of laughter, such as one day when Esme and Zelda collided on the volleyball floor. In my field notes I wrote, "Esme reaches over from the floor to help Zelda up. She rolls over, still giggling. As she gets up, she looks over at Jezel, sending her into another fit of giggles."

The counselors were also role models for laughing at oneself. Delila, the Life Skills Director, was learning how to swim and went into the pool on Fridays with the girls when they had swimming. The following excerpt describes how she was good-humored about herself as a beginner swimmer:

> When Delila went to float, she did not go very far. The other girls were mostly across the pool while Delila had barely moved from the other side wall. Darlene looked back from the other side and said, "Delila, what are you doing up there?!" and then she opened her mouth to catch herself, as though she did not realize until after she said it that her comment was potentially insensitive. Then, she and a few other girls burst out laughing. Shakina, sitting next to me on the bench poolside, started laughing, along with Delila herself.

The program supported the participants' and staff's abilities to laugh at themselves in several ways. For one thing, the program is focused on skill-building, not competition, allowing the girls to feel more relaxed in the gym. Secondly, offering multiple sports promoted a sense of learning and trying new sports. Each week, some

people were beginners and some were advanced but that seemed to change week to week as the sports rotated.

Teasing others was another way that girls could communicate and form connections. Teasing served multiple purposes, including to reach out or to initiate contact, to gain attention, to show affection, or to cement a feeling of connectedness. For example, Nakeeba would often steal Nene's shoes, sometimes right off of her own feet. This became a common ritual, recorded in my field notes: "Nakeeba has Nene's shoes and walks behind staff row. Nene walks up and says 'give me my shoes' with a smile on her face." Another day, she did it again, and it always seemed to make Nene laugh. "Nakeeba reached under when Nene wasn't looking and grabbed a shoe. As soon as Nene realized it, she protested, but was laughing at the same time. Nakeeba was then going for the other one, wrestling with Nene, giggling and grabbing at the shoe." When I asked Delila why Nakeeba did this all the time, Delila said, "because 'grandpa' (Nene's nickname) moves too slow to get them.'" Perhaps this was Nakeeba's way of showing Nene that she felt closer to her this summer than she ever had at school, cementing a feeling of connectedness.

Teasing happened frequently. This may reflect the girls' mid-adolescent developmental stage, as they were still exploring identity issues and trying to feel comfortable with who they were. The joking and bantering was a safe way of expressing themselves, and provided a comfort level for them, especially when entering a new experience or meeting a whole new group of people such as many of them were doing this summer.

Nicknames were prevalent during the program. The nicknaming began early, as Life Skills Director Delila gave almost everyone a nickname early on, such as "Ali" for Aliann, "Toy toy" for "LaToya," "Ne-nation" for "Nene," "Jazmatazz" for "Jaz," "Esmerelda" for "Esme," and "Irisita" for "Iris." These initial nicknames were based more on the girls' names than on their behaviors or personal characteristics. As the program progressed, girls also bestowed nicknames on each other for things they did or situations that occurred. Having a nickname often made girls feel closer to the person who coined it. For example, Zelda said she felt closer to Selena because Selena called her a "little lady." "I think I became closer to Selena when I was like a little lady, and then we would just talk about other things. She said the way I talk, or the way I communicated or dressed, it was very mature." During the "web of appreciation," Selena appreciated Zelda and mentioned how mature she was. "Like she just comes in with this whole new perspective of young girls and I like that."

Other girls also received nicknames for personal characteristics or behaviors. There was even an entire family of nicknames. Early on, Nene was named "grandpa" because she walked slowly and seemed to shuffle along when the group was walking to the subway for trips. Akila (not in the study) became "grandma" because she often walked in the back of the group with Nene and they were always the last to get to the subway or to the group's destination. Soon, "grandpa" and "grandma" had "children," as they started becoming closer with other girls. Sezen, who started hanging out more and more with Nene and Akila was nicknamed "grandchild" because of her small, petite size. Then Janet became another "grandchild" when she was also hanging around with them. The result was a little 'family,' and the nicknames served to demarcate and confirm the

closeness that was growing between some of the girls who did not know each other prior to PowerPlay.

Nicknames were used by girls at different points in the process of relationship development with peers. Some girls used nicknames to reach out and try to connect with others, such as at the beginning of the relationship. For other girls, nicknames were a way to show affection, or to acknowledge that there was a bond that had developed between them. For the group as a whole, nicknames also seemed to promote a sense of closeness or familiarity, because one had to be inside the group to understand the stories behind the nicknames.

Talking & Listening

Talking and listening generated shared experiences between individuals. Two different types of "talking and listening" emerged. The first was more task-oriented, or 'instrumental.' The second was more emotional, or 'developmental.' Instrumental and developmental have been used often in the mentoring literature to describe mentoring styles, with instrumental referring to activity-based, and developmental referring to relationship-based styles (Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe & Taylor, 2006; Styles & Morrow, 1995). In this study, the instrumental form of talking and listening was more about hanging out, or surface level conversation, such as on a long subway rides, while the developmental form was more about opening up or sharing one's feelings.

Instrumental talking & listening

While some girls mentioned that they grew closer to other girls through talking and listening, it was more the *act* of talking than the *content* of what was said that seemed to make them feel closer to other girls. Instrumental talking was a way for girls

to build or extend their physical connectedness, and start to feel closer through spending time or hanging out together. One way that I saw this was by watching the girls arrive and enter the room in the mornings. During the first week of the program, they came in and sat quietly, listening to music, eating breakfast or reading. There was little talking, although there was more talking towards the end of the week than in the beginning. When I returned for the third week of the program, this was different. Now, when the girls came into the room each morning, they sat down and immediately started talking to their neighbors. But these conversations were still brief or surface level, concentrated on what music was in their ipods, the status of the subways that day, or what they had for breakfast.

Another way that I saw the instrumental nature of talking was when girls were on the subways for field trips or mentioned riding the subways together at the end of the Academy day. When they took the subway as a group, the girls piled into the car and found seats, stood by the door, or squeezed into crowded cars. Girls sitting next to each other would share headphones and listen to music together, or engage in light banter. While girls said they talked or got to know each other on train rides, it seemed like it was more important that they spent time together and talked on occasion, than it was actually the length of conversation or the depth of the subject matter alone that made them feel close. Developmentally, the participants seemed to have a hard time getting to an emotional level with each other, or were still developing an awareness of what emotional closeness was for them.

Developmental talking and listening

Developmental talking and listening occurred more frequently when girls interacted with the counselors than with other girls. The participants mentioned feeling close to certain staff because they were there for them, or they listened to them, or they were "understandable" (meaning understanding). Jaz said that she and Maya had good conversations when she came in early to the Academy. "Like, she took me in, like, she was there. Like, any time I needed to talk, she there." Anastasia also felt very close to staff:

> We just like had conversation, you know, we come early in the morning, and you just start talking. It was just like that, or Sydelle, she was understandable. She listened and everything when you had a problem or just wanted to talk. And Delila too. You could relate to them. They kinda related to you. They shared their experiences.

She even felt a difference in closeness between Sydelle and Sheree, another counselor to whom she also felt close. She felt like Sheree liked to joke around a lot, but with Sydelle she could joke and get to a serious level at the same time. Finally, LaToya described that she felt like she could be herself around the counselors.

> Interviewee: I find it easier to talk to them. I can be myself.
> Interviewer: What does that mean?
> Interviewee: Not have to put on a show. I can just be myself.

In this way, it appeared that the counselors were able to scaffold the girls' to build relational skills, to develop the ability to connect emotionally, or to understand and share their emotions. One reason for this could be that the counselors were older and in a different stage of relational development. Another reason could be that the counselors understood that their role was to focus more on the campers and their needs, and less on themselves. The counselors were able to scaffold the girls in two ways, individually in their one-on-one interactions, and as a group. One-on-one scaffolding

took place in the conversations that girls had with the counselors, either early in the morning, or during lunch or down times.

Examples of group scaffolding were when Delila would facilitate group activities that dealt with emotions or feelings, such as Girl Talk. She was open and forward with the group about establishing positive interactions and relationships with each other. "You CAN have relationships with girls," Delila says. "You CAN play sports." She tells them that they may not all get along with each other 100% of the time but "we're not gonna be catty. We're gonna play sports. We're gonna have new ideas about relating to women inside and outside of sports." When issues came up in Girl Talk, Delila was not hesitant to jump in or take advantage of a teachable moment. During the stereotype discussion, she made some subtle but strong points to the girls about noticing who was laughing at which stereotypes. She urged them to keep in mind that they do not know every Black, Latina or Asian person and that in some circles it might be acceptable to joke around about stereotypes but in other circles it is not. "Friendships may have certain norms, but the same stuff does not hold true for everyone." Delila also scaffolded the girls by sharing stories during about her own life and early relationships. The staff was not shy about confronting girls' moods or issues that were affecting the group. As Aliann noticed, "if we weren't in the right mood, like we didn't want to be bothered, they understood. They talked to us and figured out what was wrong and they didn't take it personally." Janet also felt like the staff interacted well with the group. "They were easy to talk to. Yeah, during the Girl Talk, which a lot of the girls liked, the staff was very interactive. They'd give us suggestions on things we'd have problems with."

Of the two types of talking and listening that I observed or heard about, instrumental talking and listening was more common in the girls' relationships with their peers, while the developmental talking and listening occurred more in girls' relationships with staff, as the staff were able to scaffold the participants ability to feel comfortable sharing more emotions and feelings in a safe way.

Trust

The last ingredient of connectedness was *trust*. For these girls, trust seemed to be understood more as being accepted by others, or as the *absence* of feeling judged, than by the *presence* of something specific called trust. Thus, trust was even more difficult to see in the daily interactions or conversations that the girls had. Because the entire group was together much of the time, the indicators/aspects of trust that I saw were more at the level of girl with group, or girl with staff (youth-adult), than peer to peer.

Girls often talked about not feeling judged in the program, and that the Academy, although an all-girl environment like a sports team at school, was actually very different than being on a team at school. Jaz specifically noticed that girls did not judge each other at PowerPlay like they might do in school. "In basketball, everybody had an attitude. They judge you before you even get to know them. And that's one thing we didn't do when we got to PowerPlay. So it just made everybody more open, more close together." Anastasia said she felt like she got to know LaToya better because they were not wearing the protective shells that they usually did during the school day. This meant that Anastasia perceived trust might be difficult at school because they have to somehow fight through these protective shells. It is not clear whether this feeling of acceptance was due to the all-girl environment, the sports-focused nature of the

program, the girls' playing a variety of sports, the life skill work, or some combination of all of these components. What is clear, however, is that participants felt that the program was different than other contexts, and it was a place that they could feel trust, whatever that meant for each of them.

Trust seemed to be an important issue for the participants. When asked in interviews what kinds of qualities they looked for in potential friends, many of the girls mentioned honesty, someone who would not talk about them behind their back, and just being able to trust someone. Indicative of other comments, Anastasia said "mainly trust because I don't want to tell you something and then know that later on you're going to be like, "oh Anastasia told me this." Nene also mentioned trust as one of the most important things she looks for in a friend, "A person I could trust and I know that one minute they like me and the next minute they gonna talk behind my back. Janet concurred that she looks for honesty, trustworthy, "because if I tell someone something, I'm hoping that if I told them not to tell anyone, they wouldn't."

While hard to see, trust was an important ingredient of connectedness. It was something that girls talked about as an important aspect of friendship, and was related to feeling accepted in the group. But, often, trust was not one of the first ingredients that was visible between individuals. While other ingredients were involved in the initial stages of the relationship development, such as commonalities or physical proximity, trust seemed to evolve later out of the combinations of these first waves of ingredients. While girls did seem to feel a baseline level of trust for the organization when they entered the program, on a one-to-one level it was as if they needed to feel the safety of

other ingredients before they were comfortable acknowledging or allowing their trust to emerge.

Researchers have proposed distinct stages of trust-building in relationships (Lewicki, Tomlinson & Gillespie, 2006). At the first level is calculus-based trust, which is about the rational allocation or exchange of trust based on initial decisions about a person (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995, 1996, as cited by Lewicki, et al, 2006). This would be similar to girls' trusting others because they were all in the PowerPlay program together. At the next level is knowledge-based trust, where individuals are get to know each other better and feel more trust through positive interpersonal experiences. The third level, which fewer relationships reach, is identification-based trust, referring to a deeper sense of trust where individuals can identify with another's thoughts and feelings (Lewicki, et al, 2006). In a different model (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998, as cited by Lewicki et al, 2006) there are only two levels, calculus-based trust and relational trust. Here, calculus-based trust may grow to relational trust through repeated interactions, reliability and emotional connection. The participants in the program may have felt an initial level of calculus-based trust in the program because of what they read or heard about it, and knowing it was sports-related and girls-only. Then within the context of the program, girls may have experienced more trust (knowledge-based or relational) based on getting to know everyone better over the course of the six weeks, while for certain individuals in certain relationships a level of deeper relational trust was reached.

How the Ingredients and Types Fit Together: The Dyadic Pyramid

Now that I have reviewed the six ingredients that were involved in the development of connectedness, it is time to describe how the ingredients combined, and

how these combinations led to different types of connectedness. First, I will discuss the more frequent patterns of how ingredients meshed, and then I will show how the merging of ingredients led to types of connections through a series of vignettes representing the peer-to-peer and peer-adult relationship levels. To do this, I will use the visual representation of the dyadic pyramid (Figure 4.1). The dyadic pyramid represents how I saw relationships forming in the context of the program.

As referenced earlier, there seemed to be certain ingredients that were more likely to be present in the initial stage of the connectedness process. The most common initial ingredients were *commonalities*, and *physical proximity*, which were the foundation of relationships and formed the first level of the dyadic pyramid. Usually, participants identified that one or both of these two ingredients was present early on in the relationship. In addition, other ingredients such as *laughing & humor, instrumental talking and listening* or *collaboration* could be layered on to this foundation. As some relationships progressed, new ingredients would be added on at the second level, so that some relationships had two, three, four, five or perhaps all six ingredients. It is not, however, that the relationships 'had' the ingredients, but that relationships were a *context* for the individuals' perceptions of the presence of these ingredients in the space between themselves and another person. As relationships progressed, some moved to a second level of closeness, and added some of the other ingredients. Many relationships were at this second level. For example, girls who felt closer from working on project teams together, or girls who started talking more because of riding the train together, were at this level. For some girls, there was also a third level of the pyramid, where relational trust and emotional talking and listening were accessed and shared. Examples of

relationships at this level included those who knew each other before PowerPlay, and several girls' relationships with staff. Overall, fewer relationships achieved this level of closeness. Depending on the individuals involved and what ingredients were activated, the dyadic pyramids varied.

Earlier, I described the types of connectedness I observed as informational, kinship, emotional or proximal. At a higher order level, these four types can be collapsed into two main types: instrumental, which encompasses informational and proximal, and emotional, which encompasses kinship and emotional. These terms, instrumental and developmental, are used in the mentoring field to describe different orientations or pathways of how the mentoring process works. In the context of mentoring relationships, an instrumental style means that the mentor places more focus on activities, skill-building or goal attainment, while a developmental style refers to more focus placed on relationship-building (Karcher, et al, 2006). The instrumental approach focuses on the relationships as a means to other ends, such as academic outcomes, while the developmental focuses on the relationship as the end in itself. However, each style can lead to both types of outcomes. In the context of my study, I saw "instrumental" and "emotional" representing the two higher order types of connectedness that I found. Instrumental connectedness was based on more external or outward factors, which could be correlated with the activities, and skill-building emphasis mentioned above. Developmental connectedness referred to more internal, or emotional closeness, which could be correlated with the relationship focus mentioned above. Next, to further illustrate the dyadic pyramid, I will present several relationship vignettes from the program.

Peer-to-Peer Connectedness: Aliann & Venus

Aliann and Venus met on the first day and became fast friends. They learned quickly how many things they had in common, from geography, to sports and team experiences. While Venus lived on Long Island, she traveled to her grandmother's house in Queens every day after the program, and this was near where Aliann lived. They both went to Catholic schools, ran track, and had similar experiences on their track teams. Thus, they shared multiple commonalities of geography, schools, sports and teams. On her first relationship worksheet, Aliann listed Venus as someone she felt closest to that week with a rating of a '3' because "Venus and I both run, and she was my computer partner." In addition to the ingredient of commonalities, they shared other ingredients such as physical proximity, collaboration, and laughing/humor. Physical proximity came in the form of riding the subways from Manhattan to Queens. These rides could take upwards of an hour or more, leading to travel time bonding on the train. After the second week, Aliann again listed Venus as someone she felt closest to on her relationship worksheet, this time with a rating of 4.5, because "we took the train together almost every day. Also, we live in the same neighborhood and have a lot in common." Aliann felt an increase in closeness from week 1 to week 2. They shared jokes about Aliann's fear of the subway and Venus teasing her about it. Perhaps this was a reason that Venus listed "fun!," "personalities are fun and they are fun to be around," and "they are fun and we have a lot in common and understanding" on three of her relationship worksheets that listed Aliann as one of the two people she felt closest to at the Academy, with ratings of '4s' and '5s.'

Overall, the relationship between Aliann and Venus demonstrated at least four of the ingredients for connectedness: commonalities, physical proximity, collaboration, and laughing/humor. I say "at least" here because while trust was hard to see, and I did not hear their extended conversations (talking and listening), they may have felt that these ingredients were also present in their relationship. However, their relationship began with commonalities and physical proximity. These ingredients formed instrumental connectedness, through proximal and informational connections. As I mentioned, I did not observe Aliann and Venus in any deep or emotional conversations, but this is not to say that they did not occur. Thus, this relationship would be firmly on the second level of the dyadic pyramid, with strong potential to move to the third level over time.

Peer-to-Peer Connectedness: LaToya and Nakeeba and LaToya and Anastasia

LaToya was in her second year in the program. In our conversations, she shared that she did not feel a lot of connectedness in her family. She described her family as miserable, but then said that perhaps they thought of her as miserable too. She said they don't ever talk about anything, and when she tries no one responds. "So it's like I just stay in my room, in my box." Her mother worked several jobs and was never home much, and the only one in her family she felt close to was her 25-year old brother, who lived nearby and with whom she talked often. "I guess like there's a very good connection between us, and like I love that because there's nobody else I really connect to in the house." Thus, the Academy was a place for her to feel connected in a way that she did not feel like she was able to at home. Perhaps LaToya had stronger peer and program connectedness needs to compensate for her lack of connectedness at home. She said as much in our third interview when we were talking about not feeling close to one's

family, "if you don't find it one place, you can find it in another." She found

connectedness to peers, adults and the group within the context of the Academy.

LaToya became very close to both Nakeeba and Anastasia during the Academy.

With both of them, there were multiple ingredients of connectedness. One initial

ingredient was commonality. However, as mentioned earlier, they had not been close

friends prior to PowerPlay. Nakeeba mentioned LaToya as someone she felt close to in

week one because of the school connection. Likewise, LaToya listed Anastasia in her

week one worksheet because they went to the same school. Anastasia also had LaToya on

her week one worksheet saying "I feel closer to her because we already knew each other

at school but we never really had much to talk about, and now we don't stop talking :>)."

So, the commonality of school helped to form a foundation for increased closeness. It

seemed like LaToya and Anastasia bonded right off the bat, while LaToya and Nakeeba

became closer later on in the program. Perhaps this was because Anastasia is very

outgoing and social, while Nakeeba is more quiet and reserved. However, while LaToya

became close to both of them, it did not seem like Nakeeba and Anastasia became close

with each other. This shows that while some ingredients might be there 'on paper' does

not mean that they will spark closeness between individuals.

LaToya and Anastasia's relationship, or "dyadic pyramid" appeared to have the

ingredients of school commonality, physical proximity, laughing and humor,

collaboration, and trust. As for laughing and humor, both LaToya and Anastasia were

quick with a joke or a smile. I would often see them exchanging glances and smiles,

teasing one another, or hanging out with Sydelle and laughing. I saw collaboration

between them early on during the first week when they were partnered up in the

computer lab working on resumes. LaToya was stuck and having a hard time thinking of

things to put on her resume. Anastasia recounted that at first she got impatient with her,

but then realized that she could help her think of things because they went to the same

school and she knew what activities LaToya was involved in. Finally, although hard to

see, the trust ingredient was relayed through comments made by Anastasia about how

PowerPlay was different because they did not have their protective shells on that they

wore at school. When asked how she thought that she and Latoya became closer this

summer, she said:

> I guess because we were basically, stuck with each other for the whole
> eight hours of the day. And it was like, I mean it wasn't bad and all. Like I
> really got to know her better -- because in school it's kinda different.
> Because in school is like, everybody is – I don't know I just have a thing
> where I think that in school you don't really know everybody, like, that's
> because everybody's covered with something, like they're in their own
> shell. So, if you spent the whole summer with that one person and you
> really know who they are, like that. And then at school it is like, you get to
> know them in class for like two minutes or at a break during classes or at
> lunch.

Here, Anastasia seemed to say that she was able to know LaToya without her

protective shell and thus feel a sense of trust. LaToya concurred that she felt close to

Anastasia, saying that although they went to the same school, they did not talk much,

only in the one class they had together. "This summer brought us much closer. Now she

calls me her besty. It's pretty special."

Later on in the summer, I noticed that LaToya and Nakeeba also became closer.

The first ingredient that I noticed was physical proximity as the two of them started to sit

next to each other more often in the PowerPlay classroom. One day, LaToya had

Nakeeba's cell phone and was looking through all the information in it and making

comments about people, and then yelling out "Nakeeba" across the room to ask her questions, or threaten to send text messages to people. Nakeeba would yell at her not to do it, and they would smile at each other. There seemed to be a growing bond between them. This became more evident at the beginning of the fifth week when I handed out the relationship worksheets for the fourth week. All the girls began filling them out quietly at their seats. All of a sudden, LaToya yelled out "Nakeeba, how you spell your name?" and smiled. Nakeeba smiled back. It was obvious that LaToya was writing Nakeeba's name on her worksheet for someone to whom she felt close to that week. In LaToya's second interview, she said she barely knew Nakeeba at school, and "now she's my twin." Nakeeba seemed to feel equally close to LaToya, listing her as the only PowerPlay person she had on both her second and third relational maps. The key ingredients for LaToya and Nakeeba's dyadic pyramid seemed to be school commonality, physical proximity, and laughing and humor.

In both of the peer relationships discussed above, there seemed to be a lot of connectedness ingredients mixed together. This appeared to lead quickly from instrumental connectedness to developmental connectedness, especially for LaToya and Anastasia. As for where these relationships would fit on the dyadic pyramid, it seemed like LaToya and Anastasia would be on the third level, and LaToya and Nakeeba close to, if not also on the third level. However, Anastasia and Nakeeba would be on the first level. Perhaps through the commonality of their mutual friend LaToya, they may become closer in the future, but their own on-on-one relationship did not look like it had advanced past the first level of the pyramid.

Peer-to-Peer Connectedness: LaToya and Shakina

LaToya and Shakina were both second year participants at the Academy and not particularly friendly with each other. In interviews, I learned that although there was no animosity between them, neither of them seemed to have any desire to get to know each other or spend additional time together. At the end of the six weeks, when the placements were set for the internships, I said to myself "oh no" when I saw that Shakina and LaToya were placed at the same company for the two-week internship. I feared the worst. When I spoke with both of them after the program, I was pleasantly surprised to hear that they had developed a close connection through the internship process. I did not get to observe this relationship change as it occurred, but heard corroboration of it equally from both girls.

I first learned about this new connectedness during my interview with Shakina in August. When I asked her whom she felt closest to of all the girls in the program she surprised me by saying LaToya:

> I think, really interestingly, in the end, I felt closest to Latoya, because of the internship and we worked a lot together and we AIMed each other all the time, and she told me some things, and I told her some things. So we were pretty open with each other. And, it was funny because last year I didn't really like her that much. We didn't click.

The very next day, I met with LaToya, and when I asked her if there was someone that she changed her opinion about during the program, she mentioned Shakina, and went on to tell me that they she did not feel so close to her last year, but that "after we did the internship together I got to know her better. She's really cool." She mentioned how they talked about different things. She learned that Shakina writes poetry and she read some of

her poems. "It reminded me of me a little bit." Shakina described the process in more

depth:

> I guess us being forced together, not forced, but we were the only two that
> knew each other in the entire workplace, so it was only natural that we
> would work together. And after that was out of the way, we'd go out for
> lunch together, or something like that and we got to talking. And we
> realized that a lot of things we had were in common – we had a lot of
> things in common. And so we talked more about that and we became a
> little bit closer. So it was really cool.

Shakina told me that they shared common tastes in music, religious beliefs and

views on sexuality and gender. Their connection seemed involve the ingredients of

collaboration and physical proximity, which then led to the discovery of internal

commonalities, and generated developmental connectedness. This relationship also

portrayed how trust can evolve over time from calculus-based to knowledge-based or

relational trust based on shared experiences. This relationship highlights the idea that

sometimes within group contexts, there may be few opportunities for individuals to have

one-on-one time to get to know each other outside of the group. Shakina talked about

this difference between group and one-on-one interactions:

> When the whole group is together, you might not be able to individually
> get to know a person, but you get to know the entire group. And that helps
> in certain situations, but then, once you get that individual attention with
> someone and you notice that you're a lot more similar than when you first
> thought, like LaToya and I did last year. We participated as a group, so we
> didn't really get to know each other. But now we have that one-on-one
> thing, so we're like – yeah.

During this one-on-one time, they got to know each other in a deeper way than

they had in the two programs they had been through together. Their closeness seemed to

be on a more intimate level than the other peer-peer relationship examples. Knowing this,

it was interesting when I observed the dynamics of the group when I saw them one more

time in November. Approximately 15 of the girls attended a PowerPlay fundraising function. I noticed that when the group was taking photos, or when they were all seated at a table, I did not see Shakina and LaToya interact at all. LaToya hung with Selena, her close friend since before PowerPlay. It made me realize that perhaps the intimacy they created during the internship did not fit within the group context, or within the social structure and roles to which they had already subscribed. In our first interview, Shakina had expressed that she was outgoing, unique and not fitting in. She matter of factly shared that "I'm in the outcast group," and said she was used to feeling social rejection. In fact, one of her outlets that made her feel good is her poetry, which became a connecting point with LaToya. Therefore, while this connectedness that they shared may not have led to more of a day-to-day friendship, or may have been short-lived as they negotiated the boundaries of acceptability in their social circles, it was still important nonetheless. They were learning how to connect and share personal parts of themselves in an intimate way.

In the relationship between Shakina and LaToya, the main ingredients were physical proximity and commonalities of internal factors, such as beliefs and opinions. Unlike the other examples, where the commonalities were based more on external factors such as school, sports or subways, the commonalities here were based more on internal factors such as thoughts and feelings. Their connectedness was more emotional, but also more of a one-on-one vs. socially acknowledged connectedness. This suggests that adolescents, while experiencing emotional connectedness with others for perhaps the first time, are still greatly influenced by peers and their social circles. This example also indicates that it is not possible to predict when or what types of connectedness will be

generated between two people. Moreover, groups or after school programs can do more to promote the fusion of connectedness ingredients between individuals by intentionally placing youth from different social networks in one-on-one situations so they can get to know each other better. Many youth find support in groups, but many youth may also hide out in groups. It is important for youth to engage in both group, as well as one-on-one interactions to practice their relational skills and learn more about themselves and others because both types of interactions can create value or create new pathways for connectedness.

Peer to Adult Connectedness: Anastasia & Sydelle

Anastasia was bubbly and outgoing, and at times a chatterbox. She described herself as "friendly. I don't have a problem making friends. I'm outgoing. I like trying new things. I'm just open to experiences and stuff. I'm still young." She was not shy about speaking up or sharing her opinion in the program. As the weeks went by, she began hanging out more and more with Sydelle, one of the counselors. When I observed the third and fifth weeks of the program, I often saw her sitting with Sydelle, or hanging with Sydelle and LaToya, or Sydelle and Sheree, another counselor. Sydelle and Sheree were teammates from high school and now attended the same college and played softball together. Physically, Sydelle was big and strong, with an easygoing personality. She took everything in stride and never seemed to get ruffled or upset. All the girls loved her and she quickly became a favorite, especially to Anastasia. One of the commonalities they shared was that they were both Latina. "We come, like, from the same background," Anastasia said about her and Sydelle. Another ingredient that spurred their relationship development was physical proximity, and then talking and listening. Anastasia identified

that Sydelle was always around when she had to leave for the day. "It was her and Sheree, because Sheree was also one of my favorites. They were like always around, so I liked them the most." This highlighted that physical proximity was present. Anastasia goes on to describe that her relationship with Sydelle and Sheree were quite different, and how she felt closer to Sydelle:

> My relationship with Sydelle and then with Sheree were, like two different levels. Because, like Sydelle, like, I could tell her anything at all. And then Sheree I could tell her anything but for like a certain extent, because Sheree was like, I don't know she was, like, I don't want to make her sound weird, like. I don't know because Sheree likes to joke around, like every time we spoke to each other it was like about a joke. And Sydelle, like I can joke with her and be serious at the same time. I guess it was different.

Anastasia seemed to struggle a bit when talking about the two counselors. On the one hand, perhaps she felt uncomfortable about saying something that would make Sheree sound weird to me, while on the other hand, her stumbling could also have reflected an internal struggle to cognitively understand or process the way she felt like she related to the two of them on different levels. Her relationship with Sydelle was more emotional and her relationship with Sheree was more instrumental. Anastasia had mentioned in interviews that she was usually the youngest in her groups of friends, and liked to have older friends. During PowerPlay, she gravitated to Sydelle, and Sheree, and listed them along with Jade on her last relationship worksheet as the three people that she felt closest to that week. The major ingredients in Anastasia and Sydelle's dyadic pyramid were commonality of ethnic background, physical proximity, and talking and listening. As a result of these, it was clear that Anastasia perceived trust between them. The types of connectedness that their ingredients created were proximal, kinship, and

emotional, or both instrumental and emotional. On the dyadic pyramid, this relationship would probably be on the third level from Anastasia's perspective, but perhaps not from Sydelle's. Because I did not speak with the counselors about their relationships with the participants, I cannot tell how Sydelle would describe this relationship. This also brings up the question of relationship balance and give and take. The same relationship may be perceived differently by those within it, based on their perceptions of the ingredients as well as their interpretations of those perceptions, and the importance of the relationship.

Peer to Adult Connectedness: Aliann & Jade

An example of a different kind of peer-adult relationship is Aliann and Jade. In our first interview, Aliann described herself as "fun, energetic and happy." She loves sports, and competes on the track and tennis teams at her school. She feels very close to her parents, who have been her greatest influences, and her brother, who she describes as her "partner in crime" and her main tennis partner. She also feels very close to her teammates on both teams and says her teammates are "like my second family, especially track cuz I'm with them all year." Aliann is very good natured, upbeat and eager to learn, and seemed to come into the program with high levels of connectedness in many of the domains of her life, particularly family and school.

While I did not see her interact with Jade during the program, it was clear that Aliann looked up to her a great deal. At the end of the program, she shared with me how influential Jade was for her. She discussed that, of all the staff, she felt closest to Jade, saying, "because it was interesting hearing how she got to where she is, like getting a full scholarship to a Division I school." More than that, she described that she saw Jade more like a big sister. "She was just, she gave me a lot of great advice on staying focused with

my athletics and my studies. And she kind of encouraged me to be better in what I do

than I am." At 16, Aliann is one of the older girls in the program. Her story illustrates

the concept of identification, when individuals seek connections with others whose

qualities they admire or would like to emulate for themselves (Josselson, 1992). As she

idealizes the fact that Jade has received an athletic scholarship for college, she is using it

as a blueprint for motivation for her own life.

Later on in our conversation, Aliann described how the web of appreciation had a

profound effect on how she thought about herself:

> Because when Jade gave me the rope, she said all this stuff, and I was like
> 'wow. I didn't know I was like that. She said that I was athletic. I don't
> know. I just play sports. And she said that I was a nice person. I didn't
> give her problems and stuff, and I don't know. It made me think of myself
> differently. That I'm a good person, I'm a really good person and I don't
> know.

For Aliann to hear this positive feedback from Jade, whom she looked up to so

much was a transformative moment of validation for her and shows that nonfamilial

adults can play a powerful role in adolescents' lives, not only by encouraging, and

supporting them, but by validating who they are, or who they are becoming. In this case,

in terms of the dyadic pyramid, while this relationship may have displayed only

instrumental connectedness and fallen only in the first or second level of the pyramid, it

served as a strong source of validation for Aliann. Therefore, this example demonstrates

that both instrumental and emotional relationships can have great value for adolescents.

Conclusion of Connectedness Findings

As the dyadic pyramid and these vignettes demonstrate, there is no one exact

formula for connectedness. While there were particular ingredients that surfaced and

coalesced in different ways to form closeness, there was not one specific way that this happened. Rather, the relationships experienced in the program were dynamic and fluid, developing over time within the context of the program and its combination of structured and unstructured activities. While all of the relationships began with a foundation of commonalities and/or physical proximity, some relationships gained ingredients and built closeness over time, while others became closer more quickly. Certain relationships had more ingredients, although a greater number of ingredients did not predict, and were not always necessary, for a greater sense of connectedness in the relationship. As for types of connectedness created in the peer-peer relationships, the more common types were instrumental (proximal and informational). Again, similar to how the ingredients meshed, these two types of instrumental connectedness often set the stage for the later emergence of emotional connectedness. Perhaps in some relationships, instrumental connectedness was necessary as a steppingstone to emotional connectedness, while in others not. In addition, there was a wide variation in the girls' abilities to create or sustain emotional connectedness, due to maturity, social experiences, or relational competence. How the girls experienced connectedness in this program varied because of their individual personalities, demographics and background characteristics. Experiences of connectedness vary across individuals, and within individuals across settings, and adolescents will also differ in how they interpret how connected they feel to various contexts. Thus, relationships are dynamic and fluid and how they progress often relates to the needs of the individuals involved, and the timing of the relationship in their lives. Each dyadic pyramid is different, just like each person is different.

To round out the connectedness findings, I will move to research question 1b), which asked how connectedness affected girls' satisfaction with the program. Quantitatively, satisfaction was assessed through an interview question that asked participants to rate the Academy experience on a scale of 1-10. The group level mean for satisfaction was 8.8 (on a 10-point scale). Twelve of 13 girls rated it an "8" or higher (92%) so there was not a lot of individual variability in the responses. The one girl who rated the program below an "8" was Iris, who said it was a "5" but mentioned that if she had talked more and gotten to know people better her rating would have been higher. As for the associations of participant satisfaction with perceptions of connectedness, multiple domains of connectedness were assessed, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Regarding connectedness, there were no significant changes on any of the connectedness scales, with the exception of connectedness to neighborhood, which declined. Scores on the Feelings of Relatedness Scale remained relatively stable (5.51 at the pre-survey and 5.64 on the post-survey on a 7-point scale). On the Feelings of Relatedness to others in the Academy, administered only at the post, the group mean was 5.86. Iris, who rated the program a "5," the lowest satisfaction rating among the participants, felt less connected to both other people in her life and other program participants than other girls. Her individual means for Feelings of Relatedness with others and Feelings of Relatedness to others in the Academy relationships were among the lowest of the group.

In addition, on the relational maps, the mean for connectedness increased from the first map to the last. Nine of the 12 girls who completed more than one map indicated PowerPlay individuals on their second or third relational maps. Overall, girls reported

high perceptions of connectedness with PowerPlay participants after the program, as well as high levels of satisfaction with the program. These findings may suggest a positive association between connectedness and satisfaction, perhaps meaning that the more connected participants felt to those in the program, the more they were satisfied with the experience. It could also indicate that the more participants were satisfied with the experience, the more connected they felt to others in the program. However, due to low variability in these measures, no conclusions can be made.

This study provides insights into the processes of connectedness development in a sports-based program. In the next section, I will share more in depth about the findings related to self-esteem and self-esteem processes.

Part II: Self-Esteem Findings

As reviewed in Chapter 2, self-esteem is complex and difficult to measure. Most researchers have agreed that it is an overall evaluation of the self, although less clear is the process by which individuals determine this evaluation. This overall self-evaluation is composed of many mini–evaluations in a variety of contexts. Therefore, the composite evaluation is often referred to as global self-worth, while the domain-specific self-assessments are considered 'contextual' self-worth (e.g., family, school, or 'relational' self-worth (Harter, 1987). The self is by nature multidimensional, and self-assessments can vary based on what domains are being considered as well as the salience and importance of that domain to the individual (Harter, 1987).

In this section, I will focus on perceptions of competence and social support, the two elements that are critical antecedents to global and contextual self-worth. First, I will discuss self-esteem through the participants' eyes, looking at how they define it and

presenting their thoughts about whether or not the program helped to increase their self-esteem. Then, I will report on the findings related to the two antecedents, focusing on three relevant domains: athletic competence, career and future self, and global self-worth. To do this, I will use Harter's model of self-worth (1987) that illustrates how higher perceptions of competence and strong support from significant others leads to increases in self-esteem which lead to positive outcomes, such as:

```
┌──────────────────┐
│  Perceptions of  │  ⇨
│    Competence    │        ┌──────────────┐
└──────────────────┘        │  Self-Esteem │
         ⇕                  │ (Domain and  │  ⇨   ┌──────────┐
                            │   Global)    │      │ Outcomes │
┌──────────────────┐        └──────────────┘      └──────────┘
│  Social support  │  ⇨
└──────────────────┘
```
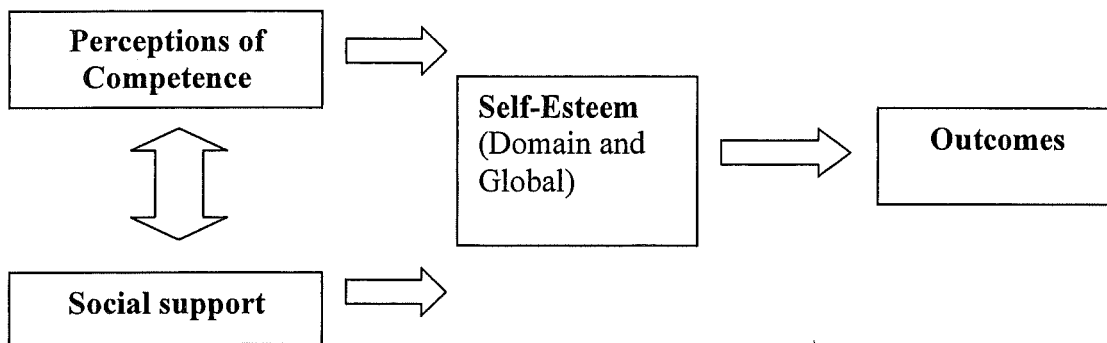
More specifically for this study, the model looks like this:

```
┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────────┐
│  Perceptions of  │  ⇨  │   Self-Esteem    │     │      Outcomes        │
│    Competence    │     │   Most relevant  │     │    in this study:    │
└──────────────────┘     │   domains in this│     │                      │
         ⇕               │   study:         │  ⇨  │ -Prepared for        │
                         │                  │     │  future              │
                         │ -Global Self     │     │ -Willingness to try  │
                         │  Worth           │     │  new things          │
┌──────────────────┐     │ -Athletic        │     │ -More open-          │
│  Social Support  │  ⇨  │  Competence      │     │  minded              │
└──────────────────┘     │ -Career & Future │     │ -Better              │
                         │  Self            │     │  communicator        │
                         └──────────────────┘     │ -More                │
                                                  │  initiative/agency   │
                                                  └──────────────────────┘
```
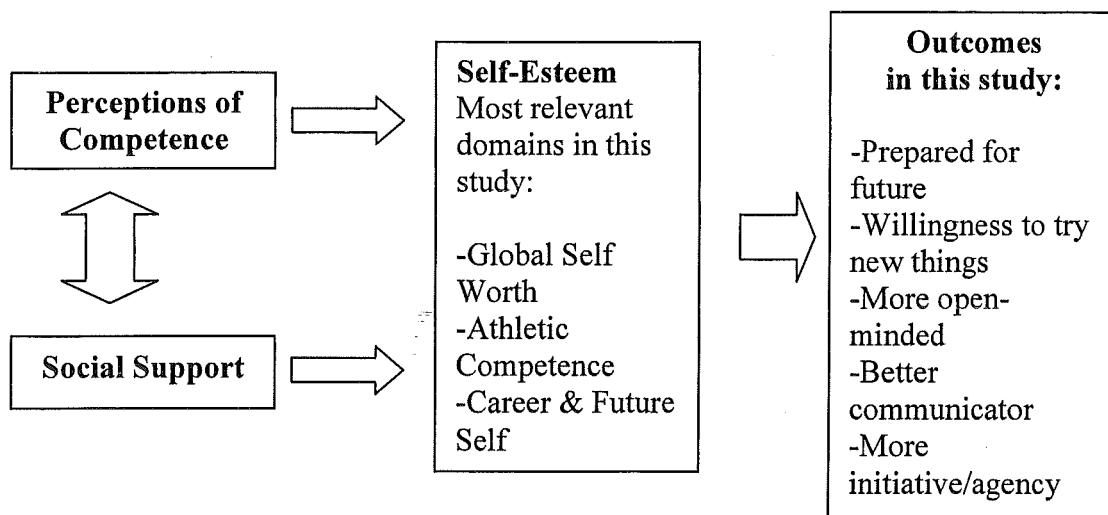
For the girls in the study, having higher perceptions of competence and social support seemed to be associated with higher levels of self-esteem in at least three

domains: global self-worth, athletic competence, and career and future self. In their interviews, girls talked about how feeling better about themselves in these domains was related to their experiences in the Academy. Rather than use more traditional, quantitative outcomes for self-esteem, such as grades or measures of psychological wellbeing, I interpreted outcomes as concrete events, actions or behaviors that girls identified as different because of their participation in the Academy, and for which they could pinpoint specific examples. I will discuss the outcomes in five main areas: future preparation, willingness to try new things, open-mindedness, communication, and initiative/agency. The way that I am presenting the outcomes is by letting the girls themselves decide what is different in their lives. Because of the qualitative nature of this study and the interpretivist framework in which I am working, this is the way that makes the most sense to present what girls feel are outcomes, or changes in how they feel about, or are acting in their lives.

<div align="center">What Self-Esteem Meant to Participants</div>

When asked how they would define self-esteem, most of the girls responded simply and directly, with words similar to those used by researchers who have studied the construct for years. Responses included "how you view yourself and how you put yourself out there," "the way you think of yourself," "how you carry yourself," "how you feel about yourself, and how you look at yourself, how you feel about your true self on the inside," "what you think of yourself," "having faith in yourself," and "how you view yourself." Only Jaz did not have an immediate definition for self esteem. Instead, she exclaimed that she did not have any self-esteem. When pressed, she said it meant "believing in, not even believing in yourself, like, loving yourself."

When asked whether the Academy helped them to increase their self-esteem, all girls (with the exception of Jaz and LaToya) responded that they felt like they came to PowerPlay with a healthy sense of self-esteem, and the program was a positive reinforcement for them. Overall, participants reported high scores on the global self-worth subscale of the Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (Harter, 1988) both before (3.48) and after (3.51) the program. Moreover, seven girls (64%) reported at least a 3.8 score for global self worth on the pre-survey. This is not surprising given that researchers have often shown that African American adolescent girls have high self-esteem levels and often do not suffer the declines in self-esteem that many Caucasian girls do at adolescence (Brown, et al., 1998; Henriques, & Calhoun, 1999; Carlson, et al., 2000; Gray & Hafdahl, 2000; Siegel, et al., 1999; Biro, et al., 2006; Greene, & Way, 2005; Kimm et al., 2002; Rotheram-Borus, et al., 1996).

Zelda echoed the voices of other participants when she said "I had good self-esteem when I got there, but it definitely helped remind me that every girl that was there was great in their own way. It definitely helps you continue to build up your self-esteem, or continue with your good self-esteem." Nene said she felt pretty good before the program and that PowerPlay made it stay that way. Nakeeba also felt this way, saying that her experience at PowerPlay was "a positive effect, it's a reassuring effect, like, I know what I'm doing is right. Like I should keep continuing it and better myself, basically." Esme thought her self-esteem was very high coming into the program, but she did feel that the program helped her. "I was able to learn how people are different from me and how it's harder for other people to keep their self-esteem up. So since I saw it I was like I know this happens to people, so I'm not gonna let it happen to me." While Iris

did not know whether the program helped to increase her self-esteem or not, she did feel like it make her stand up for herself more. Janet thought PowerPlay let her be herself and not have to pretend or try to be someone else. Only one girl, LaToya, did not think PowerPlay had much of an impact on her self-esteem. Next I will discuss the girls shared perceptions of self-competence, the first antecedent in the self-esteem model.

Self-esteem Antecedent #1: Perceptions of Competence

In Harter's model (1987), perceived competence is one of the key drivers of self-esteem. Thus, as I analyzed data, I was asking the questions, "do the girls feel like they are gaining competence? I defined competence as specific skills girls learned, and examined how they thought these skills helped them. Participants in the study expressed many ways that they were developing competencies, or increasing their perceptions of competence at different tasks. Not only did they talk about learning and improving skills, but they also indicated that they felt good about what they were learning. There were three common areas in which participants felt that they improved their skills: sports and fitness, networking and communicating with others, and career and workplace development. I will now present the findings about girls' skill development during the program by describing these areas in turn. Understanding how the girls perceived and described their own skill increases will shed further light on the processes of self-esteem enhancement for these girls.

Sports & Fitness: Stamina, Stretching, Sport Skills, and Attitude

During the interviews, 11 of the 13 girls (85%) reported that they thought PowerPlay's Summer Sports Leadership Academy helped them to improve their skills related to sports or fitness. They mentioned different dimensions including

increasing their stamina, improving sports skills, learning how to stretch, or

improving their attitudes towards working hard. Selena, Gabby, and Zelda talked

about how the program helped them improve their physical stamina. Selena

described how she could run more and did not get tired as easily:

> I would say I improved like my body wise. I remember running, for
> example, I wouldn't finish laps. I emember last year I got to four and I got
> tired. Interviewer: Stamina? Yeah, stamina, like cardio and whatnot. It
> increased a lot. I didn't get tired. I didn't get tired as fast. I really didn't
> get tired really.

Janet also noticed improvement in her stamina. In our November interview she

commented that:

> With the exercises, like the warm up in the beginning where we'd be
> running, I felt that really helped me this year when I took the Pacer test (a
> physical activity assessment) in school. It really helped me. Last year, I
> ran 56. This year, I ran 90.

Finally, Zelda was thrilled that she was able to keep up with the other girls in the

program:

> Overall, I didn't know that I had so much energy in me. I thought I was
> really a couch potato. That was one of the things I really fought with my
> mom with about entering the program. "I'm going to be the fattest girl
> there. They're going to laugh at me because I can't do sports." I really
> found myself pushing myself and keeping up with the rest of the girls,
> even the skinniest ones I was keeping up with, and that was great to me.

Other girls mentioned improving skills in individual sports, or learning techniques

and tips for staying in shape, such as stretching. Nene and Venus were both excited that

they learned how to swim for the first time. Nakeeba, a member of her high school

basketball team, was happy that she learned some new moves from Maya, one of the staff

and a former collegiate All-American player. Jaz, also a basketball player, was happy that

she learned a lot in volleyball, because her basketball coach at school asked her to play

volleyball this year. Several girls mentioned improving their skills in multiple sports. Shakina identified her improvement in softball and tennis, saying "I think I did better in tennis. I actually made it over the net a lot more times than last year. And I actually could volley back and forth for a little while." Venus, a track star, not only learned how to swim in the program, but also improved her basketball and volleyball skills. "We had a lot of drills that we kept on doing at the wall. I think that helped lot. The drills mostly helped because we had to like throw the ball against the wall for like a good time to kind of train us, or whatever."

While two girls (Janet and Anastasia) appreciated learning how important it was to stretch before sports, other girls reported that they improved intangibles like their attitude or competitiveness related to sports. Aliann thought the program enhanced her competitive spirit. "I'm more competitive now, already I can see it. I want to be better. I want it really badly and it has just made me more competitive. I have a more competitive fire, I guess." LaToya noticed that she had a better attitude this year at the Academy and a greater willingness to work hard. "I think I'm kind of more ready to go, more willing. Last year, I'm like, "I don't want to play it.""

Overall, there was a sense from the girls that when they played sports in PowerPlay it gave them a feeling of freedom and release. Janet described the sense of freedom she felt:

> You didn't have to pretend that you couldn't do a certain thing or that you didn't have to pretend. You could just play and do whatever you felt you wanted to do. I felt like – because when you play in front of other people, you kind of put yourself down a bit, and you don't really play to your fullest ability. When you were there, you could just play. It was wonderful.

In addition, Nene thought it was great for her to break out of her shell and not be lazy, "like you just having fun, you're running around, you're doing – you're playing a game. I'm actually being active and it's fun to try something different and to break out your shell and stop being lazy. So you have fun." Their comments indicated that they thought that PowerPlay was a safe space for girls to learn and practice sport skills, and to challenge themselves to stretch their boundaries of what they thought they could physically do.

The survey results showed that the group level mean for athletic competence stayed virtually the same (3.0 to 2.93), individually. However, three girls' initial scores for athletic competence were 4.0, 3.8 and 3.8 (on a four-point scale), which leaves little or no room for improvement. Given the small n, very high scores from some girls could mask growth by other girls. On the other hand, there were seven girls whose mean scores for athletic competence were below 3.0 at the pre-survey. Of these seven girls, four (Selena, Zelda, Nene, and Shakina) increased their perceptions of athletic competence by at least .2, with Shakina increasing by .4 and Zelda by .6. As mentioned earlier, offering multiple sports in the program could be an equalizer to balance out the variety of skill levels that the girls bring to the program. For some girls, who had lower perceived athletic competence at the outset, this might be both a positive and a negative. On the plus side, the sports rotated quickly so if they did not feel like they were good at one sport, a new one was not far away. The other plus was that because the sports rotated weekly, there were opportunities for a variety of girls to be leaders or demonstrate their competence in their favorite sport. So instead of certain girls always being the "superstar" or others always being the worst one on the court, girls could take turns or play different

roles based how well they performed at different sports. On the other hand, if a girl with low perceptions of athletic competence liked a sport and felt like she was doing well at it, before she knew it the week was over and she had to start all over again in a new sport.

Networking and Communication Skills

The second area in which girls reported improving their skills was networking and communicating with others. These are both important to the program, as one of PowerPlay's mantras is "building the new girl network." Moreover, these are acquired skills that the girls learned by practicing over and over again in a real-world setting. During the program, the girls went on weekly field trips to sports companies, including HBO Sports, Madison Square Garden, and ESPN, or sports events such as Pro Beach Volleyball, women's professional basketball, or a tennis tournament. Most of these trips had special logistics set up for the group, such as film screenings at ESPN and HBO Sports, followed by panel question and answer sessions with corporate businesswomen, many of whom were women of color, like the participants. I attended several of these trips during my observation weeks in New York. Each trip was an opportunity for the girls to see different work environments, meet new people, and practice their networking skills. As a result, many girls commented that they learned how to network and communicate better through the program.

To help girls learn what networking is and how to become proficient at it, the staff first explained the concept and broke it down into its core components. The following excerpt from my field notes details this process of first introducing the concept and then practicing it through an activity:

Delila (Life Skills Director) asks the group, "What is networking, what it's about?" They discuss networking for a few minutes. Delila talks about how it's really about building a connection with someone. She asks them to form two circles, an inside circle and an outside circle, with the girls facing each other. She tells them that when she plays music they will walk around, but when the music stops they need to network with whomever is standing opposite them in the circle. The girls start walking slowly as if they are playing musical chairs. Delila and the staff joke about it, and tell them to keep moving. Jaz is strutting a little bit. Esme takes really big steps. They do three rounds of this activity. In between each round, Delila asks them questions about situations that might occur. She asks them what they would do if they feel the conversation is dying down or they don't know what to say to the other person? Someone suggests asking questions. Then Samantha has the last one. "I could turn away, say excuse me I have to burp" and then she turns around, pretends that she's thinking of something else to say then turns back. Delila laughs and puts the music on again for the next round. After the networking session, Delila asks them "What do you do if the person you're talking to just ate a hunk of garlic?" They all crack up, and say things like offer them some gum or altoids.

This vignette displays how the staff intentionally set up activities to teach concepts and reinforce the girls' skill acquisition. Some girls may have been more natural networkers than others, but everyone learned how they could create new relationships and request support from others. Many businesswomen they encountered in the summer shared with them their opinions, such as that women still did not network as well as men, or that they themselves did not formally learn how to network effectively. In the program, the participants were taught that networking was not a dirty word, and that it could be an essential component to their future success. For many of them, this struck a chord.

Anastasia said that networking was one of the biggest things she learned in the program. "Networking taught me that it's always going to be put yourself out there to let them know, like, who you are and what you like to do and what are you aiming for." Aliann saw herself improve her skills in this area, although she did not consider herself a

natural networker. When asked how she got better at it, she said, "I just listened to what you guys said when you taught us about networking and I just tried it and it worked." In fact, I saw this in action on many field trips and events, as I watched Aliann introducing herself to the women after the presentation, asking questions or soliciting advice. Shakina practiced her networking skills by following up by email with women from Madison Square Garden and ESPN after visits to their office. "I told her, thank you so much for inviting me back. You motivated me a lot, thank you so much. And I think the next day or something like that, she emails me back, saying, 'oh, Shakina, you just made my day. And any time you want an internship, just let me know.'

LaToya summed it up succinctly with what she learned. "To never burn your bridges. To keep in contact with anyone you've met over the summer." She had been particularly struck by the warm response that one of the counselors (a former program participant) had received from a senior employee at Madison Square Garden, whom she had stayed in touch with ever since going on this field trip as an Academy participant five years ago. Even Iris, one of the shyest girls in the program, felt like she was better able to talk to adults after practicing her communication and networking skills. "I think it made me more confident. Back then if I had to speak to a grown up, I'd get really, really quiet, and then my heart would beat fast or whatever. But now my heart doesn't beat fast, but I'm still quiet." Before the program, Selena had discussed wanting to be better at asking questions and keeping a conversation flowing. After the program, she said:

> I definitely learned the communication skills, like to ask the question. Because I didn't know how to do that before. I didn't know how to just go out and just ask a question, see what happens. So I learned definitely to do that. I think I became more outgoing than I was.

Zelda said that communicating better was one of her life lessons from the program. "Number 3 is how to communicate better. Communicating with a group of girls around your age, I think is the hardest thing to do."

Another way that many of them worked on communication was through Prepare Impact, the personal assertiveness training mentioned earlier. I attended one of the four Mondays of the program, and observed the girls participating in discussions, stretching and drills. The facilitator taught them to be more aware of their physical space, and non-verbal forms of communication, through various skits and activities where they learned how to communicate more clearly. As I noted in my field notes:

> As the girls each went, they had a tendency to say, "no, it's okay" when Darnell asked them to go to the party. So Kim kept interrupting with "is it okay?" to make them think about how they are communicating. "Don't say it's okay if it's not, she said, "it makes it gray." A few girls later chuckled as successive girls would say "no it's okay" trying to turn down his advances.

In the day that I observed Prepare Impact, there were discussions of relationship issues, and exercises to learn kicks and blocks to fight off unwanted advances. While the girls did not always seem comfortable with the physical fighting moves, or practicing being taken down by a 300-pound male (safely), the exercises were effective because they simulated real life situations. Even though the girls knew it was 'practice,' they still seemed to have an adrenaline rush each time it was their turn. Prepare Impact was a safe space for the girls to learn about their voices and their bodies and what they could do. Within the structure of the Academy, there seemed to be many safe spaces, where girls appeared comfortable. Prepare Impact was another 'safe space' along with the sports, life skill activities such as Girl Talk, field trips and group projects. By safe space, I mean a

place where girls felt both physically and emotionally safe to try new things, express themselves openly, laugh at themselves, and connect with others.

Career/Professional

The third area where participants discussed building their skills and feeling more competent was career and workplace development. In the program, girls learned both practical skills, such as how to copy, send faxes, and write resumes and thank you notes, along with more intangible skills like how to develop a professional identity. For example, Selena said, "I learned how to keep your professional and personal life separate. For instance, e-mails, have a professional e-mail. I also learned dress for success, like certain things to wear because it's always good to refresh that part." Zelda felt like the program helped lessen her fears about the workplace. "Number 2 is how to put myself out there for people and not be afraid. Like if I go on an interview, or if it's an internship, it's to not be afraid, and show them what I have to offer." Esme thought the program helped her to write better thank you notes. "Yeah, how to write a professional letter to somebody who did a favor to you, a thank you note. Yeah, I knew how to write them, but they showed me the formal format about it, and the specific words that you should use for certain situations."

Most of the girls had not worked in an office setting before and were pleasantly surprised that it was not as scary as they thought. Several girls commented on how nice everyone was in their office during their internship experience. Many of them talked about learning how to file, contact people and update lists, and perform other office tasks. Shakina learned how to use a Mac computer better and how to fill out spreadsheets.

Venus was excited about learning all about the insurance business in her time at her internship:

> Oh, we learned a lot in our internship. We, actually, did get to do those jobs because each person in each section of the building had their own had a certain part of it for their client's insurance. So we actually looked at endorsement and policies and compared them and we put like binders and we did like the whole – you know, it was like all the baseball teams in the United States, we did that whole file. Yeah, we did like the whole thing from New York to Florida, all of them.

Venus, who came into the program with the goal of becoming a pharmacist, was now entertaining thoughts about insurance because she enjoyed her internship experience so much. For many of the girls, the domain of career and future self became more salient through the program because of the work they did and the skills they learned. It became more real for them.

Throughout the Academy, the focus was on learning and practicing skills in the areas of sports, networking and communication, and career within a safe, supportive environment. Girls reported feeling that they increased their perceptions of competence in one or more of these areas. Developing skills and competencies is an important way that individuals may feel better about themselves. Typically, when one improves her skills in an activity, she experiences parallel increases in levels of enjoyment, or motivation and persistence in the activity, especially if this is an important domain (Gould & Weiss, 1987; Weiss, 1995).

Self Esteem Antecedent #2: Social Support

According to Harter's model, the second major antecedent to self-esteem is social support. Social support is important because other people act as a 'looking glass self' (Cooley, 1902) allowing an individual to consider how others view her and thereby

influencing how one feels about herself. During the first interview, each girl discussed people who had a major influence on her life. Within the context of the Summer Leadership Academy, I was interested in how the girls experienced the staff. I wanted to know whether the counselors had become significant to the girls, and how they fit into girls' individual and collective puzzle of connectedness and self-esteem. As we have already seen from the connectedness findings, the counselors played a role in building girls' relational skills and scaffolding their burgeoning levels of emotional competence. In the next section, I review the major influences in girls' lives before they came to PowerPlay. Then, I discuss the staff's role as facilitators of learning sports and life skills, and as a "looking glass" for the girls.

Major Influences before PowerPlay

Understanding who the girls considered as major influences in their lives when they entered the Academy provides a background for better understanding the participants' relationships with the Academy counselors. In my first interviews with the girls, I asked them who they felt had had the most influence on their lives. Of the 13 girls, eight of them mentioned their mothers, two said both parents, one said her father, one said her sister, and one said a PowerPlay director from the previous summer. There were several themes that emerged from the responses regarding how these individuals influenced the girls, including "support and encouragement," "always pushing me," and "setting an example." Nene's response was typical for how the girls described their mother's support and encouragement:

> Cause she's always there for me through everything. Like right now, like what I told you about, she's there for me and she's trying to be strong for me and my family and supporting us. She's always supporting me in

everything I do. Even if I make a mistake, she tells me to learn from it.
So it's like she has a greater impact on me cause she's been through a lot
and she's trying to make my life better so I won't have to go through so
many things that she did.

The mother-daughter bond seemed strong, and the girls reported feeling like their

mothers always knew what they needed. Nakeeba described it, "because she always

knows like – I don't know, she just always knows and like she tries to encourage me like

when I'm sad or something and she'll just keep messin' with me and then I just give in."

The girls also seemed to understand that their mothers were intent on their daughters

having more opportunities or making better choices than they had. This led to the girls'

acceptance of how much their mothers or parents pushed them, which was the second

major theme expressed by the girls. Venus described how her mom pushes her. "Well,

not like pushed like force, but she tells me that I can do better and she makes me feel

better about myself. She knows my strengths and my weaknesses. She works really

hard." Even if they don't like it in the moment, they know it is coming from a good place,

because, as Aliann says, "they don't expect anything less than the best from me and my

brother and I like that." Zelda described how her father pushes her:

I really value what he says because he always puts my best interests in
heart. And like he pushes me because when I got into Arts Academy, I
was a little intimidated because my passion is singing, but when I realized
so many other people are singing at school, I kind of said, "Well maybe
I'll be a lawyer," but he's always the one that, "No, you want to be in
musical theater. Go for that. You just have to work a little harder because
it's not going to come as easy." So he's always just the one pushing me.

The third theme was that girls also looked to their mother as examples, for both

what to do and what not to do. This was exemplified by Selena, who discussed the

dichotomy of good and bad influences within her family:

Because my mom, she's a single mother, so she does a lot and she influences me to do better also in school and you don't have to worry about little things like she worries about. And also my family, so even like bad decisions that they might make, that influences me to do the opposite of that or to just go on a different path.

Anastasia also discussed this dichotomy, while choosing to focus on the good aspects of her mother and how strong she was. "She had me young, and I look at her like a strong woman and independent because it's not easy for a 15-year old to have a kid and still be in school. And she's a college graduate so she did everything she had to do. So I really look up to her." Understanding the participants' relationships with those whom they consider major influences on their lives, and how they felt supported, encouraged and pushed by those they love, provides a backdrop for examining how the counselors influenced the girls and provided support for self-esteem growth within the context of the Academy.

PowerPlay Staff Influence

Most of the girls acknowledged that the staff influenced the way they thought about themselves or their futures. Sometimes it was because of things they said to the girls, but other times, it was just things they did in their own life that were aspirational for the girls. For example, Jade was a powerful influence for many girls because she obtained a college scholarship for basketball. The girls who loved basketball (such as Jaz or Nakeeba) looked up to her for that, while girls who did not play basketball looked up to her because she received an athletic scholarship. Venus was more motivated by Jade to gain a track scholarship for herself. "And I love track, so she makes me feel like I should – I always wanted to get a scholarship for track. So it just seemed like you have to do it because it feels good. And she just seems like she's having fun doing it. So I had fun

doing what I love, too." The fact that all of the staff were in college appeared to make girls want to work harder themselves.

In my first interview with LaToya, she admitted that Maya was a big influence on her, and she looked up to her since they met in last year's program. This year she felt like she became closer with Maya and she felt her influence even more. "I think that since last year, she kind of helped me grow. Last year, I was a bit stubborn. This year, I wasn't as stubborn. She was kind of showing me. She told me that I've changed a little." Aliann described feeling differently about herself after Jade gave her the rope in the Web of Appreciation. She had not felt like she was the positive things that Jade was saying about her, but, after hearing them, she admitted to thinking that in fact, maybe she was. Zelda also felt like the staff saw something in her that she did not see in herself and it was transformational for her.

> They saw something in me that I didn't see in myself, like my personality.
> They definitely had more confidence in me than I had in myself. In the last
> week that kind of transferred to me. Now I have more confidence in
> myself.

How the counselors contributed to the girls' self-esteem seemed to be different than how they enhanced their levels of connectedness. Earlier, in the connectedness section, I presented how girls felt closer through talking and listening, and engaging in direct one-on-one interactions with the staff. However, the way the counselors influenced the girls' self-esteem was often more indirect. Whether looking up to the staff for the staff's accomplishments, or taking in what the counselors said about them, the girls more often felt the counselors' influence more broadly, rather than through one on one interactions or relationships.

In either case, when girls looked up to the staff, or felt close to them, it appeared that they were more able to listen and learn from them. From speaking with the girls and observing their behaviors, it seemed that higher levels of connectedness between girls and staff led to more respect and trust from the youth to the staff. Thus, when youth see program staff as a positive influence for them, or feel more strongly connected to them, they subconsciously deal them extra "chips" or dole out a form of " reserves" that the staff can then draw on later at difficult points in the relationship. Similar to equity in a house, being a positive influence translates into a form of relationship "equity" for the staff (Deutsch & Jones, 2008). The more the girls look up to them and aspire to be like them, the more equity this gives the staff. With this equity, the staff was better able to scaffold and facilitate girls' learning important concepts or challenging skills, or sustain relationships through other challenging moments. Next, I will discuss how the staff used this equity to scaffold girls' learning of skills.

Instrumental Scaffolding by Staff

Throughout the program, the counselors (and other adult coaches or visitors) were adept at facilitating girls' learning by empowering the girls to think and act for themselves. Compared to the emotional scaffolding that was discussed earlier in the connectedness chapter, this type of scaffolding was more instrumental, related to accomplishing tasks. Whether in sports or project groups, the staff used a combination of questions and demonstration to teach girls and help them learn to problem solve and gain new skills. The following describes a typical beginning of their daily gym session:

> After the stretches, Maya runs out on the floor again. She has the girls line
> up in the same rows of three girls deep. "Everyone, we're gonna learn how
> to bump a volleyball," Maya starts, instructing them to keep their feet

shoulder width apart, put their thumb up, and wrap the other hand around the first hand. She tells them to bend a little, asking, "what would happen if you stand up and hit it, where do you think it's gonna go? A few girls yell 'behind you.' "Can anyone tell me what part of the arm I'm hitting with? A few girls yell 'forearms.'

In this example, Maya told them the skill they were going to learn, and gave them basic instruction on form. She then asked them questions to get them to think about what they were doing.

Another example of this type of scaffolding was in the project groups. Each of the three groups was coached by a senior staff person or a guest coach. Maya coached the video group, PowerPlay Executive Director Sarah coached the Talk Show group, while the newsletter group was coached by Jezel, a PowerPlay volunteer who came in once a week to work with the group. These three senior staff successfully engaged the girls by asking them questions and reinforcing their responses regarding group issues. This also helped the girls take more ownership of the projects. The following is an example of how Jezel worked with the girls:

> Jezel talks about the relationship between graphics and text, and about layout. She asks them how they take pictures, how do they frame it? Akila says the camera has a frame thing so she uses that. Jezel asks them "what's the purpose of a newsletter? Fantasia says "to get news out," Janet says "to inform the readers about a central topic." Jezel asks them who their audience is. One says 'newcomers to PowerPlay,' others say 'adults,' and 'parents.' Jezel reinforces these answers.

In the example above, Jezel used questions to stimulate the girls to think and offer responses. Similarly, PowerPlay Executive Director Sarah facilitated the Talk Show group. In the first meeting, they discussed what the Talk Show was and what steps they would need to accomplish each week. Sarah asked the group what they needed to accomplish in the first week. Venus raised her hand and said 'topic,' Shakina said

'production roles,' Zelda said 'supplies,' and Selena said 'guests' or who they might like to have on the Talk Show. Sarah then asked them about Week Two. In this way, she helped them to break it down into smaller pieces so they would have weekly tasks and be better able to stay on track. The senior staff people not only facilitated the learning of the participants, but also that of the counselors. Sarah and Jezel leading the projects set an example for the junior counselors about how it should be done. Thus, the senior staff people modeled appropriate behaviors for the junior counselors so that they could also build their skills during their experience with PowerPlay.

The staff also scaffolded the participants' learning of skills in other ways, by contributing to group dynamics, or sharing their personal experience and advice. Shakina talked about how Delila helped the Talk Show group, "Delila helped us a lot. She introduced the whole voting thing to us (taking group votes to make decisions), which is really funny that we didn't think of that before. But she introduced that to us, and that's how we got a lot of the things done." Selena recalled that Delila shared with them what she wrote on her application to college when they were working on drafting college essays, "so that way it could help us kinda get a taste of what we should write about." Delila also reviewed the concept of being professional and developing a professional self, telling them they need to understand the difference between professional time and play time. She encouraged them to use professional emails for situations that called for it, such as jobs, internships, or recommendation requests. "So if you have an email address that is toocutesexy@whatevermail.com, then don't give it out." The staff played an important role in scaffolding the participants' learning and practicing skills. Next, I will take a

closer look at how the staff provided encouragement or pushed the participants when they needed it.

Encouragement or Giving a Needed Push

"Whatever you're good at, keep doing it, stay on top of it. Sometimes your pride might get in the way. Sometimes you need a push." This was one of the key messages shared by Ivory Thompson of Madison Square Garden when she came to visit during the program. Ivory shared her story about growing up in Brooklyn like many of these girls, going to a historically Black college, and networking herself into a job at the Garden. The girls sat in rapt attention as Ivory talked about taking the initiative to work in the athletic department at school, and how she received her degree in sports marketing and came back to New York. But the key moment for her was in high school when a teacher pushed her to enter an essay contest. Because of the encouragement of that one individual, she entered and won the contest, and was awarded at a ceremony at Madison Square Garden. When she was introduced to a senior female employee of the Garden, she unabashedly told her that she wanted to have her job, and asked her advice on how to go about it. They stayed in touch and the rest was history. She encouraged the girls to find mentors like the staff at PowerPlay who could push them in positive directions.

Many of the girls talked about how the staff were encouraging to them, or gave them a push when they needed it. For example, Iris, one of the shyest girls in the program, had a goal for the Academy to learn how to talk more. When Delila learned about this, she asked Iris to speak first at the next Girl Talk session, something that Iris would not have done without the extra push from Delila. Janet, LaToya and Venus also felt like the counselors were encouraging when girls faced challenges. When asked to

describe the staff, Janet said, "I would say encouraging because if someone would say, "I can't do it," they'd say, "Yes, you can." Then they'd encourage you to do whatever you had to do that day, and not just let you sit back and say, "Okay, that's fine." LaToya remembered that anytime they did suicide runs or different activities, the staff would push them to do better and more. Venus thought the staff was similar to other coaches in her life because "they always push you, like not too far, but they push you to do something that you don't think you can do."Aliann and Shakina felt supported by the staff regarding their career paths. Aliann said, "Delila told me that I can do one of them as my major and then another as my minor and I don't have to concentrate on law and then after I'm done with law go back to do journalism. So I think they really listened, they gave great advice and they were very supportive." Shakina described how she felt encouraged by the staff about her college choice. She has always wanted to go to MIT and appreciated how the counselors pointed out that there were many other good schools for science and that if she did not go to MIT, things would still work out.

The counselors were encouraging and cheering for the girls in all kinds of situations. During volleyball, when girls were about to serve, a counselor would cheer and clap for them. Here is another example of encouragement from my field notes:

> Jaz went for a lap with Angie. She went backwards down to the other end, and then forward on her kickboard on the way back to the shallow end. Sydelle cheered for her, "yea, Jaz" The others that were still in the water cheered.

Delila was encouraging about the fact that they could play sports and have strong relationships with other girls. This was her message from day one when she exhorted to

the girls that they could play sports, have positive relationships with other girls, and that they did not have to live up to the stereotypes that girls were catty or did not get along.

Girls seemed to enjoy the encouragement and attention they received. While they spent more hours per day at PowerPlay than at school, they were attending voluntarily. They saw the staff more as coaches and nontraditional teachers, rather than traditional school day teachers. It appeared that because they felt like it was more than a sports program and had developed a level of trust and connectedness with the staff, girls were more open to pushing themselves and being pushed by the counselors. Perhaps this was also related to the fact that many of the girls were familiar with the feeling of being pushed in positive directions from their parents. From interviews and observations, it was clear that the girls perceived the staff not just as any adults or camp counselors, but more like friends or as family. I will discuss this phenomenon in the next section.

Staff as Friends

When asked to describe the staff, the participants repeatedly talked about how the counselors were on their level, were open, or seemed more like friends than teachers. Janet said "you look at them as your friends. You're not a student-teacher relationship." Venus thought they were different than other adults in her life because "you get so used to them that you forget they're adults, you forget they're older than you, or whatever. And they're like your own friends, that's probably why." Iris said they were more open than other adults in her life, because teachers "usually restrict the thing about their life." By this Iris meant that teachers usually do not share things about their personal lives with the students.

Whether coming in early in the morning and having good talks with staff, or just thinking that they made things more fun, the participants appreciated the counselors and how they interacted with them. Selena liked that "you could relate to them. They kinda related to you. They shared their experiences." Anastasia thought they made it more fun because they "showed their personalities, which were great. That made it more fun and more enjoyable, even if you didn't like the sport." Esme said it was because they were able to get down to the girls' way of thinking and not think like an adult all the time.

> They were fun because there wasn't this type of counselors that were all strict and everything had to be – like they had their moments where it's fun and they discussed things with girls, and they just act like one of us, so that's kinda cool. For you to understand us, you have to get down to our level. You cannot think always like an adult. You know what I mean?

She was particularly impressed with Maya's ability to make jokes and splash them with a water gun even though she was the director. "She doesn't go 'oh, this is this, this is that, we're an adult, bla, bla, bla.' They didn't act like that. So that was kinda cool."

These qualities made the staff stand out from other adults in the girls' lives. When they were around the counselors, girls felt comfortable and able to be themselves. LaToya said she found it easier to talk to the counselors and that she can "just be myself." Shakina felt like the counselors were less serious than other adults in her life, who she thought needed to "take a chill pill sometimes." The counselors were successfully able to balance being at the same level as the participants, while also remaining in a position of authority. In after school programs, staff who can successfully balance these two needs are called "peer-like," connoting that the participants perceive them to be more like peers than adults, although they are obviously not participants (Hirsch, 2005). This is a high

compliment because it conveys that staff can be like a friend when needed, but can also act like the authority figure when that is needed, shifting back and forth between the twoas warranted by the situation.

Staff as Family

Another interesting phenomenon that occurred was that girls often described staff like members of their family. During the last week when I observed the program, I began to hear phrases or words like "my big sister" being tossed about by participants talking about staff. This was reinforced in several ways: during the Web of Appreciation activity on the last day, when several of the participants acknowledged their "big" or "little" sister, and during the second interviews with the girls, when I asked them which staff member they felt closest to. Four girls specifically referred to staff as "my big sister." Aliann said about Jade, "she was just – she gave me a lot of great advice on staying focused with athletics and my studies. And she kind of encouraged me to be better in what I do than I am. And, yeah, she was kind of like a big sister." In fact knowing how much LaToya looked up to Maya from the year before, I asked her "if Jade was your big sister, then what was Maya?" She responded, "My *big big* sister." It struck me that she did not call Maya 'mother,' but made a distinction between a sister and a mother, saying that a mom is someone who says "you do this" but a sister is one who says "I think you should do this." This implies that a my "big big sister" would be an older or more mature version of her big sister Jade.

In addition to sisters, the counselors reminded girls of other family members, such as fathers or aunts. Anastasia said that Maya was like her father because she pushed them. "She was in charge of the video group and noticed how we just, like, okay, like, we

were giving up. So we were, like, oh, we don't want to do this any more. And so then, she would say no, we have to finish this thing. She was, like, the optimistic one." Aliann thought Delila reminded her of her dad because "she's smart like my dad. My dad's an English teacher too, so they're all about English." When asked how they were like other adults in their lives, four girls (31%) responded with a comparison between a counselor and a member of their family. Jaz said, "Jen is like my Auntie Shell. Like, she took me in, like, she was there. Like, any time I needed to talk, she there." Zelda thought Maya was like her aunt Tess, and Delila was like a mixture of her aunts, because some of them are sarcastic and funny like Delila was to Zelda.

Overall, many of the girls bonded with or looked up most to the directors, Maya, and Delila, who were the oldest staff members, in their late 20s.' A number of girls gravitated towards Sydelle, a junior counselor, and Jade a counselor in training, who were the most popular counselors. However, in observing the group and doing interviews with participants, it was clear that everyone, whether girl or counselor, found a home, or a social niche. Even the less socially adept or athletic girls bonded and connected with at least one other girl, and the same for the less popular or quieter counselors. For example, Shakina, who had described herself as a misfit or social outcast at both school and PowerPlay, was very close to counselors Shauna, Lena and Sheba, who were former participants with her. Shauna was probably the least favorite counselor, but even she had her niche as she hung out with Shakina and one other girl who was very artistic and on the outskirts of the group.

While hearing these themes about "staff as family" emerge in discussions with the girls, I was struck by the absence of the one person who was most important to so many

of them, their mother. Not one of the girls said that any of the staff reminded them of her

mother. Why was this? Perhaps this reflected the special place that the girls' mothers held

in their lives, that no one else could get close to being this special to them. Or, that the

mother-daughter relationship was so sacred that it would take much longer for girls to

feel that way than the six weeks of the program. When reflecting back on the dyadic

pyramid, perhaps the relationship with mother is high up at the apex of the pyramid, well

ensconced in the 'trust' level. While there are typically fewer relationships at this level, it

is even more challenging to reach this level of closeness in a short period. To complete

the cycle of self-esteem antecedents, I explore the outcomes that were related to

participants' higher levels of self-esteem after the program was completed.

Self-Esteem Outcomes

When individuals feel enhanced perceptions of competence, combined with

strong support and approval from significant others, it is likely that their self-esteem will

increase. As we know from Harter's (1987) model of self-worth, these increases can be

domain-specific, or global in nature.

When girls talked about feeling better about themselves because of the

Academy, they talked most about three domains: athletic competence, career/future self,

and global self worth. As we have already seen, girls shared many life lessons that they

learned through their participation in the program, from how to network and write a

resume, to teamwork and communication skills. During interviews, each girl talked

about at least two or three important things that she learned in the program. The range

of responses crossed a multitude of life domains from career and workplace, to sports

and fitness, to relationships with peers. The responses demonstrated the degree to which

the participants grew in the eight weeks of the program. Girls described their PowerPlay

experiences as "life-changing" in at least five ways. According to the girls, the program

helped them to:

- Prepare for the future;
- Try new things and meet new people;
- Open their minds up in new ways;
- Learn networking and communication skills
- Be a better team player, on and off the field

Earlier, I showed how girls perceived their self-competence to have increased

throughout their Academy experiences. Now, I focus on the perceived outcomes of

higher self-esteem in these areas of girls' lives after the Academy. I define outcomes as

actions or behaviors that reflected the competencies that girls shared. I also consider

how girls transferred skills from the context of the Academy to other contexts in their

lives.

Preparation for the Future

Five of the participants (38%) said the experience was life-changing because

they felt like it prepared them for the future. Selena said, "It was helpful because you

learn different life skills, and resume writing, and how to – like speak when you have

interviews, and different things like that. That's very helpful for the future." Nakeeba

agreed that it helped prepare her for her future by working on college readiness skills.

Venus felt like the program helped prepare her for the upcoming college application

process. "I would say college because they got me – well, I was already interested in

college. But they made me more aware about the application process and the tests that

you have to take." Moreover, the girls felt like the focus on career and workplace skill

development made this more than a sports program. According to Aliann,

> All of those other programs are kind of geared to just sports, whereas PowerPlay, it was geared to sports a lot, but also to college, the application process, our goals in life and how we're supposed to conduct ourselves in internships, interviewing skills and dressing for success and a lot more is involved in thisprogram. You learn a lot more, I think, in this program than other programs.

Esme agreed. "It's kinda different because the teams just go after school and you play. But here, you was gonna see yourself from 9 to 5 with those girls every day of the summer."

When I spoke with the girls in November, three months after the conclusion of the program, they were still talking about being more prepared for the future. Yet they were not only thinking more about their future but were also self-aware in the present. For example, Jaz made the connection that if she wants to go somewhere with her basketball, she needs to mind her own business in class, and not get into trouble. Now, during class, she reports that she has much more self-control and does not get involved in disruptions with her peers. "Like, because I know I want to go somewhere in sports, like, go to the next level, and if I'm in class getting into trouble, I'm not gonna get nowhere. Even if I have good grades, if I'm getting in trouble all the time, it don't matter." Others echoed these sentiments about thinking a lot more about their lives and where they are going, particularly mentioning the goal setting exercises and worksheets they used in the summer. Selena's comment was typical of other girls, "it made me really think about where I want to see myself by a certain time in my life because before I didn't think about it."

From the comments of the girls, it appears that the program was successful in balancing career skills training and workforce preparation with having fun. While many

of them may have thought at the outset that they were attending a sports program, by the end they felt that it was much more. They reported being strongly impacted by the life skills work they had completed. These activities made them think in new and different ways about who they are and what they would like to do with their lives. Because it was a safe space, participants felt like they could "try on" future goals or future selves. From the perspective of "possible selves" theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986), they had many opportunities throughout the summer to think about the variety of possible selves that they could become. One example of this was when Venus said that she was now thinking of a career in insurance because of her positive internship experience at an insurance company. Moreover, the Academy provided participants with the tools to perhaps shift "hoped for" selves to "expected selves" by learning and improving their networking skills, meeting women in different industries, or gaining new mentors.

<center>*New Things and New People*</center>

In August, the girls described extensively how the program provided opportunities for them to try new things or meet new people. Zelda said the program gave her opportunities to try new things she never would have done. She commented, "I've done some things in PowerPlay that I've never done before, like rowing. Even the little stuff, like falling into the girls' arms. Just the little things are still very adventurous to me because they're things I've never done, and never would have done without PowerPlay." Nene liked trying new sports and meeting new people. "It was fun. I was able to learn different things, like different sports. I would've never tried lacrosse or rugby." For Shakina, meeting new people was a life-changing experience regarding her relationships, "because before I always thought that I used to connect with boys more.

Now I realize that I can still be friends with girls." Esme thought the whole program was like an adventure, with new things every day, "It was fun because of all the sports, and all the activities, and all the trips, and all the getting together with the girls, and talking, and doing this, and collages and stuff like that. So that's kinda cool."

In November, girls talked about how they were transferring these skills into their daily lives. Nene shared a story about a teambuilding trip with her classmates. She noticed a big difference between herself this year compared to last year before PowerPlay. "I was just proud of myself though because I was able to do something and not just stand there and say I'm not gonna do it, or I'm not gonna try it." Whereas this year, she climbed on the ladder and went as far as she could, when she thought back to last year she thought she would not have even been able to get on the ladder, let alone climb as far as she could. For her, the experience of trying new things at PowerPlay was the impetus to make her try new things during the trip at school. For Zelda, trying new things during PowerPlay appeared to begin a whole new phase of becoming involved in new activities at school. She joined the newspaper and several choirs, reporting that ever since a group conversation when girls shared their extracurricular activities, she was inspired to do more this year. She felt like PowerPlay "helped me build up my character to be more outgoing. I was never quiet or timid, I was not being as active as I am in my school, so PowerPlay helped me get more active."

Mind-opening

There was a consistent theme that participants felt like the program was life-changing because it helped them to be more open-minded. "The most important thing I learned this summer was to be open-minded, to try new things because learning different

sports – because I would have just stuck to soccer and track but now I know different things," said Nene. Aliann agreed, saying, "I built my self-esteem a lot more. I'm getting a better sense of who I am. I'm learning to take people for who they are and to go into everything with an open mind. And I'm open to different people and different personalities and culture."

For many girls, this was triggered by the Girl Talk sessions that they had every week. Girl Talk was a time to share thoughts and feelings about specific topics, such as stereotypes, relationships, friendships, self-esteem, or sexuality. Specifically, Shakina said that the session on stereotypes influenced her to be more open-minded:

> A lot of the things that I thought were actually true, a lot of people
> perceived as stereotypes. And that made me think well, maybe that isn't
> true for all people, maybe that is a stereotype. So I definitely was more
> cautious in my words and my stereotypes.

When asked what else she learned that was important, LaToya said without hesitation, "Always be open-minded..... More experiences, the more the merrier." This was also from her experience in Girl Talk, where she heard about the many different experiences and opinions that girls had, and thought they all added a distinct flavor.

Three months later, the girls were still commenting about how they are being more open-minded in their lives because of PowerPlay. LaToya said she is more open minded about what others are feeling:

> I try to see things from other people's point of view more. My favorite
> part of Power Play was mostly the Girl Talk, so I guess listening to people
> more is something that I've seen change. Like, when my mom is yelling at
> me. I can understand why she's mad, like, why she's yelling, and in
> school, and with some of my friends that are going through problems. I
> try to put myself in their shoes, I guess show empathy, and then maybe see
> what I did to make them feel that way, or what I might say could change.

For Janet, being more open-minded helped her improve her relationships with her sisters after PowerPlay. She learned that she has to understand what the other person is thinking too. "The relationship with my sisters has become better because I learned to cooperate and listen to what they say because they usually have the right answers." Finally, Aliann said that learning to be more open-minded at the Academy helped her to be more accepting in band this fall when she did not like the pieces that the Band Director gave them. She was able to pinpoint that she had learned this during PowerPlay when she learned to be accepting of different sports each week even if she did not like a particular sport. Thus, through their participation in the Academy, the girls were able to stretch themselves in new ways to meet the various challenges that have come up for them in other contexts of their lives this year.

Sense of Agency

The fifth way that participants talked about how life-changing the Academy was for them was that they learned how to be agentic and take initiative. In their words, they described it as "being a better team player." After learning about teamwork in the summer, girls took leadership roles to try and replicate strong teamwork experiences at school or on sports teams. For example, Aliann shared that she has worked hard to bring more teamwork to the track team, of which she is a co-captain, and the yearbook group of which she is a member. Her goals for the track team were to make everyone feel closer, while for the yearbook she is trying to make it a fun atmosphere. Jaz described her experience this fall as captain of the basketball team. She talked about how challenging it had been trying to get her team together and practices started. She felt like everyone was

making too many excuses, so she took the initiative to organize a team meeting for players and parents, as well as a tutoring schedule for all the players on the team. Esme described how she asked her calculus teacher if they could do icebreakers because the students did not really know each other at the beginning of the year and she remembered the various icebreakers that the group had done at the Academy:

> So I was like, 'Hey Ms. Hahn, why don't we have icebreakers?' So yeah, that's what we did. And even though I was on crutches, we still did them and everybody felt a little more comfortable, and then everybody had the confidence and the trust to go to fellow classmates and ask questions and share responses and see who needs help with what and stuff like that.

Girls reported having a deeper sense of being accountable for a team, and how important teamwork is both in sports and in life, as a result of their Academy experiences. The self-esteem outcomes that are associated with these insights and experiences were that girls became more agentic and comfortable taking initiative or leadership roles in other contexts such as school or sports.

As a way to reinforce the findings, I will summarize this section by highlighting the experiences of two participants using the model that was presented earlier:
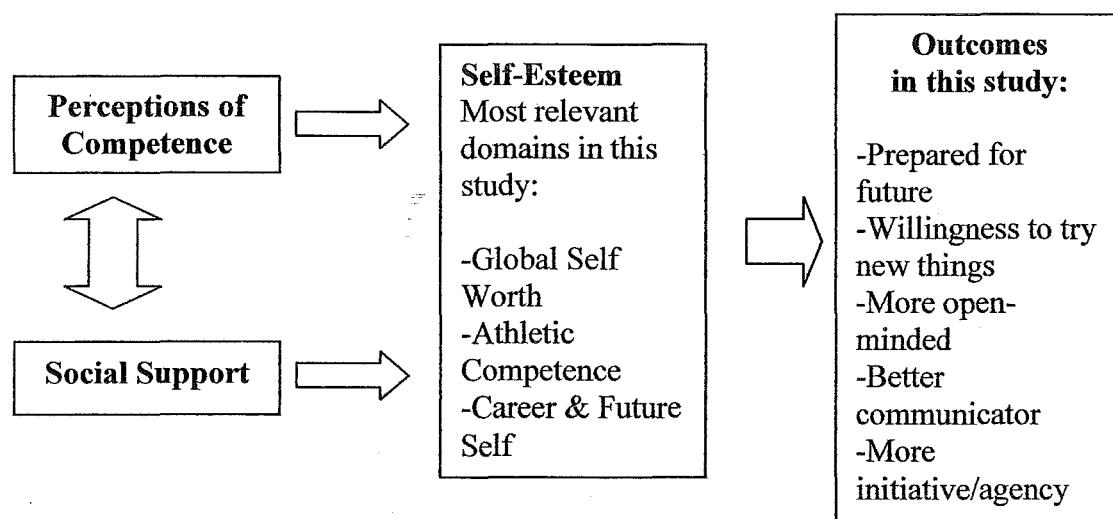
Before she came to the Academy, Zelda was concerned that she would be the fattest

participant, and not match up with the other girls during sports and fitness activities. This

was reflected both by her comments earlier in this chapter, and by her mean score of 2.4

(out of 4) for athletic competence on the pre-survey. This was one of the lowest scores for

athletic competence of all the participants. At the Academy, Zelda was continually surprised

that she could keep up with the other girls, both in stamina and in skill level. Her

perceptions of her athletic competence increased and she started to like sports more. When I

spoke with her in November, she told me that she and her dad had been exercising together,

and that she would like to try out for the volleyball team next year. Her score for athletic

competence rose to a 3.0 on the post, which was the highest single increase of all of the

participants. Thus, increasing her perceptions of athletic competence led to increases in her

domain-specific self-esteem, which led to new behaviors, or outcomes.

With a relatively high global self worth score of 3.4 on the pre-survey, Nene's

score still ranked among the lowest of the group for that domain. With group level means

of 3.5, the girls' scores were consistent with the previous research that many African

American adolescent girls often have high self-esteem, and/or do not suffer the decreases

in self-esteem that girls of other ethnic backgrounds do at adolescence (Brown, et al,

1998; Henriques, & Calhoun, 1999; Carlson, et al., 2000; Gray & Hafdahl, 2000; Siegel,

et al., 1999; Biro, et al., 2006; Greene, & Way, 2005; Kimm et al., 2002; Rotheram-

Borus, et al., 1996). For Nene, feeling higher levels of perceived support at the Academy

appeared to lead to increases in global self worth and subsequent positive changes in her

life. When I talked to her before the program, she expressed the opinion that she was lazy

and needed a push. She knew four other participants in the Academy from her school and

mentioned after the program that she grew closer to two of these girls, Nakeeba and Akila, during the summer. This was indicated on the relationship worksheets and in our interviews. In addition, Nene became very close to other participants in her newsletter group, particularly Sezen and Janet. In the connectedness section, I discussed how these four became a family during the summer, with Nene as 'grandpa,' Akila as 'grandma,' and Sezen and Janet as the grandchildren. This was noted both during my observations and interviews. For Nene, the Academy provided a great degree of social support through these new and stronger relationships. After the Academy, Nene felt better about herself, recording a 4.0 on the global self worth scale. This stronger sense of herself was evident when we spoke in August and November. In August, she talked about how PowerPlay pushed her to try new things and stretch herself more both during sports and life skill activities. In November, she shared about her willingness to climb up on the ladder during a ropes course activity. Rather than sit at the bottom and say she could not do it, which is how she formerly perceived herself, she was now willing to try and see how far she could go.

These two examples illustrate more clearly the process of self-esteem development through increasing perceptions of competence and/or social support. For some girls, one or the other of the antecedents is more important for triggering self-esteem changes, while for many girls, both of these antecedents rise in tandem and synergize each other to increase self-esteem levels in particular domains. They are often related because it is through the support and positive feedback of significant others that changes in perceptions are made.

Lastly, as a final note, if we revisit the 'web of appreciation' activity from the last day of the program, we can see how, in addition to demonstrating connectedness, it also

reinforces the antecedents of self-esteem. First, social support is displayed through the many

"my big sister" mentions and expressions of positive affect and "I love you's" that were

expressed. For example, at the beginning Shauna told Adriana she loved her and wished she

were her real big sister. Later, Anastasia said "I'ma gonna have to pass this one to my big

sis, Sydelle. I love you too, Jade.....I'm passing her (Sydelle) the string, she's my big sister,

we have a connection. So I love you Sydelle" Sydelle passed the rope to LaToya, because

she said she thought she was a cool person and appreciated her. LaToya then passed it to her

big sister Jade because she was "mad cool and mad easy to talk to." Perceptions of

competence were also heightened through the activity. Girls told each other that they were

good to talk to, or they were bright, funny, or hard-working. Jade told Aliann that she was

very athletic, easy to talk to and outgoing. While a seemingly small moment, we have seen

how much this meant to Aliann and how it affected her self-perceptions. Finally, Delila

acknowledged Iris and appreciated how much she opened up over the program and what a

fabulous personality she has. Overall, this activity demonstrated how the program

supported both connectedness and self-esteem processes among the participants.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

People move along in the world through relational connections. When we ask people about the history of the development of an interest or a skill, they usually mention a person at the root of it. (Josselson, 1992)

Introduction

Out-of-school time programs are potentially powerful contexts for promoting positive youth development. When recounting the eight characteristics that have been commonly used as a blueprint for effective youth development programs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002), it is clear that many of them are associated with connectedness and self-esteem, the two main constructs of this study. Specifically, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, and positive social norms are associated with connectedness, while others, such as physical and psychological safety, support for efficacy and mattering, and opportunities for skill-building relate to self-esteem. This again reinforces the critical importance of understanding how these processes function, both independently, and jointly during adolescence.

While many practitioners have focused on increasing connectedness in their programs, others struggle with how to do this effectively and successfully. There are still many questions about *how* to provide supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, or optimal skill-building opportunities within program settings. Theoretically, connectedness has been difficult to measure, leading to challenges in bridging theory and

practice, and translating research findings into usable nuggets for practitioners. Primarily, out-of-school time researchers have focused broadly on the importance of youth-adult relationships (Grossman & Bulle, 2002; Rhodes, et al, 2004; Roffman, et al, 2001), while mentoring program researchers have begun to identify aspects of effective youth-adult relationships, such as mutuality, trust, empathy, and a developmental focus (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Karcher et al, 2006; Rhodes, 2004). In addition, sport psychology researchers have contributed to our understanding of the behavioral aspects of adult-youth relationships through studies of coaching behaviors. The two dimensions of coaching effectiveness that have been researched most are coaches' leadership styles and types of feedback they provided (Horn, 2002). Research on effective youth-coach relationships in sport has revealed that behaviors such as providing high levels of training and instruction, contingent, appropriate and positive feedback, and social support are associated with higher levels of athlete satisfaction, intrinsic motivation and team cohesion (Black & Weiss, 1992; Horn, 2002). In addition, coaching leadership styles that are democratic, autonomy-supportive and mastery-oriented are associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation and perceptions of competence (Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, 2002; Horn, 2002; Reinboth, Duda & Ntoumanis, 2000). Yet these domains of research have been primarily seen as distinct, with out-of-school time and mentoring researchers focusing more on the emotional tenor of relationships, and sport psychology researchers focusing more on instrumental behaviors and approaches. What has been missing was research on how feelings of connection and support for building competence are tied together and interact within the context of out-of-school-time activities and adult-youth relationships in such contexts.

This study examines developmental processes in perceptions of connectedness and self-esteem expressed by adolescent girls in a sports-based youth development program. The findings presented in Chapter 4 suggest that involvement in the PowerPlay Summer Sports Leadership Academy program provided girls with many opportunities to develop connectedness and enhance self-esteem. Opportunities to build connectedness occurred with both peers and adults. Girls enhanced their self-esteem through increasing their perceptions of competence, social support, or both, particularly through feeling supported by the program staff. In this chapter, my main goal is to integrate my findings with existing research, and to discuss implications of this work for researchers and practitioners.

How Does Connectedness Grow? The Dyadic Pyramid

In Chapter Four, I presented a typology of connectedness that emerged from my analysis, consisting of six ingredients, four types (collapsed to two) and three levels. The six ingredients were *commonalities, collaborations, physical proximity, trust, humor and laughing,* and *talking and listening.* The four types of connectedness were *proximal, informational, kinship* and *emotional,* representing two main types of connectedness, instrumental and emotional. Finally, the three levels of relationships were *peer-peer, youth-adult,* and *youth-group,* although in this study, I focused on the first two levels.

The way that I saw the ingredients and types of connectedness coalescing is represented by the dyadic pyramid of relationship formation. The bottom of the pyramid represents the first, or foundational level of relationships. In this program, new relationships formed because of either commonalities or physical proximity between individuals. These were the two major formative relationship ingredients. Individuals

discovered they had things in common, or were often in the same spaces and places. This is what I call "shared environments," where individuals start with the recognition of common places or environments in their lives. After this foundation was in place, some relationships progressed to greater levels of closeness, evolved from instrumental to emotional connectedness as indicated on the left side of the pyramid. Other ingredients could be added to this foundation of commonality and physical proximity, such as humor, collaboration, talking and listening, or trust.

The second level of the pyramid is what I refer to as "shared experiences," where individuals had more interactions, and started building a relationship. At this level, there were more ingredients involved, such as talking and listening, humor or collaboration. Then, the top of the pyramid represented a third stage of relationship that fewer relationships achieve. At this deeper stage of closeness, the key ingredient was trust, which was identification-based or relational. Often, at this stage, the degree of talking and listening also evolved to be more emotional, with sharing feelings and increased intimacy. I call this level "shared emotions" or "co-constructed space" representing the deeper interactions and identification that takes place in these types of relationships. Earlier, I discussed the differences between calculus-based, knowledge-based, and relational trust (Lewicki, et al, 2006), as well as instrumental and developmental talking and listening (Karcher et al, 2006; Styles & Morrow, 1995).

Typically, relationships began with low levels of instrumental connectedness, such as informational or proximal. In this study, most relationships were at the first or second level of the pyramid. By virtue of everyone being in the program, there was a shared environment called the "PowerPlay Summer Leadership Academy." Girls who

were from different boroughs, sat in different areas of the circle, were on different project teams, and did not interact at all might have relationships that never moved beyond this first level. Girls who discovered additional commonalities with others such as shared borough or sport, or spent more time together, such as on a project team, had more potential to perceive increasingly higher levels of some of the connectedness ingredients. Then, as some of these relationships progressed from instrumental to emotional, more ingredients were added, or shifted. Talking and listening may have deepened from more superficial (instrumental) forms, to more intimate (emotional) forms. In addition, trust may have evolved from calculus-based, to more knowledge-based or relational depending on the relationship. Most of the relationships that I observed in the program would be classified in the first or second levels of the pyramid (instrumental), and only a few were in the upper parts of the pyramid (emotional). However, several relationships that I profiled earlier (Anastasia & LaToya, LaToya & Shakina, Anastasia & Sydelle) would be classified at higher levels of the pyramid. Thus, a certain proportion of relationships remained at the first level, many more were at the second level, while only a few were at the third level. In this way, the dyadic pyramid can shed light on relationship formation and progression for groups or teams in the initial phase of development. Next, I will look at how this study maps on to existing research related to supportive relationships, because this is such an important feature of positive youth development settings.

Supportive Relationships with Peers

There have been several prominent themes within the literature on adolescent girls' friendships. According to researchers, as compared to boys' friendships, friendships among girls are characterized by greater intimacy and self-disclosure (Berndt 1982;

Hartup, 1993), high needs for connection (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), trust and loyalty (Brown, Way & Duff, 1999) and by smaller and more exclusive peer groups (Berndt 1982). Girls are said to have more intimate and supportive relationships than boys, more emotional closeness, and higher levels of interpersonal competence, as well as neediness and relatedness (Berndt, 1982; Hartup, 1993; Henrich, Blatt, Kuperminc, Zohar & Leadbeater, 2001). In addition, girlfighting, bullying and rejection are often mentioned as prominent features of girls' relationships with other girls (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). However, as mentioned earlier, most of this research on girls' friendships, was conducted on white middle class girls, and not with girls from ethnic minority populations, lower-income backgrounds, or both. In addition, a majority of the research compared girls to boys, rather than examining variations of these processes among girls. In the past, this has greatly limited our understanding of the experiences of a wide range of girls and led to generalizations about the experiences and behaviors of all girls based on a narrow subset of girls.

Recently, Way and colleagues (Way, 1998; Way & Chen, 2000; Way Cowal, Gingold & Bissessar, 2001; Qin, Way & Rana, 2008) have expanded the knowledge base in these areas, by exploring gender and racial and ethnic similarities and differences in friendships among adolescents from lower-income backgrounds. They have found that Black, Latina and Asian girls report higher levels of close friendship support than boys. Moreover, Black and Latino girls report more general friendship support than Asian girls, who may experience higher levels of peer discrimination than girls from other groups (Qin, et al, 2008). In another study, Way and colleagues (2001) explored clusters of friendships that existed among ethnic minority adolescents, and found that females and

Latinos were more often in the 'ideal' cluster (62%), where friends were characterized as generally passionate and appreciative of their best friends, having had long, stable friendships to which they were committed and feeling great affection for their best friends. They trusted their best friends with most things, but also had disagreements or conflicts, which were usually resolved quickly, compared to adolescents in the 'engaged' cluster, who had higher levels of conflicts and did not always resolve them.

While the aforementioned research sheds more light on some of the patterns and variations of close same-sex friendships within and across different ethnic groups, less research has explored the patterns and variations in the *process* of friendship formation or relationship *development* of ethnic minority girls of different socioeconomic statuses. The findings in this study do not necessarily support previous research that proclaims that girls engage in more emotional closeness, self-disclosure, or intimacy than boys. Unlike much of the literature on adolescent girls' friendships, which focuses on established friendships, most of the peer relationships formed at the Academy were new. Thus, the dyadic pyramid and the data presented in this study revealed insights about the initial stages of friendship development, rather than the features of long-term, stable friendships.

In the dyadic pyramid, as mentioned earlier, the first ingredients in friendship formation were most often commonalities and physical proximity. Commonalities, also known as behavioral homophily, have long been considered a characteristic of relationships, in that children are attracted to peers who are similar to them or behave similarly (Rubin, Bukowski, Parker & Bowker, 2006). In this study, girls reported that having things in common was a strong initial ingredient in the process of connectedness. When girls discovered commonalities with other girls, such as schools or

neighborhood/borough, or sports, it seemed to give them a sense of comfort, or provide security that other girls were similar to them in some way. Commonalities made participants feel safe to progress further in a relationship.

Physical proximity, the second main ingredient at the first level of the dyadic pyramid, was another very important ingredient for these girls. Physical proximity has been called "a necessary ingredient for peer assessment and ultimately friendship selection" (Clark & Ayers, p. 404, 1988). I have shown earlier how the presence or absence of individuals led to participants' having higher or lower perceptions of connectedness. But physical proximity as a feature of adolescent relationships also ties in to broader developmental trends of early or mid-adolescence. Certain markers of adolescence include the ability to think abstractly, and conceive greater self-differentiation of life domains. Adolescents are also shifting, or expanding their attachments from parents to peers. Attachment, a form of connectedness most often identified with infants and caregivers, is described as an enduring affectional bond of substantial intensity with either parents or peers (Ainsworth, 1989; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Adolescents are in a distinct developmental phase that calls for maintaining strong relationships with their parents while forming new attachments, or emotional bonds with close friends (Kerns, Tomich & Kim, 2006). Researchers have suggested that the attachment felt by infants to their primary caregiver transforms into emotional bonds at adolescence, as adolescents are shifting or mapping the internal working models they have of primary caregivers on to peer relationships (Collins, 1997). For adolescents, secure attachment has been found to be predictive of healthy development while insecure attachment can be associated with depression (Allen & Land, 1999). In this study, it seemed that participants were mapping

their internal working models for primary relationships on to some of the program staff. Girls described the staff as "family-like" and many girls felt that relationships with staff were reminiscent of their families. From an attachment perspective, this emphasizes the way the girls felt safe in the program, or how out-of-school programs can function as a secure base, promoting not only physical, but also emotional safety.

Regarding physical proximity, this study also magnified the process of shifting attachments, as girls noted repeatedly the degree to which the presence or absence of a peer or adult affected their perceptions of connectedness. For example, several girls in the Academy reported feeling less close to parents (Aliann), best friends (Nene), or friends (Zelda) during the summer, simply because they did not see them as much. Other girls noted that they felt close to girls in the Academy because they spent eight hours a day for six weeks with them. Thus, physical proximity, or lack thereof, was a key factor in the process of developing connectedness with others, as well as in maintaining connectedness. The girls seemed to be developing the skill of "emotional abstraction," or the ability to keep others close emotionally in their minds, even if they were not present physically.

At this stage in their lives, emotional connectedness might be a new way of relating for many of these girls, as they are learning how to form intimate bonds, acknowledge personal needs, and develop emotional closeness with others. This is a type of connectedness that was less visible, the way that trust was a more difficult ingredient to observe. This could be one reason that I did not see or hear about emotional connectedness as often as instrumental connectedness. The participants could be in a developmental phase on the way to emotional abstraction and expression of intimacy. The few times that I observed girls expressing emotional connectedness, were when a few girls (Anastasia,

LaToya, or Jaz) shared about their relationships with counselors. Connections were also observed during the web of appreciation on the last day. Whereas usually the girls were chomping at the bit to leave at the end of a program day, the last day was clearly the opposite. Girls were laughing, crying and lingering as long as they could. They took turns hugging one another and saying their goodbyes long after the web of appreciation activity was finished. There was an outpouring of emotion, tears and hugs, unlike the more common day-to-day displays of laughter, teasing and shooting the breeze.

Supportive Relationships with Staff

Supportive relationships with staff have often been cited as a critical element of out-of-school-time programs' success as positive settings for youth development (Deutsch, 2005; Grossman & Bulle, 2006; Hirsch, et al, 2000; Hirsch, 2005; Huang, et al, 2000; Loder & Hirsch, 2003; McLaughlin, et al, 1994; Rhodes, 2004; Roffman, et al, 2001; Zweig & Van Ness, 2001). Hirsch (2005) found that staff provided support that was somewhere between the support and love of family and the content-specific lessons of teachers. In the Academy, the directors and counselors were both 'peer-like' and 'family-like' providing guidance and acting as mentors depending on the situation. Because of their role as mentors, it is also appropriate to refer to the mentoring literature here to illuminate the powerful effects of the youth-adult relationships on the girls.

Mentors serve as role models and advocates, and provide youth with many benefits, including relationships that offer emotional support, skills and knowledge, motivation, enhanced sense of self, a greater ability to connect with others (Rhodes, Davis, Prescott & Spencer, 2007; Sanchez, Reyes, & Singh, 2006). Furthermore, the support and guidance of nonparental adults can help adolescents become more prepared for adult life,

which in turn eases their transition to adulthood (Deutsch & Hirsch, 2002; Hirsch, Mickus, & Boerger, 2002). This is what I observed during the PowerPlay program. All of the girls talked about how the staff listened to them, were encouraging and supportive, and helped them learn new things.

Thus, after school program staff can serve as powerful mentors for adolescent girls. Within sports and physical activity programs, using the sports-based youth development model mentioned in Chapter 2 (Petitpas et al, 2005), coaches serve as the key external resources to facilitate life skill development among youth sport participants. Coaches play a pivotal role in the experiences of youth sport participants, guiding youth not only by teaching the technical and tactical aspects of sport, but more importantly by influencing athletes' perceptions of competence, providing social support, and impacting emotional responses. Coaches influence athletes' psychosocial and behavioral outcomes through their coaching self-efficacy, the coaching behaviors they exhibit, and the motivational climate they foster (Horn, 2002; Smith, 2001, Smith & Smoll, 1990). In this study, this was supported in many ways, including the fact that girls sense of athletic competence was highly correlated with nonfamilial adults.

In addition to encouragement, support and guidance, the PowerPlay staff provided girls with validation. They affirmed their identities, whether as 'athletes,' 'teammates,' 'networkers,' or 'communicators,' and coaxed and encouraged their developing competencies to emerge. They did this individually in conversations, but also publicly in front of the group. When staff shared why they appreciated the participants during the web of appreciation, these proclamations in front of the whole group, or 'public displays of

connectedness' were an extra seal of validation. Girls were perhaps more able to internalize what was said about them because it was said in front of the group.

This connectedness with adults, in turn, can bolster self-esteem and reduce risk-taking behaviors in girls. Supportive relationships and "public displays of connectedness" can enhance girls' abilities to value themselves (Stern, 1991) and to see positive images reflected back through their 'looking glass selves' (Cooley, 1902). In a study of informal mentors in the lives of adolescent mothers (Rhodes, et al, 2007), girls with mentors reported lower levels of depression and anxiety, and greater satisfaction with their support resources. Whether with parents, peers, or mentors, when adolescents feel strong connections, they are likely to have more positive outcomes, such as higher self-esteem, and lower depression (Witherspoon, et al, 2009). Being connected to significant adults who provide caring, closeness and support can help girls feel better about themselves and build conduits for the safe expression of voice, and relational development (Ward, 1996).

Added Value of Out-of-School Time Programs

There is an expression in the field of out-of-school time, that youth "vote with their feet." If they like the place, the people and the activities, or if they feel a positive connection to the program in some way, they will return. Youth have often identified that relationships with staff or peers within these programs are influential for them and keep them coming back (Huang et al, 2000; Loder & Hirsch, 2003; Roffman et al, 2001). Overall, when OST programs work, youth report that they feel connected to particular individuals within the program, or generally feel supported by the program. Researchers have explored connectedness most often within domain-specific contexts such as family, school or neighborhood, and less often in out-of-school-time settings. Moreover,

researchers have more often looked at contextual connectedness in one single domain, rather than at the simultaneous influence of perceptions of connectedness in multiple contexts. Few researchers have explored the combined influence of types and numbers of contextual connections on adolescent development, especially including out-of-school-time programs as a context.

One recent exception is Witherspoon (2009), who looked at ethnic minority adolescents' perceptions of connectedness to three contexts (family, school and neighborhood) to understand their impact on academic and psychosocial functioning. Engagement in multiple contexts was associated with more positive outcomes. For example, youth with above average connections to at least two of three primary contexts (family, school or neighborhood) reported higher levels of self-esteem than youth with one or none of these connections, while youth who felt connected in one context reported higher self-esteem than youth who had low perceptions of connectedness to all three contexts. We do not know how out-of-school time programs would fit into these findings. But we do know that youth may be able to use strong feelings or connection to a particular context to compensate for stress or lack of connection in another (Costa, Jessor, Turbin, Dong, Zhange, & Wang 2005). As the examples with Jaz and LaToya demonstrate, the out-of-school program context can become important, because it may be a place of compensation for many youth who feel low levels of connectedness or disconnected to other contexts.

Future Directions

There are several directions for future research from this study, including further exploration of the ingredients and types of connectedness, utilizing different theoretical

frameworks such as possible selves and social capital to understand how participants think about their careers, futures and expanded social networks, and exploration of whether there exists a global connectedness construct.

First, the dyadic pyramid and the ingredients of connectedness could be explored further. Will this dyadic pyramid typology or relationship formation model accurately portray relationship development in other out-of-school-time programs, or other contexts? If physical proximity and commonalities are accepted as the first ingredients in relationship formation, how can we further explore the second and third levels of the dyadic pyramid? In this study, I explored connectedness ingredients across the two main levels of relationships (with peers and adults). Additional research could explore the patterns and frequencies of the presence of the connectedness ingredients across each of the three levels of relationships independently to see if there are distinct differences in the patterns of ingredients at each level.

Because of the impact of the program on girls' sense of futures and career possibilities, possible selves theory would be a useful framework to further explore adolescents' experiences in OST programs, particularly those with a career focus. Markus and Nurius (1986) suggested that self-concept is composed of both past experiences and future orientations. These future orientations are referred to as "possible selves," which represent both "what we would like to become" (i.e., hoped for selves) but also "what we are afraid of becoming (i.e., feared selves). The theory says that the balance between these two selves can enhance regulation and motivate behavior. This was evident when Anastasia and Selena mentioned things about their mother or family that they would like *not* to happen, like getting pregnant at 15 in Anastasia's case. One extension of this study

using this framework could be to explore participants' changes in perceptions of their future selves before and after the program, particularly related to potential professional selves and possible career paths.

Social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1995) is another theoretical frame that could shed light on how participants view and utilize their expanded social networks gained through OST programs. Social capital, according to Bourdieu consisted of two dimensions: social networks and relationships, and sociability (1984). He thought that individuals must not only have relationships with others, but must understand and utilize their social networks over time. Social capital has been discussed as a key resource which can help ethnic minority youth access new knowledge, opportunities, or mentorship that might lead to higher achievement. Using this theoretical frame, it would be useful to explore participants' perceptions of their social networks, and how participation in OST programs may affect the dynamics and size of these networks, as well as how they may be associated with other outcomes including social support or perceptions of competence.

During this study, I also became interested in exploring the idea of "global connectedness," or how connected one feels overall in one's life. Similar to the way self-worth is hierarchical and multidimensional (Harter, 1987) with domains and sub-domains, I envision the construct of global connectedness as a way to explore perceptions of connectedness at the domain or sub-domain levels. Part of my interest in this relates to the concept of life skill transfer, or the idea that youth can transfer skills learned in one domain or setting to another.

Evidence of contextual life skill transfer by youth program participants has been empirically found in The First Tee Life Skills Program (Weiss, Bolter, Bhalla, Price, &

Markowitz, 2008), and The Youth Development Experience (Larson & Angus, in press) among other programs. Weiss and colleagues discovered that more than 90% of youth participants interviewed reported transferring skills learned in The First Tee to other contexts such as home, school, or peers. These skills included showing respect, managing emotions and helping others. Larson & Angus (in press) found that youth reported transferring strategic thinking skills from their after school program to other parts of their lives, such as schoolwork and jobs.

My questions were whether girls who experienced increased perceptions of connectedness to peers or adults in the Academy felt more connected in other areas of their lives. In this study, context transfer of connectedness was first evident by looking at the girls' relational maps, where 9 of the 12 girls (75%) who completed two or more maps, reported higher mean levels of connectedness in their third map. Because most of the individuals listed family and close friends on their maps, perhaps this represents a transfer of the feeling of connectedness from the Academy to these other important people in girls' lives. While preliminary, this finding suggests that the experiences of connectedness that participants gain during the program allowed them to feel more connected in other domains of their lives.

Individually, there were several examples of girls transferring the experience of connectedness to other contexts of their lives after PowerPlay. Esme talked about how the Academy, because it was such as carefree and playful environment, motivated her to spend more time with her baby cousins who lived with her. When she was back in school in the fall, even with the full load of classes, extracurricular activities, and still on crutches recovering from a broken ankle, she said she made it a point to spend time with her little

cousins every night rather than simply collapse into bed. She expressed feeling more connected to them since PowerPlay.

Jaz and Janet also shared examples of girls transferring the experience of connectedness to other contexts of her life after PowerPlay. Although Jaz was having issues with her mother and reported feeling less close to her in her second and third maps, she did have a major breakthrough in that she felt like she became closer to her 13-year old brother (her mother and father are not together and she does not have regular contact with her father or his other children). She described seeing her brother one day in the neighborhood, and asking him if he would like to go see a movie sometime. She said his face lit up and he said 'sure, which one,' as if he were ready to go right then and there. This made her realize that he wanted to be closer to her and she subsequently reached out to him and they became closer. She attributed this change to her experience in PowerPlay. In addition, Janet felt like PowerPlay helped improve her relationships with others because she learned how to cooperate better and practice understanding what someone else was thinking. This skill helped her improve her relationship with her sisters. "The relationship with my sisters has become better because I learned to cooperate and listen to what they say because they usually have the right answers." Recognition and acknowledgement of the concept of global connectedness would help shed light on these processes of contextual transfer of connectedness skills.

Global connectedness, similar to global self-worth, would be an evaluative assessment of one's connectedness in all domains of life. Like global self-worth, how connected we feel in our lives may also be related to the intersection of perceptions of competence and the importance of the domain, where the perceptions of competence one

is assessing are perceptions of *relational* or *social* competence. By focusing on

developing a model of global connectedness, more research can be conducted on the

skills that are important for connectedness such as sharing, talking & listening,

collaboration, developing empathy and trust, and how these skills can be intentionally

taught in the context of out-of-school time programs to better get inside the "black box"

of relationships, whether in sports, mentoring, or other OST programs.

I should also note here another type of connectedness that exists for many

adolescents today but which was not as visible in this study, technological connectedness.

Technological connectedness is the utilization of technology, electronic devices, and

social networking tools to communicate or be in contact with others. All of the girls in the

program carried cell phones and communicated in variety of technological ways,

including texting, or through Facebook, or MySpace. However, because I was only

observing during the program day, and there were ground rules that restricted cell phone

use, this was not as prevalent a theme as it might have been if I were observing girls

outside of program, or asking more specifically about their technology habits and

behaviors.

Many of the participants mentioned having social network pages. In the third

interviews, when I asked them if they were still in touch with anyone from PowerPlay, the

contact they talked about with other girls was through texting or social networking, not the

telephone. Out of curiosity, I checked how many girls had Facebook pages, and how many

were 'friended' with other PowerPlay girls. Out of the 13 girls in this study, eight girls had

Facebook pages. The numbers of PowerPlay friends that they had within their total

network of friends (including other PowerPlay participants who were not in the study)

ranged from nine to 15, and averaged 11. Thus, while this study focused on interpersonal connectedness development within a program setting, the idea of technological connectedness would be an area for future research, to explore how technology use influences adolescents' perceptions of connectedness, relationship development or social networks.

<div align="center">Limitations of Study</div>

As in all studies, there were several limitations in this study. First, from a quantitative perspective, the sample size was too small to detect substantial changes, or conduct analyses beyond descriptives. In addition, other potential limitations included sample selection bias, how girls perceived the researcher, the targeted nature of interview questions, the lack of multiple perspectives, and girls completing maps on their own. I will now review each of these potential limitations.

There is always the potential of sample bias of those who decided to participate in the research versus those who did not. For example, because parental consent was needed for girls to participate in the study, perhaps the girls in the study had more supportive parents than those who did not participate in the study. Secondly, attrition of participants out of the study may have introduced bias. While originally starting with a group of 20 girls, seven girls either dropped out of the Academy, or changed their minds about participating in the study. Perhaps these girls' experiences of connectedness and self-esteem may have changed the overall patterns of findings in the study.

Another limitation could be related to my history with PowerPlay. As an additional way to counter any biases I may have had, I inserted special reminder into my interview protocol with the girls. Before each interview, I explained to them that when I

was interviewing them that I was being only a researcher, and I wanted to hear everything they had to say, whether good or bad, positive or negative. I did not want them to feel like they had to tell me particular things because they knew I wore other hats with the organization. While they all heard and acknowledged what I said, there is no way to tell whether or not they were holding back or not sharing because of my relationship to the organization. I did not feel like that happened at the time, but there is always the chance that some information was not shared.

Another potential limitation was that because I was asking questions about connectedness and self-esteem, participants' responses did not spring up completely unprompted. It is possible that participants may have focused more on these topics because I was asking about them, or may have offered socially acceptable answers to seek my approval.

The fourth potential limitation was the lack of multiple perspectives provided in this study. The current study explored the experiences from the girls' perspectives only. Future research could contribute additional perspectives on the girls' experiences, including from staff or parents. Interviews with these significant others could offer a more complete picture of how the girls are sharing about their experiences and/or transferring the skills learned to other contexts. Parents and program staff may observe changes that the adolescents are not aware of or may not be able to articulate clearly. For example, in the third interview, I asked the girls if their parents or close friends noticed any of the changes that they described for themselves. Many of them did not think that the significant others in their lives noticed these changes. Some thought that the changes were more internal than external. It would be interesting to explore the perspectives of

significant others to gain further triangulation about these dynamic and multidimensional processes.

Finally, during the third phase of data collection, nine girls completed the post-survey and third relational maps at the same time during a PowerPlay event at which I was not present. While written instructions were provided, and this was the second time they were taking the survey, as well as the third time they were creating a map, it is possible that girls were not as focused in completing these instruments because I was not present. For example, the girls' third maps had fewer contacts than their other two maps. This could have been from them rushing through to get to the next activity, or the fact that they had already completed two maps and were not as excited to do a third one, particularly as I was not there to encourage them.

<div align="center">Implications for Researchers & Practitioners</div>

For researchers, this study reinforces the viability of out of school time programs as a valuable research context for adolescent development. Interest in physical activity programs has been growing steadily, for two main reasons. First, more youth participate in sports and physical activities than any other OST activity (Larson & Verma, 1999; Theokas & Lerner, 2006); second, the nationwide obesity crisis, and its effects on youth have concerned many researchers, as well as practitioners, and policy makers. Interventions using physical activity and sport have shown positive psychosocial and behavioral benefits for youth (Weiss, 2004). Because there is still little research on girls-only, sports-based youth development programs, this presents both a strong need and a ripe opportunity for researchers.

Second, this study highlights how connectedness processes occur and relationships form during a sports-based youth development program. Because peer influence is a significant factor in physical activity participation, this is important to pursue further. Third, the findings of this study highlight the importance of structured activities, both in the development of skills and competencies and also for the development of connectedness (Mahoney & Stattin, 2002). Out-of-school time programs need to have a balance of both structured and unstructured time for youth because many of the dynamics and ingredients of connectedness need time to simmer in both types of activities. In sport, teams serve as a structured context for building connectedness, where participants are collaborating to achieve a common goal, winning, or skill improvement, within an inherently social and relational environment.

Lastly, this study suggests that further investigating and developing the concept of global connectedness could prove valuable in research on adolescent development. Recent research in the sport domain has found evidence that feelings of relatedness mediate the relationship between peer and teacher relationship variables and self-determined motivation (Cox, Duncheon & McDavid, 2009). While most of the research using self-determination theory has focused heavily on the other two psychological needs (competence and autonomy), this study reinforced the importance of further exploring social relationships and connectedness.

For practitioners, there are several implications, related both to the dyadic pyramid and to the important features of OST programs mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Here, I will use the dyadic pyramid and PowerPlay's Summer Sports Leadership Academy as a template for suggesting how programs can incorporate more

"best practices" related to these eight setting features, many of which are associated with connectedness and self-esteem. As I have outlined in Chapter 4, sports-based youth development programs provide substantial opportunities for the safety, skill-building and support that are essential for connectedness and self-esteem growth.

Physical and Psychological Safety

PowerPlay staff repeatedly emphasized confidentiality, and that what was said in the room stayed in the room. From the first day it was part of the ground rules for the group. When girls moved from activity to activity, it was often mentioned again, such as during Girl Talk sessions, or at Prepare Impact. Physical safety was monitored closely through high youth-adult ratios throughout the program, and by how the staff organized the group for field trips, such as standing ahead and behind the group when entering and leaving subway turnstiles. Simply, it appeared that PowerPlay considered each activity as a separate context, and attempted to review and provide safety regularly. The takeaway here is to view individual activities as separate contexts and to regularly make sure that youth feel safe throughout the program, both physically and emotionally.

Based on the dyadic pyramid, the feeling of safety relates to commonalities. This study supports the idea that when youth feel like they have things in common with others, it makes them feel safer, or more comfortable to try new things. When practitioners emphasize commonalities among participants, and reinforce shared expectations, youth in programs may feel safer and thus have higher levels of enjoyment and participation.

Appropriate Structure

One of the findings of this study was how structured activities can promote connectedness. In out-of-school time programs, there are two main types of activities,

structured and unstructured. Structured activities are defined as activities that involve other same-age peers, have an adult leader and meet regularly, while unstructured time is typically lower in organization and skill-building, and consists of free time, or "hanging out" time (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). When youth are involved in projects or sports teams, they become connected to others through working together to achieve common goals. PowerPlay provided structure through having a similar schedule and similar activities each day, including sports & fitness sessions, and life skills sessions. The group projects also provided structure, in that each group had a product that needed to be created by a specific deadline. In this way, using the dyadic pyramid, structure related to both physical proximity and collaboration. With organized sports, structure is built in as a part of the activity, with a coach, teammates, skill-building and a common purpose. With other programs, these elements of structure may have to be created and/or inserted into a program. Practitioners should look for ways to build physical proximity by grouping participants together and providing structured tasks, or activities for them to work on. Many programs utilize events or culminating performances or ceremonies in this way, and, when organized effectively, these types of events can be powerful learning experiences for youth.

Opportunities to Belong

Belonging, or feeling like one is part of a group or team, is an important component of connectedness. PowerPlay provided multiple opportunities for girls to be in small group activities, thus increasing the chances that they would feel like they belonged somewhere. Some of these opportunities included teambuilding exercises, sports teams and practice partners, and group projects. In each of these activities, there were structural

elements such as adult involvement, peers and goals or purposes that helped direct girls' behaviors and provide a structure for purposeful interaction. Practitioners should incorporate structured activities, small groups and different configurations of groups and partners, to increase the possibilities for youth to enhance their perceptions of belonging. Using the dyadic pyramid, another way to create opportunities to belong is to set up ways for youth to discover that they share commonalities and are in physical proximity with a wider range of individuals, since these are the two major ingredients of connectedness. One way to do this is to ask youth to switch seats or sit in new areas of a room occasionally so that they interact with new people.

Positive Social Norms

The Academy began to establish positive social norms on the first day during the ground rule process. While staff led the group process, participants offered ideas for how they would like to see the group work together. These ground rules, such as "treating others with respect," "listening to others opinions," and "being on time," were the framework of positive social norms. It is also important that, once expectations for group behavior are created, they are then accepted by all participants, including staff. Some programs call them "expectations" so they sound less like "rules" because young people often associate "rules" with adults. It is also important to reinforce the expectations regularly, and again when participants act like they need a reminder. On the pyramid, positive social norms can relate to talking and listening, collaboration and trust, not only with the initial group expectations, but also with ongoing participation in productive activities.

Support for Efficacy and Mattering

The goal of many out-of-school-time programs is that youth develop and expand their skills, perceptions of competence, and self-efficacy in many areas, such as academics, sports, arts or dance. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs that they can accomplish a specific task to produce a particular outcome (Bandura, 1977). There are four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences (i.e., performance accomplishments), vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (Bandura, 1977). The most important source is mastery experiences. For example, if an athlete has completed a skill successfully before, she will have higher self-efficacy when performing that same skill again. In addition, seeing someone else complete a task can also serve as efficacy information that the task can be completed. For example, when one girl in the group overcame her fears and successfully performed the trust fall, other girls who were nervous knew that they could do it too. Significant others such as a coach can also influence self-efficacy beliefs. When participants hear encouragement from a trusted coach to try something new, they will be more inclined to try than if the coach had not said anything. These vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion relate to social support that was experienced by participants in the Academy. Thus, program practitioners should create optimal challenges so that participants can experience more mastery experiences, and encourage staff to provide high-energy and encouragement to enhance participants' perceptions of social support.

Opportunities for Skill-building

Opportunity for skill-building, or competence, was a critical component of the PowerPlay Summer Sports Leadership Academy. Skill-building was a theme of every

activity, whether it was sports, project teams, or internship preparation. The counselors and other coaches were very explicit in teaching skills, not only in sports but in other areas such as networking, office skills, writing resumes, cover letters, and thank you notes. It is important for practitioners to intentionally consider what skills they would like to foster in youth, and plan activities and specific ways to teach those specific skills.

All skills must be taught intentionally; they do not happen simply because there is an adult or a coach present. This is often a myth surrounding youth sports and life skills, that if a child is participating in sports and being coached, then he or she must be learning life skills. Life skills must be taught just like any other skills, and counselors need to be coached both on what life skills are, as well as how to teach them effectively. Thus, programs and practitioners should clarify for themselves the specific skills they are focusing on, and how best to assess the teaching and learning of those skills. Moreover, regarding connectedness, there are social and relational skills that youth can practice to increase their ability to feel connected, or increase their perceptions of connectedness. These may include exercises to practice talking and listening, cooperation and collaboration, and building mutuality, empathy and trust (Rhodes, 2002).

Integration of Family, School and Community Efforts

From an ecological perspective, youth bring all of who they are to each of the contexts in which they are involved (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). By approaching program development this way, practitioners know how important parent and community involvement can be for participant retention, and program sustainability over time. A few of the ways that PowerPlay attempted to integrate family, school and community within the program were holding parent orientations, inviting parents and family to attend

events during the program, and taking participants to attend community events such as college fairs. Moreover, the internships provided linkages to local businesses and professional women who could share their expertise and life experiences with the girls. From the perspective of the dyadic pyramid, making and strengthening these links to parents and community are ways for programs to build more trust. Therefore, because trust represents a high level of closeness, practitioners should look for ways to get parents or other nonfamilial adults involved in the program in some way, and take advantages of all available community linkages.

Conclusion

Exploring connectedness is an important way to understand the lives and developmental processes of adolescents (Witherspoon, et al, 2009). During this study, I have been immersed in the dual challenges of exploring and understanding connectedness and self-esteem, two dynamic and multidimensional constructs that have often been difficult for researchers to unpack. Often considered or explored as outcomes by researchers, I explored them as processes, or as potential mediators of other outcomes. As fundamental human processes, whether high or low, positive or negative, the *processes* of self-esteem and connectedness are always at work. I began by conceptually exploring self-esteem as an individual process, and connectedness as a social process, and later broadened this to explore them in reverse, self-esteem as a social process and connectedness as an internal process. But how do these two processes themselves interrelate or synergize within an individual? Beyond research that shows that higher levels of connectedness lead to higher self-esteem or better psychosocial outcomes

(Resnick et al, 1997; Witherspoon, et al, 2009), how are they interwoven or how do they develop and function as mutually occurring processes for girls in this program?

In this study, I observed that the program was the context for the development of different types of relationships, between girls, and between girls and adults. Thus, relationships became the context for the development of two very significant outcomes. First, relationships facilitated the development of connectedness, one of the essential elements of life (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In this program, participants learned about and experienced connectedness at different levels. Ideally, by learning and practicing connectedness in so many new relationships with peers and adults in the Academy, girls felt more connected at a global level, and could then transfer that connectedness to other domains of their lives outside of, and after the Academy program.

Second, relationships also served as a context for another significant outcome, that of social support. While relationships were strengthening girls' perceptions of connectedness, they were also providing social support, by virtue of the positive social interactions involved. Thus, the encouraging and supportive nature of these relationships, led to both stronger perceptions of connectedness, and stronger perceptions of support, through behaviors such as positive feedback, listening, and advice. Girls were able to internalize support and feedback received to enhance their perceptions of competence in different domains. Thus, social support acted as a linchpin linking connectedness and self-esteem. Those who provided social support often facilitated increases in girls' perceptions of competence. Adolescent girls' identity process is one of self-differentiation within relationships (Steiner-Adair, 1990) and girls develop their sense of self based on how they experience themselves in relationships. Thus, relationships can

serve as contexts for girls to stay connected to others and to enhance their self-esteem (Debold, Brown, Weesen & Brookins, 1999).

As part of development, relationships have been considered a critical area of study since girls' and women's voices were added to developmental research in the 1970's and 1980's (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982). According to some theorists, relationships are critical to female identity development during adolescence and remain so throughout their lives (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990). Brown and Gilligan argued that an inner sense of connection with others is a central organizing feature in women's development and that psychological crises stem from disconnections. While much research has discussed the central conflict of adolescence as a time of separation from parents and individuation of self, it may actually be that this period is characterized as a conflict of connection, and that girls struggle to remain connected to parents, while simultaneously attaching to peers and forming an independent identity. This was evident in the way the girls' seemed to have difficulty with emotional abstraction, or the ability to keep close ones close in their minds even if they were not physically present. Relational cultural theory (Miller, 1978) posits that all growth occurs in connection, that people seek connection with others, that growth-fostering relationships are created through mutual empathy and empowerment, and that psychological health and vitality are linked to such relationships (Spencer, Jordan & Sazama, 2002). Thus, relationships are the fertile contexts through which connectedness, and self-esteem are experienced, learned, and enhanced.

As seen in this study, relationships in a girls sports-based youth development program were a fertile context for growing the ingredients of connectedness. Through the

presence of various combinations of the six ingredients, several types of connectedness were created. By experiencing and practicing connectedness with others in the Academy, girls could create a template for experiencing connectedness in other domains of their lives. While connectedness was one outcome, the other outcome was social support. Because social support is also an antecedent of self-esteem, connectedness was thus a mediator of self-esteem, through the social support that was created through program relationships. Therefore, both processes independently and jointly contributed to girls' healthy, and positive development.

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Table 1
Quantitative Results: Connectedness Scales

Scale	Pre-mean (SD) (N = 13)	Post Mean (SD) (N = 11)
Connectedness to Parents (Karcher, 2001)	4.29 (.48786)	4.0 (.68718)
Connectedness to Siblings (Karcher, 2001)	4.52 (.58127)	4.31 (.88380)
Connectedness to Father (Karcher, 2001)	3.84 (.91134)	3.62 (1.21838)
Connectedness to Non-familial Adults (Karcher, 2001)	4.19 (.54045)	3.87 (.84547)
Connectedness to Neighborhood (Karcher, 2001)	3.17 (.92546)	2.93 (.58899)
IPPA Mutual Trust (Armsden & Greenberg, 1988)	4.20 (.75829)	3.61 (.81438)
IPPA Communication (Armsden & Greenberg, 1988)	4.05 (.85854)	3.18 (.92092)
IPPA Altercation (Armsden & Greenberg, 1988)	4.26 (.54142)	3.71 (.75892)
Multi-ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992)	3.36 (.43883)	3.29 (.57931)
Feelings of Relatedness (Richer & Vallerand, 1998)	5.51	5.64
Feelings of Relatedness to Academy (Richer & Vallerand, 1998)	--	5.81

Note: There is no Pre-mean data available for Feelings of Relatedness to Academy because this scale was administered on the post-program survey only.

Table 2
Quantitative Results: Self-Esteem Scales

Scale	Pre-mean (SD) (N = 13)	Post Mean (SD) (N = 11)
Scholastic Competence (Harter, 1987)	3.5 (.61185))	3.36 (.42725)
Athletic Competence (Harter, 1987)	3.00 (.78316)	2.93 (.79636)
Physical Appearance (Harter, 1987)	2.98 (.76359)	3.13 (.58153)
Social Acceptance (Harter, 1987)	3.28 (.66603)	3.07 (.73361)
Global Self-worth (Harter, 1987)	3.48 (.53875)	3.51 (.58216)
Behavioral Conduct (Harter, 1987)	3.15 (.54020)	3.15 (.42039)
Close Friendships (Harter, 1987)	3.46 (.73659)	3.45 (.73806)

Table 3

Quantitative Results: Youth Experiences Survey (Hansen & Larson, 2005)

Scale (N = 11)	Mean (SD) (at post)
Identity Experiences (Identity exploration, identity reflection)	3.18 (.48565)
Initiative Experiences (Goal setting, effort, problem solving, time management)	3.55 (.60757)
Basic Skills (Emotional regulation, cognitive skills, physical skills)	3.16 (.89808)
Interpersonal Experiences (Diverse peer relationships, pro-social norms)	3.44 (.49801)
Teamwork Experiences (Group process skills, feedback, leadership and responsibility)	3.49 (.68768)
Adult Networks and Social Capital (Integration with family, linkages to community, linkages to work and college)	2.81 (.96314)
Negative Experiences (Stress, negative peer influences, social exclusion, negative group dynamics)	1.21 (.20633)

Table 4
Participants in the Study

Name	Age	Borough	Race/Ethnicity	Former Participant
Aliann	16	Queens	African-American	No
Anastasia	15	Queens	Latina	No
Esme	16	Brooklyn	Latina	No
Iris	15	Brooklyn	Asian	No
Janet	14	Queens	Asian	No
Jaz	14	Brooklyn	African-American	No
LaToya	15	Brooklyn	African-American	Yes
Nakeeba	14	Brooklyn	African-American	No
Nene	14	Brooklyn	African-American	No
Selena	15	Brooklyn	African-American	Yes
Shakina	15	Queens	African-American	Yes
Venus	15	Long Island	African-American	No
Zelda	15	Queens	African-American	No

Table 5

PowerPlay Summer Leadership Academy Staff

Name	Borough	Race/Ethnicity	Former Participant
Maya	Brooklyn	African-American	No
Delila	Brooklyn	African-American	No
Jade	Brooklyn	African-American	Yes
Lena	Brooklyn	Asian	Yes
Shauna	Queens	African-American	Yes
Sheba	Brooklyn	African-American	Yes
Sheree	Queens	Latina	Yes
Sydelle	Queens	Latina	Yes

Table 6
Individual Participants' Self-Esteem Scores (pre, post)

Name	Academic	Athletic	Physical appearance	Social acceptance	Close friendship	Behavior/ conduct	Global self-worth
Aliann	3.4/3.0	3.6/3.8	3.4/3.6	3.4/2.6	3.0/3.0	3.4/3.0	3.8/3.4
Anastasia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Esme	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Iris	2.8/3.0	1.6/1.4	2.2/3.0	2.8/3.6	4.0/3.8	2.6/2.8	2.6/3.2
Janet	3.2/3.2	3.8/3.4	3.8/3.2	3.0/3.0	4.0/2.6	3.8/3.4	4.0/3.2
Jaz	3.6/4.0	3.8/4.0	2.2/2.2	2.0/2.2	1.8/1.4	3.8/4.0	2.8/2.4
LaToya	3.6/3.8	2.6/1.8	2.2/2.0	3.2/3.2	4.0/4.0	2.6/2.8	3.2/3.6
Nakeeba	3.8/3.6	3.0/3.4	3.4/3.8	3.4/3.2	3.8/3.8	3.2/3.0	3.8/4.0
Nene	3.8/4.0	2.0/2.2	2.2/2.6	2.6/3.4	4.0/4.0	2.6/2.8	3.4/4.0
Selena	3.6/3.2	2.8/3.0	2.8/3.4	8/3.6	8/4.0	8/4.0	3.6/4.0
Shakina	2.4/2.6	2.6/3.0	2.2/3.0	2.0/1.6	3.6/3.8	2.8/2.8	3.2/2.6
Venus	4.0/3.8	3.8/3.4	4.0/4.0	4.0/4.0	3.6/3.4	3.2/3.2	4.0/4.0
Zelda	2.6/2.6	2.4/3.0	2.6/3.2	4.0/3.6	3.4/4.0	3.4/3.0	3.8/4.0

N/A: did not take the post survey

Table 7

Individual Participants' Connectedness Scores (Pre, post)

Name	Parents	Mothers	Fathers	Siblings	Non-familial adults	Neigh-borhood	Life Relation-ships	Academy Relation-ships
Aliann	4.83/ 4.5	4.7/ 4.3	4.8/ 4.6	5.0/ 5.0	5.0/ 5.0	3.0/ 1.67	6.7/ 6.6	7.0
Anastasia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Esme	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Iris	4.33/ 3.33	3.3/ 2.8	4.0/ 4.6	*	2.2/ 2.5	4.17/ 3.5	5.2/ 6.0	5.5
Janet	*	4.0/ 3.3	*	4.4/ 3.2	4.5/ 3.67	4.0/ 3.3	5.8/ 5.3	6.0
Jaz	4.3/ 2.83	4.8/ 2.2	5.0/ 1.6	4.6/ 2.6	4.83/ 5.0	2.5/ 3.0	1.0/ 2.0	5.9
LaToya	3.17/ 3.33	2.3/ 2.7	2.2/ 1.8	5.0/ 5.0	3.67/ 3.0	3.5/ 2.5	5.9/ 5.8	5.7
Nakeeba	3.83/ 4.33	3.8/ 4.2	4.2/ 3.6	4.0/ 4.0	4.0/ 3.67	3.0/ 3.0	5.8/ 6.0	6.0
Nene	**	**	*	**	**	**	6.5/ 6.8	5.7
Selena	4.0/ 3.83	4.2/ 3.9	3.2/ 3.2	4.6/ 4.4	4.33/ 4.67	2.5/ 3.0	4.7/ 5.5	4
Shakina	4.17/ 4.5	4.5/ 4.3	3.6/ 3.8	4.2/ 4.6	3.33/ 3.17	3.5/ 2.5	5.6/ 5.1	5.7
Venus	4.67/ 4.67	4.7/ 4.6	4.4/ 4.6	5.0/ 5.0	3.83/ 4.0	3.17/ 3.5	5.1/ 6.3	6.6
Zelda	4.5/ 4.67	4.3/ 3.8	4.4/ 4.8	4.6/ 5.0	4.0/ 4.0	2.83/ 2.83	6.6/ 6.6	5.0

-- Did not take the post survey
*   Does not apply (i.e., does not have siblings or father)
** No data for items

Figure 4.1

Dyadic Pyramid

Emotional Connectedness

Shared emotions

Shared experiences

Shared environments

Instrumental Connectedness

Trust

Talking & Listening

Humor   Collaboration

Commonalities   Physical Proximity
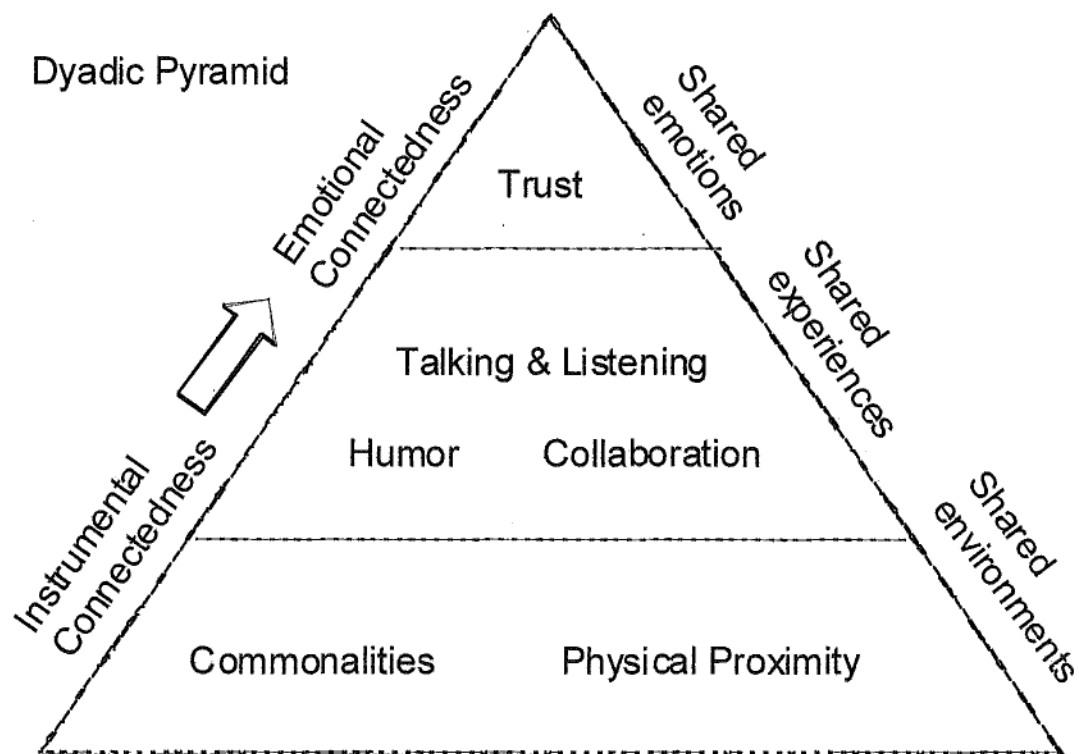
APPENDIX A: Interview Protocols -- Interview #1: Beginning of Academy
Interview Protocol

The primary interest of this study is to learn about girls' experiences in a sports-based youth development program. All interviews will be conducted in person. The following protocol will provide guidelines for a typical interview.

Prior to the interview:
- Ask the participant if she would be willing to participate in a 45-minute interview.
- Designate a time to meet in a quiet, comfortable location at the program venue. The interviews will take place on-site during the program day.
- Check that the recorder is in working order and is functioning correctly.

At the beginning of the interview:
- Introduce myself to the participant
- I will say the following: *Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I would like to audio tape this conversation today so that I can better listen to you and focus on what you have to say. Here is a copy of the assent form that you have already signed. This says: (1) your information will be held confidential (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop and withdraw or you may indicate that you do not want to answer specific questions at any time, and (3) this study is intended to explore adolescent girls experiences in a sports-based youth development program. These audiotapes will only be heard by me. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The interview will last no longer than 45 minutes and will cover several questions about you and your life.*
- Explain the purpose of the study to the participant: *This study explores girls' experiences in sports-based youth development programs. We are interested in your experiences in the Sports Leadership Academy this summer.*

Background Information

Participant Name:Name of interviewer:
Date of interview: Time of interview:
Phone or in-person location:

Interview Questions

The following questions provide a framework for the interview. Based on the participants' answers, these questions will be expanded with follow-up questions.

I. Self

Tell me about yourself. How would you describe yourself?
- What kind of person are you?

What people, things or activities make you feel good about yourself?
What is it about that person, thing or activity that makes you feel good?

Give me the three words that you think best describe yourself. Why did you choose those?
Tell me a little about what these mean to you.

Who has had the greatest influence on who you are?
Please describe this person, group, or organization and the way in which they have had an impact on you.

What are your goals for the future?

II. Family

How would you describe your family? What are they like?

Who are you closest to in your family?
- What is your relationship with your mother like? Your father?
- What is your relationship with your siblings like?

What kinds of activities do you do with your family regularly?
Activities, meals, visiting relatives, going to church, etc.

What kinds of things do you disagree on with your family?
- How do you resolve those situations?

If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be?

III. Friends

What is your group of friends like?
- How would you describe them?
- How much time do you spend with them?
- What kinds of things do you do with your friends?

Do you have a best friend?
- If yes, who is it? How long have you been best friends?
- How would you describe them? How would they describe you?
- If no, do you wish you had a best friend?

What qualities do you look for/value in a friend?

How do you know when you are friends with someone?

How do your friends support you or help you out?
- Can you give an example?

What kind of friend are you?
  Pick three words to describe what kind of friend you are?
  Why did you pick these?

When is the last time you made a new friend?
- How did that happen?
- How did you know that you were friends with this person?

What kinds of things do you disagree on with friends?
- How do you resolve those situations?

IV. Relational Map Exercise

Depending on where they list people on the page and their closeness ratings.....
- Has this changed at all from when you first met? If so, why? How did you become more or less close over time?
- How do you know this person (family, friend, school, club, church, etc.)?
  If family, what relation?
  If they are from the Academy, is the person a peer or staff?

V. Sports and other activities

Do you participate in extracurricular activities?
- If yes, which one(s)? Do your friends participate in these too?
- If no, is there an activity you would you like to be part of? Why don't you participate? Do your friends participate?

Do you participate in sports or fitness activities outside of the PowerPlay Sports Leadership Academy?
- If yes, which one(s)? Do your friends participate in them too?
- How long have you played that sport?

- Why do you like it?
- If no, is there a sport(s) that you would like to learn? Why don't you participate in sports or fitness? Do any of your friends participate in sports?
- What is the best part of playing sports?
  - What is the best part of being on a team?
- What is the most challenging part of playing sports?
  - What is the most difficult part of about being on a team?

How confident do you feel in your abilities to play sports?

How much input or choice have you had on sports teams you've been on?
- Have you felt like the coach listened to you?
- Have you felt supported by the coach?

VI. PowerPlay Sports Leadership Academy

What made you apply for the program?
- What are your expectations for the program?

VII. Girls & Sports

What stereotypes do you think there are around girls and sports?
- Do you think these stereotypes keep girls from getting involved in sports?

What do you think are the biggest barriers for girls to play sports?

Do you think it is important for girls to have opportunities to learn and play sports?
- If so, why? If not, why not?

How would you try to encourage more girls to be active in sports?

Notes from interview:

At the end of the interview:

- Record any post-interview comments
- Thank participant again for her time, information and willingness to participate in my study.
- After the interview, send a thank you note or email to the participant

Appendix A: Interview #2: Post-Program

Interview Protocol

The primary interest of this study is to learn about the experiences of adolescent girls self in a sports-based youth development program. All interviews will be conducted in person or by phone. The following protocol will provide guidelines for a typical interview.

Prior to the interview:
Ask the participant if she would be willing to participate in a 45-minute interview about her experiences in the Academy.
Designate a time to meet in a quiet, comfortable location at the program venue or set up a convenient time for a phone interview. The interviews will take place either at the PowerPlay office or over the phone.
Check that the tape recorder is in working order and is functioning correctly.

At the beginning of the interview:
Introduce myself to the participant
Please say the following: *Thanks again for participating in my study and for talking with me today. I would like to tape this conversation today, so that I can listen to you better. I want to remind you that you signed the assent form to participate in this study and that (1) your information will be held confidential (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop and withdraw or you may indicate that you do not want to answer specific questions at any time, and (3) this study is intended to examine girls' experiences in a sports program. The audiotape will only be heard by me. The interview will last no longer than 45 minutes and will cover several questions about your experience in the Academy.*
Explain the purpose of the study to the participant: *This study explores the experiences of girls in a sports-based youth development program. I am interested in your experiences in the Sports Leadership Academy and what you learned.*
Record the following information

Background Information

Participant Name:
Name of interviewer:
Date of interview:
Time of interview:
Phone or in-person location:

Interview Questions

The following questions provide a framework for the interview. Based on the participant' answers, these questions will be expanded with follow-up questions.

I. Academy Experiences

Tell me about your experience in PowerPlay's Sports Leadership Academy this summer.

What was the best part of the Academy this summer?

What was the most challenging part about the Academy this summer?

What was your favorite activity at the Academy?

What was your least favorite activity at the Academy?

What are three words you would use to describe your summer?
- Why did you pick those words?

What are three words you would use to describe the group as a whole, girls and staff?
- Why did you pick those words?
- What are three words you would use to describe the group of girls? Why?
- What are three words you would use to describe the staff? Why?

Tell me about what you learned by being in the Academy this summer.
- What were the most important things you learned this summer?
- What activity or activities had the most influence on you?
  - How?
- Are there activities at the Academy that have changed how you think about yourself?
- What is one thing you would change about the Academy if you were the Director?
- How do you define leadership and being a leader?
- Can you tell me who stood out to you as being a leader in the group? Why?
- Did you ever see yourself as a leader in the group? How?

II. Academy Relationships

Tell me about your relationships with peers and staff in the Academy this summer.

Relational Map exercise. Depending on where they list people on the page and their closeness ratings…..
- Has this changed at all from when you first met? If so, why? How did you become more or less close over time?
- How do you know this person (family, friend, school, club, church, etc.)? If family, what relation?
- If they are from the Academy, is the person a peer or staff?
- Who did you feel closest to at the Academy? Why?
    o Among the girls, whom did you feel closest to? Why?
    o How did you become close to her?
    o Among the staff, whom did you feel closest to? Why?
    o How did you become close with her?
    o How are the girls from the Academy similar to your friends from outside the Academy? How are they different?
    o How are the Academy staff like other adults in your life? How are they different?

How have the relationships with the Academy staff influenced who you are now at all?
    o Has staff helped you feel more confident about your future?
    o How does the staff help you feel like you can be yourself in different situations?

Are there ways that the Academy has made you think differently about being female?
    o How?
    o How has the Academy changed how you feel about girls participating in sports?

What did you learn in the sport and fitness activities?
What was the best part about sport and fitness activities?
What was the most challenging part about the sport and fitness activities?
How did you improve your sport skills this summer?
Do you feel like the staff listened to you? Can you describe an example?
Do you feel like the staff supported you during activities? If so, how?

V. Satisfaction/Enjoyment
On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rank your experience in the Academy?
- Why?
How did this experience rank in terms of other programs in which you have participated?

Appendix A: Interview #3: November

Interview Protocol

All of the third interviews will be conducted in person or by phone. The following protocol will provide guidelines for a typical interview.

Prior to the interview:
Ask the participant if she would be willing to participate in a 45-minute interview. Designate a time to meet in a quiet, comfortable location at the program venue at a time that is convenient for them. If the participant is not available for an in person meeting, set up a time for a telephone interview.
After the time and place for the meeting has been determined, send an email or note before the interview to confirm the date and time.
Check that the tape recorder is in working order and is functioning correctly.

At the beginning of the interview:
Please say the following: *Thanks again for participating in my study and talking with me today. I would like to tape this conversation so that I can listen better to what you are saying. I want to remind you that: (1) your information will be held confidential (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop and withdraw or you may indicate that you do not want to answer specific questions at any time, and (3) this study is intended to explore your experiences in the Sports Leadership Academy. The tape will only be heard by me. Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study.*
Review the purpose of the study to the participant: *This study explores the experiences of adolescent girls in a sports-based youth development program. I am interested in your experiences in the Sports Leadership Academy and what you learned.*
Record the following information

Background Information

Role of participant/ job description:
Name of interviewer:
Date of interview:
Time of interview:
Phone or in-person location:

Interview Questions

The following questions provide a framework for the interview. I will ask follow-up questions based on what the participant's answers are.

1. I last spoke with you in August (or September). What changes have you seen in yourself since the summer?
- How do you think or act differently because you were in the Academy?
- How do your parents think the Academy experience changed you?
- How do your friends think the Academy experience changed you?

2. What skills from the summer are you using in your life this fall?
- Can you give me an example of that?

3. Relational Map exercise. Depending on where they list people on the page and their closeness ratings.....
- How have you become more or less close over time?
- How do you know this person (family, friend, school, club, church, etc.)? If family, what relation?
- If they are from the Academy, is the person a peer or staff?

If she does not list anyone from Academy...Are you still in touch with anyone from the Academy?
- If so, who?
- Do you feel like you are still connected to PowerPlay? How?
- What are the most vivid memories you have of the program?

4. Are you participating in any extracurricular activities this year?
- If yes, which ones? Tell me about your experiences in those activities. Do you have friends in those activities?
- How did participating in PowerPlay help prepare you for these activities?
- If no, why not? Is there anything keeping you from participating in those activities?

5. Are you currently participating in any sports or fitness activities?
- If yes, which ones? Tell me about your experiences in those activities. Do you have friends in those activities?
- What do like best about participating in those activities?
- If no, why not? Is there anything keeping you from participating in those activities?

6. Do you feel like you can speak up and have input in those activities?
- Do you feel like your coach/leader listens to you and values what you have to say?

- Do you feel like your coach/leader supports you?
  - Can you describe an example of that?

6. What are your goals for yourself in the future?
- Did the Academy influence how you see your life after high school?
  - If yes, how?

7. Overall, how do you think the PowerPlay experience affected your life?

Notes from interview:

At the end of the interview:

- Record any post-interview comments
- Thank the participant for his/her time, information and willingness to participate.
- After the interview, send a thank you note or email to the participant.

Appendix B: Relational Map

First, I will instruct the participants to put their name in the center of a blank piece of paper. Then, I will ask them to create a physical representation of how close they feel to others in their lives. They should include all the various people in their lives, whether or not they feel close to them. They will be instructed to put the names near or far from their own based on how close they feel to them. Therefore, the closer the names are to their own indicates more closeness with that person, while the farther away the names are from their own indicates less closeness. I will then ask them to draw lines connecting the people who know each other. Then, they will complete a table that has a row for each person on the map.

The information listed for each person will be:

1. Name

2. Age and sex (older than 25 = adult)

3. Age you were when you first met this person

4. How close would you say you are to him/her on a scale of 1-5 (1 not at all, 5 extremely)

5. Has this changed at all from when you first met? If so, why? How did you become more or less close over time?

6. How do you know this person (family, friend, school, club, church, etc.) If family, what relation?

7. If they are from the Academy, is the person a peer or staff?

Appendix C: Connectedness Worksheets

1) Who did you feel closest to this week at the Academy?
On a scale of 1-5, (1 = distant and 5 = super close), please rate how close you felt to that girl or staff person(s):

Name   Closeness Rating (circle one)

_____   1   2   3   4   5

_____   1   2   3   4   5

2) Please describe why you felt close to them.

3) Who did you feel distant from this week at the Academy?
On a scale of 1-5, (1 = distant and 5 = super close), please rate how distant you felt to that person (s)

Name   Distance Rating (circle one)
_____   1   2   3   4   5

_____   1   2   3   4   5

4) Why did you feel distant from them?

5) How close do you feel to the program as a whole?
On a scale of 1-5, (1 = distant and 5 = super connected), please rate how close you feel to the program.

1   2   3   4   5

6) What would make you feel closer to the program?

7) What would make you feel closer to other participants or staff at the Academy?'

Appendix D: Quantitative Measures

<u>Time 1: Pre-program (Late June, 2009)</u>

- Self-esteem Profile for Adolescents (all scales but romantic competence and job competence) (Harter, 1988)
- Hemingway Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (all scales but reading, self in present, self in future) (Karcher, 2005)
- Inventory of Parent & Peer Attachment (mother scale) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987)
- Multi-ethnic Identity Scale (belonging items) (Phinney, 1992)
- Relatedness to Others (Richer & Vallerand, 1998)

<u>Time 2: Post-program (November, 2009)</u>

- Self-esteem Profile for Adolescents (all scales but romantic competence and job competence) (Harter, 1988)
- Hemingway Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (all scales but reading, self in present, self in future) (Karcher, 2005)
- Inventory of Parent & Peer Attachment (mother scale) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987)
- Multi-ethnic Identity Scale (belonging items) (Phinney, 1992)
- Relatedness to Others (Richer & Vallerand, 1998)
- Relatedness to Sports Leadership Academy (modified from Relatedness to Others scale, Richer & Vallerand, 1998)
- Youth Experiences Scale (Hansen & Larson, 2005)

Appendix E: Start Codes: Connectedness

What are the experiences of girls in a girls-only sports program? Does the program serve as a context for the development of connectedness, and self-esteem?

- **1a. If so, what are the mechanisms or processes underlying the development of connectedness for girls in a sports-based youth development program?**
- **1b. If so, how does connectedness influence girls' experiences of and satisfaction in the sports program?**

Codes
a. = Definition of connectedness code
b. = Instances or descriptions of what it might look like
c. = Opposite, or disconnectedness

1. Attachment
a. Definition: affectionate regard or devotion; a bond, as of affection or loyalty; something that ties one to another person, place, or thing
b. Includes: instances of or expressions of feeling committed to another person, place or thing, can be physical or emotional attachment; must be in association with someone or something else, can be positive or negative
c. Detachment; lack of bonds with others

2. Authenticity
a. Definition: genuineness, realness, undisputed credibility, believability
b. Includes: instances where an individual is being real, or vulnerable, or able to express one's genuine feelings
c. Inauthentic; feeling fake

3. Belonging
a. Definition: a feeling of acceptance within a group or experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of being part of the group, being an accepted member
c. Feeling left out

4. Caring
a. Definition: showing compassion for others, feeling and exhibiting concern and empathy for others, showing or having compassion; kind, sensitive, responsive, receptive, sympathetic, considerate
b. Includes: instances or descriptions where individuals display compassion, concern or empathy for others

c. Lack of caring and compassion; treating others with disrespect

5. Collaboration

a. Definition: working jointly together, partnership, association, cooperation, alliance

b. Includes: descriptions of working together to develop a skill or problem solve, instances of partnership, or teamwork for purpose

c. Lack of collaboration; not working together, disagreeing or arguing

6. Commitment

a. Definition: the trait of sincere and steadfast fixity of purpose; a pledge; being bound emotionally or intellectually to a person or idea; dedication to a cause or principle; obligation, responsibility or promise; allegiance, loyalty, dedication

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of one's loyalty or allegiance to another, supporting another through tough situations.

c. Flakiness; not following through on commitments or promises

7. Communication

a. Definition: exchange of information between individuals; two-way process in which ideas, thoughts and feelings are exchanged between two or more people; a process by which people assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding; three forms of communication include body language, voice tonality and words, or content.

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of talking, texting or somehow communicating with other people, verbally or nonverbally. Also includes descriptions of messages sent through tone or body language

c. Silence; not speaking, being quiet

8. Closeness

a. Definition: emotional tie or bond, feeling of knowing and being on the same wave length with another

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of strong feelings between two or more people.

c. Distance

9. Companionship

a. Definition: the state of being with someone; company, friendship, rapport, comaraderie, togetherness

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of spending time together, doing things together, enjoying the company of another person

c. Aloneness; being alone, not hanging out with others, sitting on the side

10. Empathy

a. Definition: the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another; capacity to share and understand another's feelings

b. Includes: Talking or understanding the other's perspective, feeling like another person understands, knows who you are and cares about you, individuals relating to the experience of another from their own personal experience

c. Lack of empathy; not understanding or being sensitive, being rude, saying hurtful things

11. Liking

a. Definition: a feeling of attraction, fondness, preference or taste; what one chooses or prefers, a feeling of pleasure and enjoyment; appreciation, affinity, inclination, delighted approval

b. Includes: Expressions of satisfaction, or positive feelings; preference for other person (s), activity or thing, having a preference for one person or thing over another

c. Disliking; expressions of negative feelings about person or activity, lack of enjoyment

12. Listening

a. Definition: to pay attention, hearing with thoughtful attention, give consideration, become aware of something through the senses

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of a person or persons hearing the verbal or nonverbal communications of another

c. Ignoring; not able to listen or choosing not to listen to another person or group

13. Mutuality

a. Definition: quality or state of being mutual, sharing sentiments with another, shared level of intimacy, commitment and attunement to the relationship

b. Includes: instances of mutual engagement, bi-directional energy into a relationship, emotional ties or perceived mutual involvement

14. Physical proximity

a. Definition: the state, quality, sense, or fact of being near or next to; closeness, nearness in space or time, the property of being close together

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of physical closeness or nearness to another person or group; walking, sitting or talking together, touching, hugging or hitting

c. Distance; being physically apart from others or the group,

15. Reaching out

a. Definition: get in contact or communicate with, make an effort to interact with another person

b. Includes: instances of or descriptions of approaching another person, starting a conversation, asking questions, or initiating interactions

c. Withdrawal; pulling oneself away, actively removing oneself

16. Social Support

a. Definition: an interaction between the self and social environment, much like belonging; refers to general support and/or specific supportive behaviors from others that enhance one's functioning and/or act as a buffer from adverse circumstances

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of group members being positive or encouraging to someone, cheering them on, letting them know they can do something they don't think they can

c. Lack of social support, not feeling like others are behind you or on your side

17. Trust

a. Definition: Feeling safe, feeling like one can reveal inner thoughts and feelings to another and will not be betrayed, feeling a certain comfort level, feeling like whatever one says is accepted unconditionally by another

b. Includes: instances of feeling safe in a relationship, sharing personal information with another, relying on another

c. Lack of trust; not feeling safe

Appendix E: Start Codes: Self-Esteem

**What are the experiences of girls in a girls-only sports program?
Does the program serve as a context for the development of
connectedness, and self-esteem?**

- **1a. If so, what are the mechanisms or processes underlying the
  development of connectedness and self-esteem for girls in a sports-based
  youth development program?**
- **1b. If so, how does connectedness influence girls' experiences of and
  satisfaction in the sports program?**

Codes
a. = Definition of self-esteem code
b. = Instances or descriptions of what it might look like in the field
c. = Opposite, if applicable

1. Scholastic Competence
a. Definition: one's perception of competence or ability within the realm of
scholastic perfomance, ie. how well she is doing in school, and how smart or
intelligent she feels.
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of feeling capable or competent in academic
areas, talking positively about school, classes or grades.
c. low perceived scholastic competence; thinking one is not good at school, or not
very smart

2. Athletic Competence
a. Definition: feeling capable or perception of ability and competence in sports,
feeling that one is good at sports, and can do well at them.
b: Includes: instances or descriptions of individuals saying they are a good athlete,
expressing high perceived ability in sport. talking about feeling comfortable in
sport environments
c. low perceived athletic competence; thinking one is not very athletic or good at
sports

3. Close Friendship
a. Definition: ability to make close friends that one can share personal thoughts
and secrets with.
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of
c. hard to make close friends

4. Social Acceptance
a. Definition: degree to which one is accepted by peers, feels popular, has a lot of
friends, and feels that she is easy to like.
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of

c. social outcast or loner

5. Behavioral Conduct
a. Definition: degree to which one likes the way they behave, does the right thing, acts the way one is supposed to, and avoids getting into trouble.
b: Includes: instances or descriptions of
c. bad behavior, getting into trouble

6. Physical Appearance
a. Definition: degree to which one is happy with the way she looks, likes her body, and feels that she is good looking.
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of
c. low body image

7. Self-worth
a. Definition: overall self-evaluation; how girls feel about themselves as a person, extent to which one likes herself, is happy with the way she is leading her life, and is generally happy with the way one is. It is a global judgement of one's worth as a person, rather than domain-specific competence.
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of how girls globally feel, such as whether they are a good person or not, whether they
c. low self-worth, not liking oneself

8. Agency
a. Definition: the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power
b. Includes instances or descriptions of taking initiative in a situation, seeing oneself as having power to change context or environment, sense of control over environment
c. passive; letting things happen to oneself, not exerting control

9. Significant Others/Socializers
a. Definition: a person who is important to one's well-being
b. Includes instances or descriptions of girls talking about relationships with important people in their life, expressions of how those relationships make them feel, or provide a sense of self, ie. Cooley's 'looking glass self.'
c. enemies

10. Self Perceptions
a. Definition: how one thinks about herself
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of one's identity, or self-concept in various domains

11. Future Selves
a. Definition: how one thinks about herself in the future

b. Includes: instances or descriptions of girls talking about what their life will be like in college or beyond, what kinds of careers they are interested in, or what kind of life they would like for themselves.

12. Family
a. Definition: group of people that one lives with, or to whom one is related
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of girls talking about close relatives such as parents, siblings or grandparents; particularly associated with how those people make one feel

13. Feedback
a. Definition: the transmission of evaluative or corrective information about an action, event, or process to the original or controlling source
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of girls giving or receiving feedback from peers or counselors/staff, can be positive or negative; positive feedback supports the actions or behaviors of another, while negative feedback curtails or dampens them

14. Skill Development
a. Definition: the process of using one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance; building dexterity or coordination especially in the execution of learned physical tasks
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of girls trying new things, expressing that they accomplished a new skill, or can now do something competently that they could not before, or growing in aptitude or ability

15. Relationships
a. Definition: the state of being related or interrelated, attachments or connections between individuals; a state of affairs existing between those having relations or dealings; a romantic or passionate attachment
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of girls discussing friends or other people to whom they are attached or connected; discussion of sexual relationships

16. Beliefs/Values
a. Definition: a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing; something believed, a tenet or body of tenets held by a group; conviction of the truth of some statement or the reality of some being or phenomenon especially when based on examination of evidence; faith, opinion, evidence; personal philosophy or way one sees the world
b. Includes: instances or descriptions of girls talking about how they feel about 'big picture' topics; expressing their opinions or personal philosophy

Appendix E: Code List

Accepting or openness	Fun
Acknowledgement	Future Selves
Advice	Global Self-Worth
Agency	Goals
Aloneness	Group Activity
Associates	Group Dynamics
Athletic Competence	Influence
Attachment	Internship
Attention	Leadership
Authenticity	Life Lessons
Behavioral Conduct	Liking
Beliefs & Values	Listening
Belonging	Mutuality
Caring	Overall Impressions
Challenges	Physical Appearance
Cliques	Physical Proximity
Closeness	Program Reflections
Close Friendships	Program Structure
Coaching	Race & Ethnicity
Collaboration	Reaching Out
Commitment	Relationships
Commonalities	Role Models
Communication	Scholastic Competence
Companionship	Self-Perceptions
Competition	Self-Worth
Conflict	Sharing
Descriptions of girls	Significant Others
Descriptions of staff	Skill Development
Descriptions of whole group	Social Acceptance
Emotions	Social Support
Empathy	Staff Support
Encouraging	Stereotypes about Girls
Extracurricular	Suggestions for Improvement
Family	Summer Rating
Favorite Activity	Teamwork
Feedback	Teasing
First Impressions	Transformational Activity
	Trust

Appendix F: Surveys

Girls Sports Survey

Name: _____Date: _____

Grade in Fall: 8____ 9____ 10____ 11____ 12____   Age: _____

Who do you live with? Mother ___ Father ___ Both ___ Other _____

If other, who? _____

_____

What I am Like
Sample Items

Some teenagers like dogs better than	BUT	Other teenagers like cats cats better than dogs.
Really true Sort of true **for me for me**		**Sort of true Really** **for me true for me**

Some teenagers like vanilla ice cream	BUT	Other teenagers like chocolate ice cream.
Really true Sort of true **for me for me**		**Sort of true Really** **for me true for me**

_____

1. Some teenagers feel that they are just as smart as others their age	BUT	Other teenagers aren't so sure and wonder if they're smart.
Really true Sort of true **for me for me**		**Sort of true Really** **for me true for me**

2. Some teenagers find it hard to make friends	BUT	For other teenagers it's pretty easy to make friends.
Really true Sort of true **for me for me**		**Sort of true Really** **for me true for me**

3. Some teenagers usually do the right thing	BUT	Other teenagers often don't do what they know is right.
Really true Sort of true **for me for me**		**Sort of true Really** **for me true for me**

4. Some teenagers do very well at all kinds of sports

BUT

Other teenagers don't feel that they are very good when it comes to sports.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

5. Some teenagers are <u>not</u> happy with the way they look

BUT

Other teenagers are happy with the way they look.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

6. Some teenagers like the kind of person they are

BUT

Other teenagers wish they were different.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

7. Some teenagers are able to make really close friends

BUT

Other teenagers find it hard to make really close friends

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

8. Some teenagers are pretty slow in finishing their schoolwork.

BUT

Other teenagers can do their schoolwork more quickly.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

9. Some teenagers have a lot of friends

BUT

Other teenagers don't have very many friends.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

10. Some teenagers often get in trouble for the things they do

BUT

Other teenagers usually don't do things that get them into trouble.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

11. Some teenagers feel they could do   BUT   Other teenagers are afraid
well at a new sport   they might not do well at a
    new sport.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

12. Some teenagers wish their body was   BUT   Other teenagers like their
different   body the way it is.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

13. Some teenagers are often disappointed   BUT   Other teenagers are pretty
with themselves   pleased with themselves.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

14. Some teenagers do have a close   BUT   Other teenagers do not have a
friend they can share secrets   really close friend they can
    share secrets with.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

15. Some teenagers do very well   BUT   Other teenagers don't
at their classwork   do very well at their
    classwork

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

16. Some teenagers are kind of hard to like   BUT   Other teenagers are
    really easy to like.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

17. Some teenagers feel really good   BUT   Other teenagers don't feel
about the way they act   that good about the way they
    they often act.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

18. Some teenagers have trouble figuring   BUT   Other teenagers
out the answers in school   almost always can figure out
    the answers.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

19. Some teenagers feel that they are better BUT Other teenagers don't feel
than other kids their age at sports they can play as well.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

20. Some teenagers don't like the way BUT Other teenagers do
they are leading their life like the way they are
                                         leading their life.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

21. Some teenagers wish they had a really BUT Other teenagers do have a
close friend to share things with really close friend to share
                                         things with.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

22. Some teenagers are popular with others BUT Other teenagers are
their age not very popular

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

23. Some teenagers wish their physical BUT Other teenagers like their
appearance was different physical appearance the way
                                         it is.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

24. Some teenagers feel that they are BUT Other teenagers question
pretty intelligent whether they are intelligent.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

25. Some teenagers feel that they are BUT Other teenagers wish
socially accepted that more people their age
                                         accepted them.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

26. Some teenagers are happy with themselves most of the time   BUT   Other teenagers are often not happy with themselves.

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

27. Some teenagers usually act the way they are supposed to   BUT   Other teenagers often don't act the way they are supposed to.

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

28. Some teenagers do not feel that they are good at sports   BUT   Other teenagers feel that they are very good at sports.

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

29. Some teenagers find it hard to make friends they can really trust   BUT   Other teenagers are able to make close friends they can really trust.

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

30. Some teenagers are very happy being the way they are   BUT   Other teenagers wish they were different.

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

31. Some teenagers think they're good looking   BUT   Other teenagers think that they're not very good looking.

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

32. Some teenagers do things they know they shouldn't do   BUT   Other teenagers hardly ever do thing they know they shouldn't

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

33. Some teenagers feel very athletic   BUT   Other teenagers don't feel so athletic.

Really true   Sort of true   **Sort of true   Really**
for me   for me   **for me   true for me**

34. Some teenagers don't have a friend   BUT   Other teenagers do have a
that is close enough to share really   close friend that they can
personal thoughts with   share personal thoughts
                                                    and feelings with.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

35. Some teenagers really like their looks   BUT   Other teenagers wish they
                                                      looked different.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

Please tell me about yourself. Read each statement. MARK the number that best describes how true that statement is for you or how much you agree with it. If a statement is unclear to you, ask for an explanation. If it is still unclear, mark the "?".

"How TRUE about you is each sentence?"	Not at all true	Not really true	Sort of true	True	Very true	? Unclear
	1	2	3	4	5	6

(1) I like hanging out around where I live
(like in my neighborhood).

(2) My family has fun together.

(3) I have a lot of fun with my brothers
and sisters (leave blank if you have none)

(4) I care what coaches, after school staff,
or other non-familial adults think of me.

(5) I spend a lot of time with kids around
where I live.

(6) It is important that my parents trust me.

(7) I feel close to my brother(s) or sister(s)
(leave blank if have none)

(8) I do not get along with some of my
coaches, after school staff or other non-familial
adults.
(9) I get along with the kids in my neighborhood.

"How TRUE about you is each sentence?"

	Not at all true	Not really true	Sort of true	True	Very true	? Unclear
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

(10) I enjoy spending time with my parents.

(11) I enjoy spending time with my brother(s) or sister(s) (leave blank if you have none)

(12) I want to be respected by my coaches, after school staff or other non-familial adults.

(13) I often spend time playing or doing things in my neighborhood.

(14) My parents and I disagree about many things.

(15) I try to spend time with my brothers/ sisters when I can. (leave blank if you have none)

(16) I try to get along with my coaches, after school staff or other non-familial adults.

(17) I hang out a lot with kids in my neighborhood.

(18) My parents and I get along well.

(19) I try to avoid being around my brother/sister(s).

(20) I always try hard to earn the trust of my coaches, after school staff, or other non-familial adults.

(21) My neighborhood is boring.

(22) I care about my parents very much.

(23) I usually like my coaches, after school staff or other non-familial adults in my life.

"How TRUE about you is each sentence?"

Not at all true	Not really true	Sort of true	True	Very true	? Unclear
1	2	3	4	5	6

(24) I enjoy spending time with my father.

(25) My father and I are pretty close.

(26) My father cares a lot about me.

(27) My father and I argue a lot.

(28) I talk with my father about very personal things and about my problems.

Please mark the response that best reflects how you feel about the relationships in your life. The items are:

Do not agree at all	Disagree	Disagree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Very strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(1) In my relationships with others, I feel supported. _____

(2) In my relationships with others, I feel close. _____

(3) In my relationships with others, I feel understood. _____

(4) In my relationships with others, I feel attached. _____

(5) In my relationships with others, I feel listened to. _____

(6) In my relationships with others, I feel bonded. _____

(7) In my relationships with others, I feel valued. _____

(8) In my relationships with others, I feel part of a close-knit group. _____

(9) In my relationships with others, I feel safe. _____

(10) In my relationships with others, I feel like a friend. _____

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or <u>ethnic groups</u> that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement
(4) Strongly agree   (3) Agree   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree

(1) I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.   _____
(2) I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.   _____
(3) I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.   _____
(4) I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.   _____
(5) I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.   _____
(6) I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.   _____
(7) I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.   _____

(8) My ethnicity is: (please check or circle one)
      (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
      (2) Black or African American
      (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
      (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
      (5) American Indian/Native American
      (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
      (7) Other (write in): _____

(9) My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)   _____
(10) My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)   _____

This section asks about your feelings about your mother. Please read each of the following statements and check the box that best describes how you feel about your mother.	Not True	Somet imes True	Sometimes True, Sometimes Not True	Usually True	Almost Always True
1	I like to get her point of view on things I'm concerned about.					
2	She can tell when I'm upset about something.					
3	When we discuss things, she cares about my point of view.					
4	Talking over my problems with her makes me feel ashamed or foolish.					
5	I wish I had a different parent.					
6	She understands me.					
7	She helps me talk about my difficulties.					
8	She accepts me as I am.					
9	I feel the need to be in touch with her more often.					
10	She doesn't understand what I'm going through these days.					
11	I feel alone or apart when I'm with her.					
12	She listens to what I have to say.					
13	I feel she is a good parent.					
14	She is fairly easy to talk to.					
15	When I am angry about something she tries to listen.					
16	She helps me to understand myself better.					
17	She cares about how I am.					
18	I feel angry with her.					
19	I can count on her when I need to get something off my chest.					
20	I trust her.					
21	She respects my feelings.					
22	I get upset a lot more than she knows about.					
23	It seems as if she is irritated with me for no reason.					
24	I can tell her about my problems and troubles.					
25	If she knows something is bothering me, she asks me about it.					

Please indicate whether any of the following events have ever happened to you by circling the response if it has happened to you.

Getting married

Unwed pregnancy

Death of a parent

Acquiring a visible deformity

Divorce of parents

Becoming involved with drugs or alcohol

Jail sentence of parent for over one year

Marital separation of parents

Death of a brother or sister

Change in acceptance by peers

Pregnancy of an unwed sister

Discovery of being an adopted child

Marriage of parent to stepparent

Death of a close friend

Having a visible congenital deformity

Serious illness requiring hospitalization

Failure of a grade in school

Not making an extracurricular activity

Hospitalization of a parent

Please indicate whether any of the following events have ever happened to you by circling the response if it has happened to you.

Jail sentence of parent for over 30 days

Breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend

Beginning to date

Suspension from school

Birth of a brother or sister

Increase in arguments between parents

Loss of job by parent

Outstanding personal achievement

Change in parent's financial status

Accepted at college of choice

Being a senior in high school

Hospitalization of a sibling

Increased absence of parent from home

Brother or sister leaving home

Addition of third adult to family

Becoming a full fledged member of a church

Decrease in arguments between parents

Decrease in arguments with parents

Mother or father beginning work

Appendix F: Survey (Post-program)

Girls Sports Survey

Name: _____Date: _____

Grade: 8_____ 9_____ 10_____ 11_____ 12_____   Age: _____

Who do you live with? Mother ____ Father ____ Both ____ Other _____

If other, who? _____

_____

What I am Like
Sample Items

This section asks you to describe what kind of teenager you are. To answer these items, use the following three step process:
1) Read the entire statement from start to finish across the page
2) Decide which teenager is more like you and focus on that side of the page
3) Decide if that statement is 'sort of true' or 'really true' for you and select the answer that best describes you. Try it with the two sample items below.

Some teenagers like dogs better than cats	BUT	Other teenagers like cats better than dogs.
Really true **Sort of true** **for me** **for me**		**Sort of true** **Really** **for me** **true for me**

Some teenagers like vanilla ice cream	BUT	Other teenagers like chocolate ice cream.
Really true **Sort of true** **for me** **for me**		**Sort of true** **Really** **for me** **true for me**

_____

1. Some teenagers feel that they are just as smart as others their age	BUT	Other teenagers aren't so sure and wonder if they're smart.
Really true **Sort of true** **for me** **for me**		**Sort of true** **Really** **for me** **true for me**

2. Some teenagers find it hard to make friends

BUT

For other teenagers it's pretty easy to make friends.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

3. Some teenagers usually do the right thing

BUT

Other teenagers often don't do what they know is right.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

4. Some teenagers do very well at all kinds of sports

BUT

Other teenagers don't feel that they are very good when it comes to sports.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

5. Some teenagers are <u>not</u> happy with the way they look

BUT

Other teenagers are happy with the way they look

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

6. Some teenagers like the kind of person they are

BUT

Other teenagers wish they were different.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

7. Some teenagers are able to make really close friends

BUT

Other teenagers find it hard to make really close friends

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

8. Some teenagers are pretty slow in finishing their schoolwork.

BUT

Other teenagers can do their schoolwork more quickly.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

9. Some teenagers have a lot of friends

BUT

Other teenagers don't have very many friends.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

10. Some teenagers often get in trouble
for the things they do   BUT

Other teenagers usually don't
do things that get them into
trouble.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

11. Some teenagers feel they could do
well at a new sport   BUT

Other teenagers are afraid
they might not do well at a
new sport.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

12. Some teenagers wish their body was
different   BUT

Other teenagers like their
body the way it is.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

13. Some teenagers are often disappointed   BUT
with themselves

Other teenagers are pretty
pleased with themselves.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

14. Some teenagers do have a close   ·   BUT
friend they can share secrets

Other teenagers do not have a
really close friend they can
share secrets with.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

15. Some teenagers do very well   BUT
at their classwork

Other teenagers don't do
very well at their classwork

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

16. Some teenagers are kind of hard   BUT
to like

Other teenagers are really
easy to like.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

17. Some teenagers feel really good about the way they act   BUT   Other teenagers don't feel that good about the way they they often act.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

18. Some teenagers have trouble figuring out the answers in school   BUT   Other teenagers almost always can figure out the answers.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

19. Some teenagers feel that they are better than other kids their age at sports   BUT   Other teenagers don't feel they can play as well.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

20. Some teenagers don't like the way way they are leading their life   BUT   Other teenagers do like the they are leading their life.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

21. Some teenagers wish they had a really close friend to share things with   BUT   Other teenagers do have a really close friend to share things with.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

22. Some teenagers are popular with others their age   BUT   Other teenagers are not very popular

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

23. Some teenagers wish their physical appearance was different   BUT   Other teenagers like their physical appearance the way it is.

Really true   **Sort of true**   **Sort of true**   **Really**
for me   **for me**   **for me**   **true for me**

24. Some teenagers feel that they are pretty intelligent

BUT

Other teenagers question whether they are intelligent.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

25. Some teenagers feel that they are socially accepted

BUT

Other teenagers wish that more people their age accepted them.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

26. Some teenagers are happy with themselves most of the time

BUT

Other teenagers are often not happy with themselves.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

27. Some teenagers usually act the way they are supposed to

BUT

Other teenagers often don't act the way they are supposed to.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

28. Some teenagers do not feel that they are good at sports

BUT

Other teenagers feel that they are very good at sports.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

29. Some teenagers find it hard to make friends they can really trust

BUT

Other teenagers are able to make close friends they can really trust.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

30. Some teenagers like the kind of person they are

BUT

Other teenagers often wished they were someone else.

Really true   **Sort of true**
for me   **for me**

Sort of true   **Really**
for me   **true for me**

31. Some teenagers think they're they're good looking

BUT

Other teenagers think that not very good looking.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

32. Some teenagers do things they know they shouldn't do

BUT

Other teenagers hardly ever do things they know they shouldn't

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

33. Some teenagers feel very athletic

BUT

Other teenagers don't feel so athletic.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

34. Some teenagers don't have a close friend who is close enough to share really personal thoughts with

BUT

Other teenagers do have a friend that they can share p personal thoughts and feelings with.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

35. Some teenagers really like their looks

BUT

Other teenagers wish they looked different.

Really true for me   **Sort of true for me**

Sort of true for me   **Really true for me**

Please tell me about yourself. Read each statement. MARK the number that best describes how true that statement is for you or how much you agree with it. If a statement is unclear to you, ask for an explanation. If it is still unclear, mark the "?".

"How TRUE about you is each sentence?"	Not at all true	Not really true	Sort of true	True	Very true	? Unclear
	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) I like hanging out around where I live (like in my neighborhood).	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) My family has fun together.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) I have a lot of fun with my brothers and sisters (leave blank if you have none)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) I care what coaches, after school staff, or other non-familial adults think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) I spend a lot of time with kids around where I live.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) It is important that my parents trust me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) I feel close to my brother(s) or sister(s) (leave blank if have none)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(8) I do not get along with some of my coaches, after school staff or other non-familial adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(9) I get along with the kids in my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(10) I enjoy spending time with my parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(11) I enjoy spending time with my brother(s) or sister(s) (leave blank if you have none)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(12) I want to be respected by my coaches, after school staff or other non-familial adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(13) I often spend time playing or doing things in my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5	6

"How TRUE about you is each sentence?"	Not at all true 1	Not really true 2	Sort of true 3	True 4	Very true 5	? Unclear 6
(14) My parents and I disagree about many things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(15) I try to spend time with my brothers/ sisters when I can. (leave blank if you have none)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(16) I try to get along with my coaches, after school staff or other non-familial adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(17) I hang out a lot with kids in my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(18) My parents and I get along well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(19) I try to avoid being around my brother/sister(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6
(20) I always try hard to earn the trust of my coaches, after school staff, or other non-familial adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(21) My neighborhood is boring.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(22) I care about my parents very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(23) I usually like my coaches, after school staff or other non-familial adults in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(24) I enjoy spending time with my father.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(25) My father and I are pretty close.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(26) My father cares a lot about me	1	2	3	4	5	6
(27) My father and I argue a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(28) I talk with my father about very personal things and about my problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please mark the response that best reflects how you feel about the relationships in your life. The items are:

Do not agree at all	Disagree	Disagree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightl Agree	Agree	Very Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(1) In my relationships with others, I feel supported. _____

(2) In my relationships with others, I feel close. _____

(3) In my relationships with others, I feel understood. _____

(4) In my relationships with others, I feel attached. _____

(5) In my relationships with others, I feel listened to. _____

(6) In my relationships with others, I feel bonded. _____

(7) In my relationships with others, I feel valued. _____

(8) In my relationships with others, I feel part of a close-knit group. _____

(9) In my relationships with others, I feel safe. _____

(10) In my relationships with others, I feel like a friend. _____

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or <u>ethnic groups</u> that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement

(4) Strongly agree   (3) Agree   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree

(1) I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.   _____
(2) I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.   _____
(3) I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.   _____
(4) I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.   _____
(5) I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.   _____
(6) I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.   _____
(7) I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.   _____

(8) My ethnicity is: (please check or circle one)
     (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
     (2) Black or African American
     (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
     (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
     (5) American Indian/Native American
     (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
     (7) Other (write in): _____

(9) My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)   _____
(10) My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)   _____

	This section asks about your feelings about your mother. Please read each of the following statements and check the box that best describes how you feel about your mother.	Not True	Somet imes True	Sometimes True, Sometimes Not True	Usually True	Almost Always True
1	I like to get her point of view on things I'm concerned about.					
2	She can tell when I'm upset about something.					
3	When we discuss things, she cares about my point of view.					
4	Talking over my problems with her makes me feel ashamed or foolish.					
5	I wish I had a different parent.					
6	She understands me.					
7	She helps me talk about my difficulties.					
8	She accepts me as I am.					
9	I feel the need to be in touch with her more often.					
10	She doesn't understand what I'm going through these days.					
11	I feel alone or apart when I'm with her.					
12	She listens to what I have to say.					
13	I feel she is a good parent.					
14	She is fairly easy to talk to.					
15	When I am angry about something she tries to listen.					
16	She helps me to understand myself better.					
17	She cares about how I am.					
18	I feel angry with her.					
19	I can count on her when I need to get something off my chest.					
20	I trust her.					
21	She respects my feelings.					
22	I get upset a lot more than she knows about.					
23	It seems as if she is irritated with me for no reason.					
24	I can tell her about my problems and troubles.					
25	If she knows something is bothering me, she asks me about it.					

Please indicate whether any of the following events have ever happened to you by circling the response if it has happened to you.

Getting married

Unwed pregnancy

Death of a parent

Acquiring a visible deformity

Divorce of parents

Becoming involved with drugs or alcohol

Jail sentence of parent for over one year

Marital separation of parents

Death of a brother or sister

Change in acceptance by peers

Pregnancy of an unwed sister

Discovery of being an adopted child

Marriage of parent to stepparent

Death of a close friend

Having a visible congenital deformity

Serious illness requiring hospitalization

Failure of a grade in school

Not making an extracurricular activity

Hospitalization of a parent

Jail sentence of parent for over 30 days

Breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend

Beginning to date

Suspension from school

Birth of a brother or sister

Increase in arguments between parents

Loss of job by parent

Outstanding personal achievement

Change in parent's financial status

Accepted at college of choice

Being a senior in high school

Hospitalization of a sibling

Increased absence of parent from home

Brother or sister leaving home

Addition of third adult to family

Becoming a full fledged member of a church

Decrease in arguments between parents

Decrease in arguments with parents

Mother or father beginning work

Please mark the response that best reflects how you feel about your relationships at PowerPlay's Summer Leadership Academy. The items are:

Do not agree at all	Disagree	Disagree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Very strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt supported.

_____

2) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt close to them.

_____

3) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt understood.

_____

4) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt attached to them.

_____

5) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt listened to.

_____

6) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt bonded to them.

_____

7) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt valued.

_____

8) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt like it was a close-knit group. _____

9) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt safe.

_____

10) In my relationships with girls and staff at the Academy, I felt like a friend.

_____

Instructions: Based on your *__recent__* involvement please rate whether you have had the following experiences in PowerPlay's Summer Leadership Academy.

Your Experiences In PowerPlay Summer Leadership Academy......			
Yes, Definitely 1	Quite a Bit 2	A Little 3	Not At All 4

IDENTITY EXPERIENCES

Identity Exploration			
1. Tried doing new things	1	2	3	4
2. Tried a new way of acting around people	1	2	3	4
3. I do things here I don't get to do anywhere else	1	2	3	4

Identity Reflection			
4. Started thinking more about my future because of this activity	1	2	3	4
5. This activity got me thinking about who I am	1	2	3	4
6. This activity has been a positive turning point in my life	1	2	3	4

INITIATIVE EXPERIENCES

Goal Setting			
7. I set goals for myself in this activity	1	2	3	4
8. Learned to find ways to achieve my goals	1	2	3	4
9. Learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans	1	2	3	4

Effort			
10. I put all my energy into this activity	1	2	3	4
11. Learned to push myself	1	2	3	4
12. Learned to focus my attention	1	2	3	4

Problem Solving			
13. Observed how others solved problems and learned from them	1	2	3	4
14. Learned about developing plans for solving a problem	1	2	3	4
15. Used my imagination to solve a problem	1	2	3	4

Time Management			
16. Learned about organizing time and not procrastinating (not putting things off)	1	2	3	4
17. Learned about setting priorities	1	2	3	4
18. Practiced self discipline	1	2	3	4

BASIC SKILLS	Yes, Definitely 1	Quite a Bit 2	A Little 3	Not At All 4
Emotional Regulation				
19. Learned about controlling my temper	1	2	3	4
20. Became better at dealing with fear and anxiety	1	2	3	4
21. Became better at handling stress	1	2	3	4
22. Learned that my emotions affect how I perform	1	2	3	4
Cognitive Skills				
In this activity I have improved:	1	2	3	4
23. Academic skills (reading, writing, math, etc.)	1	2	3	4
24. Skills for finding information	1	2	3	4
25. Computer/internet skills	1	2	3	4
26. Artistic/creative skills	1	2	3	4
27. Communication skills	1	2	3	4

Physical Skills				
28. Athletic or physical skills	1	2	3	4
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS				
Diverse Peer Relationships				
29. Made friends with someone of the opposite gender	1	2	3	4
30. Learned I had a lot in common with people from different backgrounds	1	2	3	4
31. Got to know someone from a different ethnic group	1	2	3	4
32. Made friends with someone from a different social class (someone richer or poorer)	1	2	3	4

Prosocial Norms				
33. Learned about helping others	1	2	3	4
34. I was able to change my school or community for the better	1	2	3	4
35. Learned to stand up for something I believed was morally right	1	2	3	4
36. We discussed morals and values	1	2	3	4

TEAM WORK AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Group Process Skills				
37. Learned that working together requires some compromising	1	2	3	4
38. Became better at sharing responsibility	1	2	3	4
39. Learned to be patient with other group members	1	2	3	4
40. Learned how my emotions and attitude affect others in the group	1	2	3	4
41. Learned that it is not necessary to like people in order to work with them	1	2	3	4

Feedback				
42. I became better at giving feedback	1	2	3	4
43. I became better at taking feedback	1	2	3	4

Leadership and Responsibility				
44. Learned about the challenges of being a leader	1	2	3	4
45. Others in this activity counted on me	1	2	3	4
46. Had an opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers	1	2	3	4

ADULT NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL	Yes, Definitely 1	Quite a Bit 2	A Little 3	Not At All 4

Integration with Family				
47. This activity improved my relationship with my parents/guardians	1	2	3	4
48. I had good conversations with my parents/guardians because of this activity	1	2	3	4

Linkages to Community				
49. Got to know people in the community	1	2	3	4
50. Came to feel more supported by the community	1	2	3	4

Linkages to Work and College				
51. This activity opened up job or career opportunities for me	1	2	3	4
52. This activity helped prepare me for college	1	2	3	4
53. This activity increased my desire to stay in school	1	2	3	4

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Stress				
54. Demands were so great that I didn't get homework done (skip this item if your Target Activity is a class)	1	2	3	4
55. This activity interfered with doing things with family	1	2	3	4
56. This activity has stressed me out	1	2	3	4

Negative Peer Influences				
57. Felt pressured by peers to do something I didn't want to do	1	2	3	4
58. I did something in this activity that was morally wrong	1	2	3	4
59. I was ridiculed by peers for something I did in this activity	1	2	3	4
60. Youth in this activity got me into drinking alcohol or using drugs	1	2	3	4

Social Exclusion				
61. Felt like I didn't belong in this activity	1	2	3	4
62. I felt left out	1	2	3	4
63. There were cliques in this activity	1	2	3	4

Negative Group Dynamics				
64. I get stuck doing more than my fair share	1	2	3	4
65. Other youth in this activity made inappropriate sexual comments, jokes, or gestures	1	2	3	4
66. Was discriminated against because of my gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation	1	2	3	4

Thank you SO much for completing this survey.