

Chrysalis Girls Program – 5 year evaluation



September 2012



Acknowledgements

Over the past five years many people and organisations have contributed to and supported the Chrysalis Girls Program. Particular thanks go to:

All the Chrysalis girls who have participated in the program and shared their experiences, completing questionnaires for this and previous evaluations

Participating schools for their support and commitment, and a special thanks to the school stakeholders who participated in evaluation interviews

The program facilitators, Amie Dreyer and Jane McGowen for sharing their knowledge and expertise

And a final thanks to everyone who has supported the program over the past five years: North Coast Area Health Service, Indigo House, Byron Youth Service, Byron Shire Council and anyone else who makes the program possible.

**Written and compiled by Joke de Jong
Social Work student, Richmond Sexual Assault Service
September 2012**







Amie Dreyer and Jane McGowen

Chrysalis founders and facilitators





Quotes from Chrysalis girls

"I am so much more emotionally stable and have learnt better ways to deal with my crap"

"Anger management has been the thing I've learnt most, because for years before it was a huge problem for me and now it's not"

"Chrysalis has helped me mend my relationship with my mum and it's given me suggestions on how to act when something goes wrong"

"I have heaps more respect and understanding towards my family"

"It has given me insight into what life's like for other people and helped me not get to that point"

"Yes, I have learnt how some boys can act to be careful and how you should wait for the right guy who will treat you right"

"I have a more positive attitude towards school"

"I pay more attention in class and actually love school now"

"I've learnt to respect myself and got to school and try"

"I got a lot of stress off my mind so I could focus and learn more, like I have been lately".

"Chrysalis has taught me there are other ways to deal with anger, because I used to self harm"

"Chrysalis came into my life at a cross roads of my adolescence. It opened my eyes to the lives of other girls and gave me much needed peer and trained support to help me move through a very difficult time"

"I wanted to die and then I started Chrysalis, now I love my life. Chrysalis makes me happy every week".

"It has given me insights into what life's like for other people and helped me not get to that point".

"Realising that I have an opinion and a right to say it"

"Chrysalis helps me make better choices"



“I feel so much more confident”

“I have heaps more respect and understanding towards my family”

“I have a more positive attitude to school”

“It has made me realise that I am not a dumbass and that I can do it”

“Chrysalis is there when everyone else isn’t”

“I’ve learnt I deserve the same respect every girl should have”

“I was in a bad place if it wasn’t for Chrysalis I wouldn’t be here”

“I have so much more confidence and believe in the things I want to do”

“Chrysalis helps you reach your goals”

“I stopped having an eating disorder since I started Chrysalis”

“Chrysalis has helped me to feel as though I can be pretty without makeup”

“I used to be depressed all the time, there has been a huge change in my life since I started going to Chrysalis”

“I’ve changed from acting out and isolation to being the real me”

“I am a lot calmer and I listen a lot more to people”

“That I am worth something, I can be open and trust others”

“I felt I had support for once in my life”

“I changed my negativity towards things, people and life altogether”

“I learnt to trust others”

“I still hold the morals I was taught about the way women should be treated”

“I’ve learnt to love myself for who I am”



**In 2012 Amie Dreyer put together a video about Chrysalis –
to watch the clip, follow the link below**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1LBHp-VN6c&feature=g-high-u>





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CHRYSALIS GIRLS PROGRAM

The Chrysalis girls program is a prevention-based support program for young women 'at risk'. Starting at one High School in 2008, the program is now running at five High Schools across the NSW Northern Rivers: Byron Bay High School, Mullumbimby High School, Kadina High School, Lismore High School and Richmond River High School.

Many of the young women in Chrysalis have experienced high levels of adversity in their lives compared to other girls their age, such as exposure to domestic violence, experience of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, childhood neglect, poverty, family conflict, parental drug and alcohol addiction and mental health problems.

Research shows that young people who have experienced trauma may resort to destructive or maladaptive behaviours as a way of responding to the stressors in their lives. Many of the girls in Chrysalis are disengaged from school, have difficulties with personal relationships, managing their anger, feel disconnected from their families and self, have low self-esteem and self-worth or are experiencing mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

The overall vision of the program is to prevent cycles of violence, crime and abuse from occurring in future generations. To realise this, the program aims to reduce the impact of trauma, reduce at-risk behaviour, re-engage young women with school, empower young women, develop awareness, skills and tools to deal with life challenges and increase connection with self, their peers, family and wider community. The program seeks to achieve these objectives through providing weekly group educational and therapeutic counselling sessions, individual counselling, participation in community events and school conferences and ongoing connection through online interaction on Facebook.

The program is a unique partnership between the Department of Education funding Amie Dreyer, an adolescent counsellor and NSW Health funding Jane McGowen, a sexual assault counsellor.

EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTION

Chrysalis adopts a range of evidence-based interventions that are relevant to its target population, adolescent girls 'at risk'. The program's framework is based on feminist theory, youth empowerment, peer education and trauma informed practice. The group facilitators integrate a range of contemporary counselling techniques into their weekly counselling sessions such as yoga, mindfulness and expressive therapies (art, expressive writing and symbolic strategies).



EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The aim of this evaluation is to demonstrate how the Chrysalis girls program is achieving its objectives, what impact the program has made on its participants and to identify future challenges for the program.

To answer these questions a range of data collection methods have been used: past evaluation reports have been reviewed and summarised, open interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the schools, observations and experiences from Chrysalis facilitators were included, student questionnaires were completed by a new group at Richmond River High School and an online questionnaire was developed to gather responses from graduated Chrysalis girls.

These findings were organised in themes and according to the program objectives.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overwhelming positive feedback from everyone that has been part of the Chrysalis program, either as participant or stakeholder, indicates that Chrysalis is achieving incredible positive outcomes. The increase in demand for the program from other schools suggests that Chrysalis has built a reputation in the area and its positive outcomes are known and shared within the school community. Responses that indicate how Chrysalis is meeting each of its objectives are summarised here:

Reduce impact of trauma

Experiencing trauma can have significant impact on a young person's self-worth and self-esteem, and recovery from trauma happens in the context of positive and trusting relationships. Feedback from girls, facilitators and school stakeholders indicates that since participating in Chrysalis, the girls have developed a greater sense of self-esteem, self-worth and feelings of trust and safety. Facilitators have observed that once their self-worth and self-esteem grows, symptomatic behaviours such as self-harm, promiscuity, anxiety, depression and substance abuse start to drop away. Positive behaviour change is one indicator for emotional healing. In addition, the majority of girls have indicated in previous evaluations that Chrysalis has helped them emotionally.

Re-engage with school

Feedback from school stakeholders shows that participation in Chrysalis positively affects school attendance, attention in the classroom and motivation and attitude towards education. Young women themselves also say that since attending Chrysalis they are going to school more and have a more positive attitude towards their education. Evaluation findings indicate that by having a more positive outlook on their future, education becomes more relevant, and by addressing the underlying issues that impact on their ability to concentrate, their attention and engagement with school improves.



Empowerment

Chrysalis offers many opportunities for young women to become empowered. The program is client driven and the girls participate in decision-making giving them a sense of ownership of the program. The program has a strong focus on increasing knowledge and awareness of issues affecting the girls, and teaching them strategies of how to respond to these challenges. The girls find that Chrysalis has helped them feel more confident and in control over the problems they encounter, and make better choices. Through participation in the Young Women's Self-Empowerment Conferences, the girls share their knowledge with other girls and further build their confidence and self-esteem while learning communication, facilitation and leadership skills. Graduated girls remember a sense of empowerment, feeling united and strong.

Awareness, skills and tools to deal with life challenges

The Chrysalis program develops their awareness of issues affecting the young women in the group. Through sharing their experiences, they realise they are not alone and develop ways of coping with their problems. One example of this is anger management. The program also increases their insight into how childhood trauma and family circumstances can influence their choices and behaviour. Through their new found awareness and development of skills to deal with problems, the girls are better equipped to deal with life challenges. Through sharing of 'The Game' the girls increase their awareness of patterns of abuse and discuss amongst each other how they can respond. The girls respond feeling empowered and more able to handle complex situations and relationships. Other skills that were identified were the development of communication and conflict resolution skills as having a positive impact on their relationships.

Increase connection with self, their peers, family and wider community

The girls describe that Chrysalis gives them a sense of belonging, and a place where they are able to share their experiences and make new friends. Stakeholders have observed positive changes in the way girls interact with each other as well as increased levels of empathy amongst the girls, positively impacting on their relationships. For a majority of the girls, Chrysalis has positively changed the way they interact with their families. Through the participation in (regional) conferences the girls built networks with other girls in the community as well as other health professionals. More so, the connection to health professionals is particularly facilitated through the presence of a NSW Health sexual assault counsellor as part of the group, developing trusting relationships with young people and health services, improving access to support. The facilitators also create a bridge between the girls and the school and other authorities such as police. In addition, the facilitators will facilitate family meetings or link the girls in with other support services in the community, widening their support network.



Value of Chrysalis to the school

All stakeholders found that Chrysalis addresses a need that is not being met by society or any other educational program. Chrysalis offers a safe space for its students with the greatest need and schools feel a responsibility to provide this. The schools benefit from the presence of specialist skills and knowledge as well as reduced pressure on school counsellors to cope with increased workloads. Another positive outcome for schools is improved attention, performance and reduced problem behaviour at school, as well as increased school attendance.

Program challenges

Security of funding is one of the major challenges of the program. While this issue is not the same for each school, most are concerned that at one point they may not be able to continue funding it. Non-favourable attitudes from within the school community, feeling that these girls don't deserve special treatment, can make it more difficult to maintain funding support. This report hopes to provide some context to the sometimes disrupting and self-destructive behaviours and demonstrate how the program addresses the underlying issues impacting on their behaviour. Another challenge raised for the program is continuity of staffing, not only within the schools but also the question of whether the program is able to expand and/or continue to run in the absence of its facilitators and founders.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

It has become evident that Chrysalis is important for young women 'at risk' for many different reasons. For some it has been a lifesaver, for others an opportunity to gain awareness, learn new skills and feel more confident about themselves and the future. The improved skills, awareness, beliefs, self-esteem and self-worth the girls take away from the program are invaluable, as well as the improved educational outcomes and relationships.

Besides the importance of Chrysalis for its participants, the flow on effects to the school, families and the wider community needs to be considered to fully appreciate the overall impact of the program.

The future direction of the program will largely depend on security of funding but also on the direction the Chrysalis girls take it. Further expansion of the program is only viable with additional suitable staff sharing the vision and expertise of Amie and Jane, as well as ongoing financial support.



CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chrysalis program overview	2
Program description	3
Supporting young women ‘at risk’	
Vision, aims and strategies	
Chrysalis – the story so far	4
Program structure	7
Partnership between NSW Health and Department of Education	
Weekly group counselling sessions	
Referrals to the program	
Young Women’s Self-Empowerment Conferences	
‘Let’s go for a walk’ talth Conferences	
Future conferences	
Program underpinnings	10
Relational health and healing	
Feminist theory	
Sexual assault prevention	
Peer education	
Youth empowerment	
Group work model	
Trauma framework	
Yoga and mindfulness	
Expressive therapy	
Emotional release	
Art therapy	
Symbolic strategies	
Expressive writing	
Pancha Tanmantra martial arts	
Evaluation methodology	17
Evaluation findings	19
Review of past reports	
Open interviews with school stakeholders	
Observations and experiences from Chrysalis facilitators	
Pre / post term data from Richmond River High school	
Online questionnaire graduated Chrysalis girls	



Discussion of findings	32
What are some of the indicators that Chrysalis is meeting its objectives?	
What is the value of Chrysalis to the schools?	
What are some of the challenges for the program?	
 Conclusion and future directions	 38
 References	 39
 Appendices	
I Group rules	43
II The Game	44
III Four months before	45
IV Yoga, sun salutation	47
V Pre-term questionnaire	48
VI Post-term questionnaire	49
V Online questionnaire	50

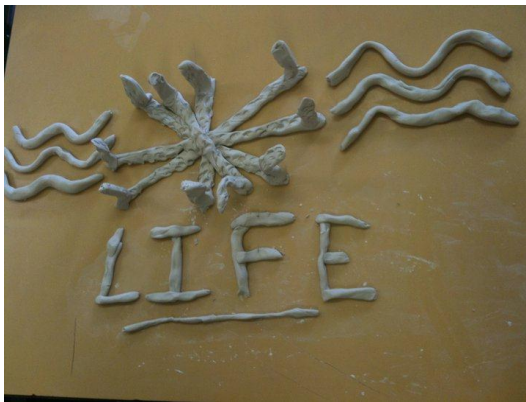


Introduction

The Chrysalis girls program is a prevention-based support program that is targeted at young women at-risk. Starting at one high school in 2008, Chrysalis is now running in five high schools in the Northern Rivers of NSW. This report will outline the genesis, the underpinnings and future directions of the program and point out that through using an innovative, contemporary approach to working with young people, positive change can be achieved.

Previous evaluations have indicated that Chrysalis is a hugely successful program. The program facilitators have received overwhelming positive feedback from participants, school teachers, deputies, principles and the wider community. Moreover, over the past five years there has been an increasing demand for Chrysalis from other schools, illustrating the need for and proven reputation of the program.

One of the main challenges that Chrysalis faces each year is security of funding and this is expected to be an ongoing challenge in the future. The aim of this report is to demonstrate that Chrysalis is an effective and worth-while program that deserves ongoing funding security that will support and achieve better outcomes for young women at risk, schools and the wider community.



Clay work by Chrysalis girls



CHRYSLIS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2007 – The idea for a support group for young women originated through adolescent girls in Byron Bay becoming aware of shared issues related to sexual relationships, abuse, domestic violence and bullying



2008 – Chrysalis was founded as an initiative by young women, for young women at Byron Bay High School. Over a period of 18 months the program structure further developed to include a wide range of issues affecting young women



2009 - Chrysalis was launched at Nimbin High School, and Chrysalis girls participated in the development and facilitation of the 'Let's Go for a Walk' conference in Bangalow



2010 – Chrysalis was launched at two more schools: Mullumbimby and Kadina High School and continues to run at Byron Bay High School



2011 – Chrysalis year of nominations and conferences.
Chrysalis was re-launched at Byron High School and the girls participated in the second 'Let's Go for a Walk' conference



2012 – Chrysalis was launched at Lismore High and Richmond River High School and is now running at five High Schools in the NSW Northern Rivers.



CHRYSALIS GIRLS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Chrysalis is a prevention-based support program that over the past 5 years has delivered weekly group counselling sessions and community building conferences to identified “at risk” adolescent girls. Starting at one high school in 2008, the program is now running in five high schools across the NSW Northern Rivers; Byron Bay High School, Mullumbimby High School, Kadina High School, Lismore High School and Richmond River High School.

Supporting young women ‘at risk’

Many of the young women in Chrysalis have experienced high levels of adversity in their lives compared to other girls their age, such as exposure to domestic violence, experience of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, childhood neglect, poverty, family conflict, parental drug and alcohol addiction and mental health problems. Experiencing some form of childhood trauma can have long lasting negative consequences in multiple areas of people’s life (Bruce Perry, 2012) and young people who have experienced trauma may resort to destructive behaviours as a way of responding to the stressors in their lives (Swartz and Thompkins, 2009). Many of the Chrysalis girls are disengaged from school, have difficulties with personal relationships and managing their anger, feel disconnected from their families and self, have low self-esteem, poor self-worth or are experiencing mental health problems such as a depression or anxiety. Through the process of individual counselling, group counselling and peer based education they are supported to transform from adversity and develop a strong sense of self-worth, self-esteem, compassion, self-awareness, respect for self and others, take on leadership and mentoring roles, self-empowerment, creativity, development of healthy personal boundaries and empathy. The program is holistic and views the participant as a unique individual.

Vision, aims and strategies

The overall vision of Chrysalis is to prevent cycles of violence, crime and abuse from occurring in future generations. To realise this, the program aims to:

- 1) reduce the impact of trauma
- 2) reduce at-risk behaviour
- 3) re-engage young women with school
- 4) empower young women
- 5) develop awareness, skills and tools to deal with life challenges
- 6) increase connection with self, their peers, family and wider community

The Chrysalis girls program seeks to achieve these objectives through

- weekly group educational and therapeutic counselling sessions
- individual counselling
- participation in community events and school conferences
- ongoing connection through online interaction on Facebook



CHRYSLIS, THE STORY SO FAR...

2007 – The genesis of Chrysalis...

The genesis of Chrysalis began in 2007. Byron High School students attended Youth In-Search, a youth development program that has been running successfully for twenty two years. Youth In-search empowers disadvantaged young Australians to heal emotional trauma through group work. The program is held over three days and addresses issues such as grief and loss, sexual abuse and substance addiction. Once completing the weekend the participants are required to attend weekly support groups facilitated by the supporting adult (Amie Dreyer, adolescent counsellor) as follow up therapy to the weekend. Youth In-search support groups became very popular with the students of Byron High and a strong level of emotional trust began to evolve between the students and Amie over time, as did a growing interest in the program.

During this time issues pertaining to sexual relationships, abuse, domestic violence and bullying began to surface as consistent problems affecting the young women attending the group. As the support groups had both young men and women attending it was difficult for the girls to share their stories with young men present and it quickly became clear that a gender specific program was needed.

In the Christmas holidays of 2007 Amie was phoned by one of the young women who attended the group and disclosed that she had been sexually assaulted by her friend's father. Amie organised free counselling for the young woman with a sexual assault counsellor Jane McGowen from Indigo House, North Coast Area Health Service. The counselling was very successful for the adolescent involved. Jane and Amie realised they shared a professional interest and similar enthusiasm for issues pertaining to the empowerment of young women.

2008 – The beginning of Chrysalis...

Returning to school in February 2008 the young women of Byron High became increasingly passionate and proactive about wanting to create a young women's support group. They had identified the need to support each other and address the increasing prevalence of violence and bullying directed at one another. The girls wanted to find a way to begin to heal the trauma related to sexual, emotional and physical abuse that consequentially leads to the self destructive behaviours they all shared. Amie contacted Jane McGowen from Indigo House, Richmond Sexual Assault Service and she agreed to join the project. Jane brought the professionalism, skills and experience needed to support and co-facilitate the program. With the support of Byron High School, Byron Shire Council, Byron Youth Service, Jane McGowen - North Coast Area Health and Amie Dreyer Youth Support Counsellor the Chrysalis Girls Group was born.



2008 – The development of Chrysalis...

The Chrysalis girls program further developed through weekly experiential learning and action research. Through a democratic facilitation style with emphasis on equality and open communication the students and counsellors defined and established the way the group operates and the structure within which they wanted the program to be presented.

In 2008, the Chrysalis girls group was also approached by the Byron Shire Council to assist in the development and facilitation of a Young Women's Health Conference 'Let's go for a walk', referring to the pick-up line used by many young men to encourage and coerce unsuspecting girls to come with them and engage in sexual activities. The aim of the conferences is to provide relevant and useful information for young women to empower them to make positive choices and help young women to develop and explore skills and strategies to handle complex situations and relationships. The Chrysalis girls facilitated a creative writing workshop and presentation of 'The Game'.

2009 - The Launch of the Program at Nimbin High School

The launch of Chrysalis from one school to another is an integral component of the program. A four hour group intensive workshop was delivered by 12 Byron High School Chrysalis girls to 15 young women at Nimbin High School who had been identified as adolescents "at risk". The launch involved reading out a personal account of a sexual assault 'Four months hand' (appendix III), followed by introduction of group rules (appendix I) and open discussion of the monologue. The workshop also involves presentation and discussion of 'The Game' and a creative writing workshop.



2010 – Chrysalis spreads its wings

In 2010, Mullumbimby High School and Kadina High School in Lismore expressed interest in having Chrysalis at their school. In May 2010, Chrysalis was launched at Mullumbimby High School and in March at Kadina.



2011 – Chrysalis year of nominations

In 2011 Chrysalis was nominated for and won a number of awards: Amie was nominated at the 2011 International Women's Day Awards, and Amie and Jane won the Directors Award for Excellence in Education (Department of Education) as well as the award for 'Contributing to young people in the Byron Shire' from the Byron Shire Council.



Kids in the Community Awards night, 2010

This year the second Young Women's Health Conference 'Let's go for a walk' was held in Bangalow. The Chrysalis girls again participated in the organisation and facilitation of the day.

2012 – Chrysalis starts at Lismore High and Richmond River High School

In March 2012 Chrysalis was launched at Lismore High School through the delivery of the Young Women's Self-Empowerment Conference and the Chrysalis girls group commenced a week later.

In June 2012, Chrysalis was launched at Richmond River High School through the Young Women's Self-Empowerment Conference. With Chrysalis starting at Richmond River High in July 2012, the program is now being offered at five high schools in the Northern Rivers: Byron High, Mullumbimby High, Kadina High, Lismore High and Richmond River High School.



PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Partnership between NSW Health and Department of Education

Chrysalis is a unique partnership between the Department of Education and NSW Health. The Department of Education funds Amie Dreyer, an adolescent counsellor and NSW Health provides a sexual assault counsellor, Jane McGowen to co-facilitate the groups. Amie Dreyer facilitates all five groups and Jane McGowen co-facilitates one group per week.

Weekly group counselling sessions

Weekly group sessions run for about 1.5 hours a week, every term. One class period is chosen to be allocated for Chrysalis in conjunction with recess or lunch. During the first session, or when a new person joins the group, the Chrysalis group rules are explained (appendix I). Each session starts with 10 minutes of yoga, sun salutations (appendix II) followed by a group activity called 'high high' where each girl is encouraged to share something positive that has happened to them that week, or something they are looking forward to. Each week a different topic or part of a module / theme is discussed. Some of the topics covered are:

- Sexual Assault
- Date rape – prevention and support
- Body awareness
- Anger release and management
- Family systems
- Sexuality
- Body Image
- Boundaries
- Anxiety and Depression
- Grief and loss
- Communication
- Addictions and substance abuse
- Healthy relationships
- Self-esteem
- Domestic Violence
- Bullying
- Self-empowerment
- Art therapy
- Meditation

Individual counselling

Individual counselling is offered to Chrysalis girls outside the weekly group sessions and often takes place before or after the group session. To ensure their emotional safety, the girls are encouraged to seek individual counselling to further talk about their problems or responses to some of the issues raised during group sessions. Individual counselling is also encouraged as part of the conferences when sensitive subjects such as sexual assault and domestic violence are discussed. Where Chrysalis facilitators are unable to meet the needs of each girl individually, they are supported with referrals to other services that provide counselling support.



Referrals to the program

Chrysalis is a voluntary program. Referrals to the program come via a range of pathways such as school counsellors, teachers, school principles or deputy principles as well as girls identified by the Sexual Assault service. The program is open to girls from year 7 to year 10, and girls under the age of 16 need parental permission to attend. Often the program is launched at a school through a conference, introducing girls to the program and inviting them to become part of the group.

Yearly graduation

As girls finish year 10, they are no longer able to stay in the group. Some girls may leave the group earlier, depending on their needs as well as school practices. Each year a graduation ceremony is held that bring the graduating girls from all participating schools together. This day is an opportunity for girls to celebrate their achievements, reflect on their Chrysalis experience and farewell the facilitators and their peers.



Young Women's Self-Empowerment Conferences

The Young Women's Self-Empowerment Conferences are an extension of the school based Chrysalis groups. The girls learn group facilitation skills, public speaking and build relationships with other schools. The aim of the conferences is to reduce the likelihood of young people becoming the victims/perpetrators of sexual and domestic violence in the future. The conferences offer a safe space for young women to express their concerns about destructive relationships and behaviours, self-respect and substance abuse. The conferences were developed and are facilitated by the Chrysalis girls. The conference starts with reading out a personal account of a sexual assault 'Four months before' (appendix III) and open discussion of the monologue. The workshop also involves presentation and discussion of 'The Game' (appendix II) and a creative writing workshop.



**‘Let’s go for a walk’, Young Women’s Health Conference, Bangalow
August 2008 and 2011**

In 2008 and 2011, the Chrysalis girls group participated in the development and facilitation of workshops at the Young Women’s Health Conferences, ‘Let’s go for a walk’. These one day regional conferences, directed at young women aged 13 to 25 offers a safe space for young women to express concerns about destructive relationships and behaviours around peers, young men, families, sexuality and substance abuse. The aim of the conferences is to provide relevant and useful information for young women to empower them to make positive choices as well as helping young women to develop and explore skills and strategies to handle complex relationships.



The Chrysalis girls facilitated two workshops: a creative writing workshop and presentation and discussion of ‘The Game’ (appendix II). The creative writing workshop consisted of facilitators reading out a personal story about unhealthy relationships and asking participants to write about their own experience. This was completely anonymous and stories were collated and pinned on boards in the auditorium. During the second workshop, the Chrysalis girls presented the ‘The Game’, referring to the cycle of abuse that gets played out against them by older males. The girls had found commonality amongst their experiences and identified ‘The Game’ during the weekly Chrysalis group sessions. At the conferences, the girls shared their insights and engaged participants around a discussion of the issue with a view of assisting young women to become aware of ‘The Game’ to prevent the likelihood of sexual violence in the future.

Future conferences

In October 2012, the Chrysalis girls from year 9 and 10 have the opportunity to participate in a sexuality conference targeting ‘at risk’ boys from year 8 (13 – 14 years) at Mullumbimby High School. The idea for the conference came from the Chrysalis girls group. The girls hope that through the use of peer education both young women and man may begin to engage in conversations together about important issues such as sexual health, consent, pornography, consent and healthy relationships. The conference will be guided by the Chrysalis facilitators and other health professionals.



CHRYSALIS GIRLS PROGRAM UNDERPINNINGS

Chrysalis has a strong theoretical foundation and integrates a range of evidence-based therapeutic approaches into their weekly group sessions. The following chapter presents an overview of the program underpinnings and describes how these are incorporated into the Chrysalis girls program.

Relational health and healing

Through the experience of childhood trauma, adversity or family dysfunction some girls may have been deprived from developing healthy and secure relationships with their families or friends. Insecure or inadequate attachments during childhood impacts on the way young people deal with the stressors of adolescence and are linked to problems such as substance abuse, eating disorders, anxiety, poor self-image as well as early and risky sexual behaviour (Geldard and Geldard, 1999). The availability of secure and loving relationships with others form a buffer to the long lasting consequences that trauma can have. Children with attachment difficulties need many positive and trustworthy interactions with peers, teachers and adults (Perry, 2005) to heal and mitigate impacts.

Perry (2010) also highlights the importance of nurturing relationships and empathy for our development into healthy adults. He finds that many social problems in modern society such as criminal behaviour and drug and alcohol addiction are related to a lack of empathy. Our capacity to be empathetic – the ability to love and share the feelings of others - comes from our own experiences of being cared, valued and listened to (Perry, 2010). Based on this knowledge, by creating a safe place to share, be heard, valued and listened to, the Chrysalis girls program provides an opportunity for healing. As the girls can remain in the program for a number of years until they finish year 10, they often develop strong, positive relations with other girls in the group and the Chrysalis facilitators. The connections between the Chrysalis girls are further facilitated through the Facebook page where girls keep in contact, even when they have graduated from the group.

Feminist theory – raising awareness of violence against women

Feminism is at the heart of Chrysalis. The group came together after a group of young women in Byron Bay realised they shared many issues around sexual relationships, abuse and domestic violence. Feminism is about raising awareness about sexual violence and other issues affecting women. It recognises that the problems of individuals are social problems reinforced by power and gender-differences that play out in interpersonal relationships (Astbury, 2006). The first Chrysalis girls group came up with 'The Game' (appendix II) which represents the externalisation of the pattern and system of abuse that many of the Chrysalis girls identified and relate to. By creating 'The Game' and sharing it with other young women at the conferences, Chrysalis girls engage in their own feminist action by raising awareness and empowering young women to recognise patterns of abuse and make informed choices about their own behaviour, 'do you want to play or not?'.



Sexual assault prevention

Sexual assault prevention is a key component of the Chrysalis program. It is recognised that through the understanding of risk factors, prevention programs can be more targeted at people that are more likely to experience violence or sexual assault. This way, risk factors can be addressed and protective factors increased (Carmody, 2009). Over a number of group sessions, girls develop an awareness of 'The Game', share their experiences and understanding with each other and learn about the prevalence of 'date rape'. The group sessions also addresses myths and facts about sexual assault, what is and how to negotiate consent, sexual readiness, how to take care of each other and where to seek support if you or someone you know has been assaulted.

Through the presence of a professional sexual assault counsellor, the girls have access to information about sexual assault as well as counselling support if required. The sexual assault counsellor also provides a link to other services provided by NSW Health such as mental health, drug and alcohol counselling and sexual health clinics.

Peer Education

The Chrysalis program is open to girls from years 7 to 10 and they can stay in the group until they graduate from year 10. As new girls join the group, the older Chrysalis girls take on more of a leadership role as peer educators and may facilitate parts of the group sessions. Peer education has proven to be an effective health promotion strategy, particularly in sexual health education and assists young people in making informed decisions while providing support and information (Sriranganathan et al., 2010). Through peer education and interaction, young people can learn valuable skills such as communication, impulse control, creative thinking, interpersonal skills and learning how to share, support and empathise with others (Black, et al). As the Chrysalis girls discuss and share their experiences, the young women develop awareness, understanding and empathy while creating opportunities to offer each other support and advice in a safe environment. Some suggest that while peer educators are more likely to change norms and attitudes, they are less likely to pass on factual information (Mellanby et al, 2001) which is why the role of the Chrysalis group facilitators is crucial in ensuring that the young women have access to accurate information.

Involvement in the development and delivery of the Young women's Self-Empowerment Conferences is an opportunity for the girls to educate their peers on topics such as sexuality, abuse and relationships. Peer education can be powerful in that young people speak to their peers in ways that professionals can't. They can act as role models, influence peer behaviours and provide information in a non-threatening way (Weisz and Black, 2010). Peer educators gain from the experience through the development of transferable skills such as communication, facilitation, leadership and team work skills contributing to their personal development. They also benefit from increased knowledge and are found to less likely engage in high-risk behaviour. In addition, the knowledge and confidence gained from training and participation can lead to increased job opportunities and better educational outcomes (Sriranganathan et al, 2010).



Youth empowerment

Chrysalis aims to empower young women and believes in the potential and inherent strengths that exist within people. Essentially, empowerment refers to a process that helps people gain more control over their lives. It focuses on strengths and providing opportunities for people to acquire knowledge and skills, and to participate in decision making. Wageman (2011) defines youth empowerment as “the process by which adolescents develop the consciousness and skills necessary to envision social change and understand their role in that change”. Chrysalis has a strong commitment to empower young women through various processes and activities. Raising awareness, learning new skills, sharing knowledge and experiences, and building self-esteem are key components of the Chrysalis girls program that encourage young women to feel strong, confident and able to make informed choices about issues affecting their lives. The Chrysalis girls are supported to address their self as a whole which in turn creates change in the way they perceive themselves in the world.



Group work model

While many of the girls will seek individual counselling at school, with the group facilitator or an external organisation, there are many therapeutic benefits to using group work to address personal issues (Toseland and Rivas, 2012), for instance:

- Developing and receiving empathy and understanding by peers and facilitator
- Providing help and mutual support is therapeutic for the member who shares their experiences and knowledge
- Sharing a sense of solidarity and connectedness with each other.
- Validation by sharing and learning of similar experiences and problems

Studies have shown that group counselling can be effective in improving interpersonal and relational skills, copings skills and the ability to manage anger and stress, as well as producing emotional change and attitudes (Zink and Littrel, 2000).



Trauma framework

Exposure to trauma in childhood can negatively impact on a child's brain development and create significant social, cognitive, behavioural, physiological and emotional problems. A basic understanding of neurodevelopment tells us early childhood trauma disrupts the functioning of the brainstem and limbic system (Perry, 2005). Therefore, alternative interventions to cognitive therapy need to be used to tap into the part of the brain where trauma sits to allow healing to take place. The use of movement, yoga, breathing and drumming is known to target poor self-regulation, attention, arousal and impulsivity. Art therapy, symbols and imagery are therapeutic interventions that specifically respond to relational-related problems, affect regulation and memory. The Chrysalis girls program integrates a range of trauma specific therapeutic exercises into the weekly group sessions to promote healing and processing of trauma.

Yoga and mindfulness

The Chrysalis program incorporates yoga techniques of breathing exercises, physical postures, movement, relaxation and mindfulness into each session. Each week starts with 10 minutes of yoga; two sun salutations (appendix IV). Only 10 minutes of yoga can achieve a low impact workout integrating resistance and cardiovascular training (Better Mind, 2008).

Yoga has proven to have multiple physical and mental health benefits. It is an excellent way to relax and relieve stress. Regular yoga can improve attention, increase energy levels and coping capacities (Kaley-Isley, Peterson, Fischer and Peterson, 2010). Yoga also improves cardiovascular health, overall body strength, balance and flexibility (Forneris, Stewart Stanec and Theuerkauf, 2010). In addition, the breathing techniques learned through yoga can be transferred to situations outside of school life and help young people to relax and control negative feelings.

Trauma expert, Vander Kolk (2009) explains how yoga helps to regulate emotional and physiological states and assist people who have experienced trauma to gain a sense of mastery over their body and to safely experience physical sensations. Through integrating breathing exercises, postures and body movement in weekly Chrysalis sessions, the girls develop awareness of their own body and find ways to calm down body and mind (Emerson et al., 2009)



Each session ends with 5 minutes of relaxation and guided mindful meditation (picture). Practising mindfulness teaches us to experience thoughts and feelings in a detached and less judgemental way assisting the ability to regulate affect. As yoga, mindfulness has been recognised as a powerful technique to improve focus, attention and to calm the mind.



Expressive therapy - integration of exercises into weekly group sessions

The group facilitators integrate a range of expressive therapeutic techniques into the weekly group sessions such as symbology, emotional release, expressive writing, art therapy and body focus. Expressive therapy is founded on the belief that the tendency for emotional healing is within all of us (Pearson, 2009) and expressive therapies can be the catalyst for emotional healing and change (Pearson, 2003). The various exercises used in expressive therapy promote self-awareness, self-esteem, and cognitive clarity, release of troubling unresolved emotions, emotional and physical integration, and opportunities for creative problem solving. It is a client-centred approach that values and supports empowerment and self-discovery (Pearson, 2003). One of the principles of expressive therapy is the need to deal with emotions first in order to improve behaviours and cognitive focus (Pearson, 2003; Pearson and Wilson, 2009). There is a growing evidence-base for the use of expressive therapy, including its use for counselling young people. Creative strategies are particularly appealing to young people as they involve interesting and dynamic activities (Geldard and Geldard, 1999). Taking a playful approach to therapy can help to avoid resistance and increase involvement.



As the impact of past experiences may manifest through disruptive, destructive or reactive behaviours, one of the most obvious indicators of emotional healing is positive behaviour change (Pearson and Wilson, 2009). Considering the background and presenting behaviours of many girls in the Chrysalis program, the use of expressive therapies is highly relevant and validated.

Emotional release therapy is integrated in a number of activities in the weekly group sessions. In a session focussing on grief and loss, the girls talked about a time they felt sad, for example when someone close to them died, a break-up, a change in life and are then asked to create a painting using watercolours that represents that experience. This allows the girls to experience and express their emotions. As experiencing our emotions is part of the body's own natural healing mechanism, emotional release therapy teaches that emotions are a normal part of everyday life and how to release emotions in a safe way (Rutherford, 2006). Emotional release therapy can help deal with the underlying feelings that may be driving behaviours such as acting out or withdrawal. It supports a sense of balance and integration. The Chrysalis facilitators bring this approach into a range of creative activities that are dynamic and energetic, connecting the girls to what is happening for them.



“Process work provides a safe, structured way of encountering our issues and supports the deep healing of anger, grief, loss, rage and resentment” (Rutherford, 2006).



Art therapy involves the creation of art and discovery of its meaning. It is based on the assumption that visual images are the most natural form of communication to human beings, as humans have expressed themselves visually throughout history. Creating art encourages self-discovery and emotional growth (Ford-Martin, 2012). Using art can help people become 'unstuck' and provides a non-threatening way for young people to express their thoughts and feelings (Geldard and Geldard, 1999). A person's art work can be used for discussion or purely a record of self-discovery (Rutherford, 2006). It gives young people another language to express themselves. Previous experience or artistic skill is not needed to benefit from art therapy.

Art therapy is recognised as an intervention that targets the limbic brain system, responsible for relational functioning, affect regulation, psycho-sexual development, memory and learning (Perry, 2009). The limbic part of our brain starts developing in early childhood but does not mature until adolescence. Trauma experienced during this time of a person's development can thus cause difficulties in relationships, learning and affect regulation.



Art therapy is used in variety of ways and related to a range of issues. Some examples of art that Chrysalis girls have created are paintings, clay work and body drawings. In one of the Chrysalis sessions, the girls will create a personal life sized body drawing. The girls are asked to think about the shape, size and colour of certain emotions and illustrate these on their body drawing. As emotional pain is often felt as physical pain or tension, focussing on the body allows awareness and release of the emotional hurt held in the body (Rutherford, 2006). This exercise not only brings awareness to how the girls feel and experience emotions in their body but also increases their connection to their body and emotions, an important aspect of trauma informed practice.



Another type of expressive therapy is the use of **symbols**; specific physical objects that can help adolescent uncover unconscious material and thereby increase their self-knowledge (Geldard and Geldard, 1999). It can be helpful for young people to choose a symbol that represents their situation and make it easier for them to talk about it. Representing an issue symbolically allows the client to project their feelings, gain visual clarity and discuss issues in depth, all within a framework of the client's own personal understanding (Rutherford, 2006). Symbols can also help to externalise any feelings and thereby empower the young person to take control over that feeling and how it is troubling them (Geldard and Geldard, 1999). Chrysalis facilitators have a range of symbols that are used in group counselling sessions. For example, girls may be asked to pick a symbol that represents their family situation and help them talk about something that may difficult.



Expressive writing is used in a variety of ways within Chrysalis. For example, as part of the conferences, girls are asked to write a story about their experiences in relationships. In previous Chrysalis group sessions, the girls have been asked to write a letter without the need to actually send this letter but as a way of expressing themselves. This could be a letter to themselves about any hopes or fears they may have about the future or a letter to their parent or a friend that they would like to tell something that is bothering them. In sessions focussing on self-esteem, the girls may write something to each other, something positive. Many adolescents enjoy writing lyrics or in journals and it is a valuable tool widely used in adolescent counselling (Geldard and Geldard, 1999). Writing can be very therapeutic as it stimulates greater self-awareness, supports the healing of memories from the past, helps to clarify any current issues and identify future directions, whilst reclaiming creativity (Rutherford, 2006).



Pancha Tanmantra Martial arts

One of the facilitators, Amie Dreyer, has a black-belt at instructor's level in Pancha Tanmantra Kung Fu. This form of martial arts originates from the Buddhist temple Pemuda Vihara Vimala Dharma in Bandung, Java, where it was taught by Buddhist Monks for strengthening physical, emotional and spiritual health. It incorporates meridian systems, similar to those used in acupuncture to release energetic and emotional blockages to achieve balance and healing. Pancha martial arts is incorporated in Chrysalis by introducing the girls to a basic form of energy release; an exercise consisting of slow breathing followed by punching in the air and screaming a loud 'ahhh'. As you can see in the picture, each girl is then asked to lead and guide the rest of the group through the exercise.



EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation intention

The aim of this evaluation is to demonstrate how the Chrysalis girls program is achieving its objectives, what impact the program has made on its participants and identify future challenges for the program. The evaluation questions that we seek to answer are:

1. What are some of the indicators that tell us that Chrysalis is meeting its objectives?
2. What is the value of Chrysalis to the schools?
3. What are some of the challenges for the program?

Data collection methods

To answer these questions a range of evaluation data collection methods have been used. The methods chosen are a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative methods assist in gaining understanding of how Chrysalis is achieving its objectives and quantitative methods to measure its impact for participants.

- a) Review of past reports – what have we learnt so far?
- b) Open interviews with school stakeholders
- c) Observations / experiences from Chrysalis facilitators (Amie, Jane)
- d) Pre/post term data from Richmond River High School
- e) Online questionnaire for graduated Chrysalis girls

a) Review of past reports – what have we learnt so far?

From the onset of the program, yearly evaluations have been conducted through the completion of evaluation forms asking Chrysalis girls their opinion on the issues covered, changes they have observed in themselves and their relations since participating and the most valuable thing they learnt. The reports also captured information gathered through informal conversations with community stakeholders

b) Open interviews with school stakeholders.

To improve our understanding of the views and experiences of the schools who have hosted the program, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders within the schools such as principles, deputy principles, head welfare teachers and school counsellors. Six interviews were carried out across the five schools.



c) Observations / experiences from Chrysalis facilitators.

As the program facilitators have been directly involved with the program from the very beginning, they possess invaluable knowledge around the background and issues of the girls, how the program has evolved and grown, changes they have observed in young women and feedback received from teachers, parents and wider community. They also have great knowledge of the underpinnings and therapeutic approaches that are embedded in the program.

d) Pre/post term data from Richmond River High School.

With a new group starting at Richmond River High School at the time of commencing this evaluation, an opportunity was to find out their reasons for joining the group, how they felt about themselves prior to joining and how they hope Chrysalis will help them. Another survey was conducted after their first term of participation (10 weeks).

e) Online questionnaire for graduated Chrysalis girls.

Chrysalis girls keep in contact with each other on Facebook, a long time after they have 'graduated' from the group and some even moved out of area. An online questionnaire has been developed with four open-ended and one closed question to find out how Chrysalis has impacted on their lives. Nine girls responded to the questionnaire.

Limitations

One limitation of this evaluation was the inability to use questionnaires completed by Chrysalis girls from previous evaluations. The online questionnaire was developed to incorporate the experiences of Chrysalis girls. In addition, many of the evaluation results were recorded in the 2009, 2010 and 2011 evaluation reports including quotes, which have been an invaluable data source.

Another limitation is in the use of the pre and post term questionnaires completed by the girls attending Richmond River high school. The first questionnaire was completed by 13 girls and the post-term survey by 11 girls. Due to the small number and relatively small changes in responses, it is difficult drawing conclusions from this data. The results do however give a good overview of where the girls are at.



EVALUATION FINDINGS

a) Review of past reports – what have we learnt so far?

The Chrysalis facilitators have completed yearly evaluations asking participants to complete a questionnaire at the end of the year. These findings were summarised in three evaluation reports in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Findings of these evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive and are a strong indication that Chrysalis is achieving remarkable positive outcomes for young women at-risk. The statistics are convincing and indicate that Chrysalis is having a positive impact. In addition, some of the quotes of Chrysalis girls further demonstrate the significant impact that participation in Chrysalis can have on a young women's life.

The vast majority of girls responded that Chrysalis had helped them emotionally (100%) and positively changed the way they felt about school and their future (89% in 2010 and 79% in 2011 evaluation). Some examples of quotes that further illustrate these findings:

“Chrysalis came into my life at a cross roads of my adolescence. It opened my eyes to the lives of other girls and gave me much needed peer and trained support to help me move through a very difficult time”

“I wanted to die and then I started Chrysalis, now I love my life. Chrysalis makes me happy every week”

“I am so much more emotionally stable and have learnt better ways to deal with my crap”

“I have a more positive attitude to school”

“It has made me realise that I am not a dumbass and that I can do it”

“Not about school, but about the future, I feel more spontaneous and excited towards the future and opportunities that come with it”

“Yes now I feel like I want to go to uni and get a good career”



Also, the majority of girls (73% in 2010 and 90% in 2011 evaluation) indicated that Chrysalis has changed how they interacted and felt about their family.

“I have heaps more respect and understanding towards my family”

“It’s helped me understand that my family don’t always understand what life is like for me and I have to be more open to help them understand”

“Chrysalis has helped me mend my relationship with my mum and it’s given me suggestions on how to act when something goes wrong”

The girls also found they behaved towards intimate relationships in a healthier, self-empowered way (91 % in 2010 and 96% in 2011 evaluation).

“It’s helped me see that’s there is more to life than being used by guys”

“Yes that my sexuality should be respected and treated equally”

“Yes, I’ve learnt how some boys can act to be careful and how you should wait for the right guy who will treat you right”

Compared to other educational programs, all girls felt that Chrysalis was more relevant, engaging and educational (2011 evaluation). In addition, most girls (95%) noticed a positive change within themselves since participating and 96% felt the program had significantly helped them develop higher levels of self-awareness and self-responsibility (2011 evaluation).

“I have so much more confidence in myself to believe in the things I want to do”

“I’ve learnt to love myself for who I am”

“It has given me insights into what life’s like for other people and helped me not get to that point”.

“Chrysalis helps me make better choices”

“Chrysalis has shown me I can be strong and I can do whatever I want in my life”

“I feel so much more confident”

More quotes can be found on the first two pages of this report.



Feedback from teaching staff indicated that they noticed an increase in school attendance, attention and motivation towards school as well as increased levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression and anxiety among the girls (2010 and 2011 evaluation). Parents also observed positive changes in the way their children communicated with them and saw greater levels of empathy and understanding in their relationship (2010 evaluation).

Indigenous participants of the program have been observed to develop raised levels of self-esteem, feelings of equality, belonging, self-respect and self-expression (2011 evaluation).

Conference feedback

Past reports also include feedback from some of the conferences Chrysalis girls have participated in. Feedback from the Young Women's Self-Empowerment Conference in Mullumbimby in 2010 showed that the girls felt supported, understood and empowered by the day. They also felt that the information provided was educational and helpful and they liked that the day was facilitated by other young women.

The evaluation report from the regional 'Let's go for a walk' Young Women's Health Conference held in Bangalow in 2008 is also overwhelmingly positive. The girls gained a sense of empowerment and clear understanding of issues relating to healthy relationships, respect, consent and sexual abuse. The girls also said they felt comfortable on the day and learnt that other girls share similar experiences, that they are not alone.

Previous reports can be found online <http://www.amiedreyer.com/chrysalis-girls-program.html>



b) Open interviews with school stakeholders

All school stakeholders that were interviewed valued and showed great support for the Chrysalis program in their school. Many recognise that because of the trauma, hardship and grief some of these girls have experienced, they have great difficulty concentrating, relating and connecting to the school or teachers. They found that by bringing outside expertise into the school, they are able to create a safe and confidential space within the school where girls are supported and feel comfortable to open up. A school counsellor said that since Chrysalis started at their school, there has been an increase in disclosures of personal problems including sexual assault which led to the school or Chrysalis facilitator being able to provide support and link the young person in with appropriate support services. Some of the stakeholders found that Chrysalis addresses a need that cannot be met by the school, and there are no other programs that offer these girls the kind of support they need.

Access to specialist skills and knowledge

One teacher found that for many of the girls school is not a priority; they have great difficulty learning as there is so much they have to deal with. A deputy principle said that offering the program in the school is a way of recognising that the issues some of these girls are dealing with are overly complex and requires access to specialist skills and knowledge, beyond what the school can offer. The value of the availability of professional help in the school was raised by several stakeholders.

School engagement

A common theme is the way Chrysalis engages the girls with the school community. Many have seen an increase in school attendance, in particular on the day that Chrysalis is on. And for some girls, this may be the only day they are guaranteed to attend school. Beside an increase in school attendance, they also observed a greater connection and engagement with the school.

RISC stats

Interestingly, one school had kept records of the number of incidences on the Register of Individual Student Contact (RISC) tracking welfare, discipline and merit of the girls that attend Chrysalis. They found a significant reduction in negative incidences recorded on the system for the girls that attended the program. The schools also compared these records to other girls identified as being 'at-risk' but didn't participate in the program. For these girls, they observed an increase, no or minimal changes in their RISC stats.

Positive changes

All school stakeholders have observed positive changes in the girls. Among many positive outcomes, they observed improved, more sophisticated communication skills, better ways of dealing with conflict and controlling their anger. One teacher said that overall she sees "happier and more confident girls". As a school principle reports, "sometimes you see a girl that you know is having a difficult time but to see a smile or



twinkle in their eye, you know the program is doing something good for them". Another teacher observed small changes for some but also "some remarkable successes where girls make great steps in addressing their issues and breaking the cycle of dysfunction and drug abuse". Another teacher that has been involved with the program at two different schools also claimed to have witnessed life changing progress for some girls engaging in significant self-destructive behaviours. Through Chrysalis they started to believe in themselves, gain self-worth, realising other options for them, and choosing a different path, "Chrysalis plants seeds for change and I have seen lives being turned around".

Positive peer interaction

Another change that was observed was the way the girls interacted with each other. They saw less 'bitchiness' on school grounds, supporting each other, friendships developing, and increased understanding for each other, as well as more respect, tolerance and empathy.

Empowerment

The involvement of the girls in school conferences was also mentioned and one teacher describes their participation in these events as "very brave" and "empowering for them to stand up and speak about their experiences, connect with other young women and feel part of the Chrysalis community, knowing they are not alone". Stakeholders also observed increased self-esteem and confidence among the girls. One teacher remembers a girl that would barely look at you when she spoke, she started attending Chrysalis and there were notable changes in her confidence and appearance. She spoke at one of the conferences, a transformation which absolutely blew the teacher away.

Long-term, community benefits

When asked about the long-term, community benefits stakeholders acknowledged it was hard to observe and measure long-term benefits but they all held a strong belief that participation in Chrysalis would have lasting benefits for the girls as well as for the wider community. They felt that improved educational outcomes opened up opportunities in life and would thus reduce future unemployment rates amongst the girls. They also felt that with a reduction in risk taking behaviour, costs to the community would be reduced with less reliance on for example drug and alcohol services, the mental health or criminal justice system. They also saw the ripple effects for families that are benefiting from positive behavioural changes in the girls.

Funding challenges

The majority of stakeholders believed that funding is one of the major challenges for Chrysalis' sustainability in the future. While they all support the program and none of them would want to see the program go, they realise that competition for resources could make it difficult for schools to continue funding it. In one school, a dedicated teacher is actively involved in fundraising to keep the program operating in their school but she is concerned that this may end once she leaves the school.



c) Observations / experiences from Chrysalis facilitators.

Amie and Jane both have a wealth of inspiring stories to tell about girls that have participated in the program; they have seen girls grow and change. Jasmine's story is an illustration of how Chrysalis has supported and empowered young women.

Jasmine's story *

Jasmine joined Chrysalis when she was fourteen. She was referred to Chrysalis by a school teacher due to concerns about promiscuous behaviour and rumours she was pregnant. She would often exhibit abusive and sometimes violent behaviour in the classroom and was extremely disruptive. Jasmine was in the lowest academic classes and expected by many that she would not finish school. She took up many hours of time from deputy principles and particular staff members because she refused to access the school counsellors or anyone from the welfare team because as she put it bluntly, "hates them all".

What was not known by the school was that Jasmine was sexually abused by her swimming coach when she was six years old. Her mother is an alcoholic and she never met her father. She grew up in a home with domestic violence, substance abuse and inconsistent attachment parenting.

Jasmine joined Chrysalis and after a few weeks she started to feel safe and trusting of the level of confidentiality in the group. She started to open up about her volatile relationship with her mother and ongoing feelings of isolation and difficulties engaging in her school work. She started the bond with the other girls and gained a sense of belonging. Jasmine often asked for individual counselling after the group sessions and learned strategies to stabilise her relationship with her mother and outbursts in the classroom.

Topics in group sessions that were covered at this stage were anger management skills, empathy, communication, and substance abuse and family systems. These topics were highly relevant to her situation and she began to gain insight into the generations of addiction that afflicted her mother's family. Jasmine returns home with the ability to feel more compassion towards her mother, and a sense of self-esteem that she can make different choices in her own life. She began to become aware that the sexual abuse trauma sometimes influences her current behaviour and that lacking a father figure in her life caused her to have one-night-stands with older guys.

After one term in Chrysalis (10 weeks), Jasmine was noticeably calmer, has fewer altercations with school staff, her peers and family and has reduced the amount of time she accesses school staff due to behavioural issues. Jasmine is more in control of her life and has begun to think more positively about her future.



After one year in Chrysalis, Jasmine took on a leadership and mentoring role for other girls. She felt more confident, a strong sense of self-worth and has developed strong personal boundaries.

While her home environment did not change, Jasmine now has the skills to help support her mother and knows how to handle situations when abuse, violence or anger is present. The Chrysalis facilitators also linked Jasmine and her mother in with other services to support them at home.

At the end of year 10, Jasmine attends her graduation. She plans to continue school and hopes one day to work in childcare. During the time she participated in the program, she helped facilitate school conferences where she spoke publicly and educated other 'at risk' young women. She has learnt to meditate, practise yoga and martial arts. She has become more self-aware and self-responsible. She understands that ultimately, she is the most powerful person who can influence her future.

* Jasmine is not her real name

Growth and change

Amie describes that many of the girls gain a sense of unity and equality in Chrysalis they may have never experienced before. Chrysalis creates an expectation for girls to be motivated, honest, compassionate, kind and teaches them to be more self-aware, empowered and self-responsible. One example is the development of, as Jane puts it, a language for their inner world, the ability to explain what is happening for them; a basic skill that is often missing. Amie and Jane have seen how these skills and qualities flow into their interactions with peers, families, at school and in the community. Amie finds that often girls that have experienced childhood trauma have a lack of hope and ability to think positively about the future. Chrysalis helps to heal and process childhood trauma and bring awareness that life can be positive and that ultimately they are responsible for their lives. Jasmine's story is one example of this.

While Chrysalis is there to support young women, there needs to be some motivation and willingness for change to occur. Jane says sometimes girls are lacking this motivation and it can take a long time for any visible change to occur, but on a positive note she says at least they engage and know Chrysalis is there to help for when they are ready.

Long-term program

Amie says that because of the long-term, consistent and client driven nature of the program, Chrysalis is able to produce changes in young women's behaviour. For some girls, this process is slower than for others, a long-term commitment is thus crucial for real change to take place. The facilitators say the change in behaviours comes from supporting and guiding the girls to create a strong foundation of self-worth and esteem within themselves. Once this develops symptomatic behaviours such as self-harm,



promiscuity, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and anger related issues begin to drop away.

The importance of a long-term commitment is also highlighted when Amie speaks about the challenges she observes in group development and dynamics. In all groups, she has observed classic stages of group formation that are normal but none the less challenging. Amie says it takes about one term (10 weeks) for the group to become more cohesive, trusting and open emotionally. After this time, they will often comfortably cry in group sessions and disclose highly emotional issues such as experiences of abuse or feelings of rejection from a father that abandoned them. Challenges arise when new girls join the group and members can become upset as they feel they have lost that sense of emotional security and it can take some time to establish this sense of safety again. The facilitators say the groups function very well, once the girls learn to listen to each other there is very little disruption. Jane says the group rules that were created by the girls themselves give clear boundaries and they are rarely crossed. She says that sometimes it is difficult to grasp that some of these girls can be so disruptive in a classroom, as they see a different side in Chrysalis.

External influences

While Chrysalis supports young women to make better choices, facilitators realise that at the end of the day the girls go home to their home environment which is often the underlying cause of their problems. Other difficulties can arise when girls refrain from disclosing abuse because of the requirement for the facilitators to report this to community services (FaC'S). While mandatory reporting is crucial in protecting and supporting young women, it often creates a barrier for young women to disclose as they fear for FaC'S involvement in their lives.

Access to services

The visibility of NSW Health within the High School environment and subsequent availability has led to greater transparency and increase in referrals to the Richmond Sexual Assault Service (RSAS) and other related support services. Jane McGowen, NSW Health Sexual Assault counsellor states that the increase in referrals to NSW Health Sexual Assault Service (SAS) has meant they were able to offer immediate specialist support to the young women. Also, the Chrysalis girls program offers opportunity for girls that have experienced sexual assault and have come to the attention of SAS to be linked in with the Chrysalis support group in their school that may help in the recovery of the assault.

Jane says that through the long-term nature of the program and consistent availability, solid relationships have developed between NSW Health, the schools and young people improving access to services within a community notoriously underrepresented within health services. This has been a positive outcome for all. As a service, the Richmond Sexual Assault Service has learnt and developed their expertise in working with young



people. Jane believes that through the long-term tenure, girls develop trust in the services provided and will often recontact or refer a friend.

Also, as the facilitators identify support needs, they will support to link the girls in with other community services such as Centrelink, housing and medical support when issues such as pregnancy or STD's arise. This is where Amie also identifies challenges as many of the girls are under 16, which means they often require parental consent which can be a barrier to offering support. Jane says that they often are a bridge between Chrysalis girls, the school and other authorities such as police or FaC's. Chrysalis facilitators will often advocate on the girls behalf or facilitate family meetings.

Attendance

Amie and Jane have witnessed a remarkable commitment to the program by the girls and know that in some of the schools, the groups will continue to come together even if they can't make it that week, an occurrence that could be considered rare in any other educational program. As Jane says, they will follow the structure of the group session starting with yoga, the 'high high's', have discussions amongst themselves, support each other and end the session with meditation. Their commitment is also reflected in attendance and drop-out rates. As the facilitators indicate, the group has a very high attendance rate and very few drop-outs; most girls stay in the group until they graduate in year 10.

Chrysalis community

Amie and Jane estimate the Chrysalis community to be around 200 participants in the Northern Rivers, grown over five years. Their Facebook page currently has 160 members. The Facebook page allows girls to stay connected and keep each other updated on conferences, graduations and post positive messages of empowerment and change. Most importantly, the page allows any girl to access a huge number of girls that continue to practice the Chrysalis code of ethics such as support, leadership and compassion. Amie describes that when a young woman is experiencing adversity, she can share that on the Facebook page and will immediately receive care, support and guidance from a large community of young women that is Chrysalis. Facebook also allows girls to easily access the facilitators to ask for advice and support when needed.

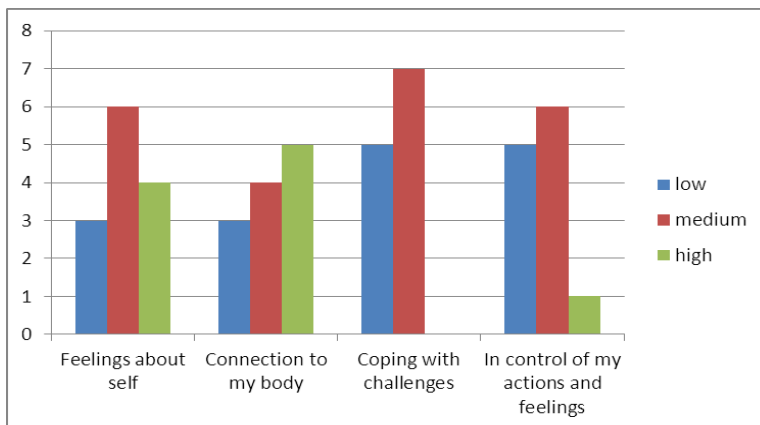
Funding challenges

Funding remains a constant challenge. While both facilitators are paid for the hours they put into facilitating the groups, they both say that they have put many voluntary hours into organising activities for the group or providing individual support. Additional funding is sourced via fundraising to pay for activities, food or transport. An example may be raffles that girls organise. Amie has also put many applications in for one-off funding that are not always successful. Insecurity of funding is an ongoing challenge for the group. Another challenge identified by the facilitators is the change of staffing within the schools. Having several staff leave that understand and support the program can put the continuity of the program at risk but also creates logistic difficulties to run the program for instance with room availability or liaising with teachers.



d) Pre/post term data from Richmond River High School

The girls at Richmond River High School were asked to complete a short questionnaire (appendix V) on the first day they attended Chrysalis. The girls were asked to rate themselves from 1 – 10 about how they felt about themselves, how well they felt connected to their own body, how well they felt they coped with challenges and if they felt in control of their actions and feelings. Scores 1 – 3 were grouped as 'low', scores 4 – 6 were grouped as 'medium' and 7 – 10 as 'high'. The results are displayed in the graph below. The graph clearly shows that most girls felt okay about themselves and mostly scored medium to high when asked how well they felt connected to their own bodies. However, when asked how well they felt they coped with challenges, not one girl felt they coped very well (high) with challenges and only 1 girl rated herself as being quite in control of her own actions and feelings. The majority either felt they didn't or only moderately coped with challenges. The same results are visible when asked how well they felt in control of their actions and feelings.



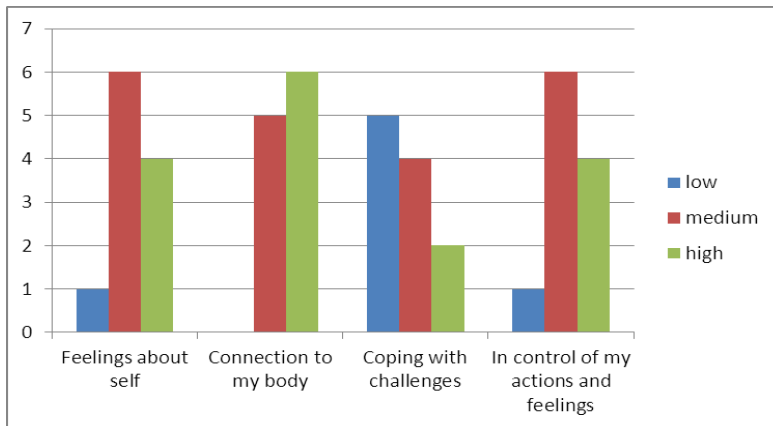
Graph 1: self-evaluation Richmond River High School, pre-Chrysalis

Interestingly, when asked about the good and not so good things in life, most answers were about relationships. Some of the good things were their (true) friends (10 out of 13) and some mentioned their pet, boyfriend and three mentioned (certain) family members. Ten out of thirteen girls answered the not so good thing in life was their family life. Two girls mentioned having problems with anger and some mentioned self-confidence, school and bullying.

The girls were also asked how they hope Chrysalis would benefit them. More than half of the girls hoped Chrysalis would help them cope, deal with things, be happier, feel better about themselves or manage feelings. Four girls specifically said they wanted to be happier and three girls wanted help with managing their feelings. Other said they wanted to feel more confident, be able to talk about things and respect themselves more.



At the end of the term, the girls were asked to complete a similar questionnaire, again asking them to rate themselves. Eleven girls filled out the questionnaire. The findings are presented in graph 2.



Graph 2: self-evaluation Richmond River High School, after 1 term

Overall, the results show fewer responses with scores in the 'low' ranges except when asked how well they cope with challenges, although there were two girls who rated themselves 'high' compared to none in the pre-term questionnaire. Overall the girls gave themselves higher ratings for connection to their body and feeling in control of actions and feelings.

The girls were also asked how their experience of Chrysalis has been so far and if there was anything that they learned. All feedback was very positive and gave a real sense that the girls loved coming to the group every week. Some of the responses were 'fantastic', 'really good', 'amazing', 'absolutely love it', 'the highlight of my week', just a good environment' and many responded that they learnt a lot already, interesting things that they may not have learnt otherwise and know they will learn many more things to come. One girl acknowledged that it has been scary to talk about her experiences but that coming to Chrysalis has already changed things in life for her. Another girl said it has been good because there is always someone to listen and being part of the group feels good. Some of the things the girls said they learnt about were sexuality, safe sex and sexual transmitted diseases but also around anger and healing. A few girls (3) responded they learnt to trust and talk to people about their problems. Two girls also said they learnt about controlling their mood and emotions, and how to relate to other people and themselves. One girl said it helped her so much, brought her "from the brink of self-destruction back into my body more". When asked if there was anything they wanted to change, they all said 'no', Chrysalis is great the way it is.



e) Online questionnaire for 'graduated' Chrysalis girls

An online questionnaire was developed for girls that graduated from the program to find out how they look back on their Chrysalis experience and how it is helping them today.

Again the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. Some of the key words that were used in their responses were: security, empowerment, confident, happy, support, learn, understand, listen, sharing, not alone, self-control, connect, trust, non-judging, strength, safe place, belonging, feel loved and capable.

For many of the girls, the reason they joined was because they needed support. In Chrysalis they found a safe place, where they didn't feel judged but understood and felt they belonged. Girls indicated in their responses that they have become more self-aware and their place in the world around them.

"That we are not alone, our situations are all different but in many ways the same, that we are all unique but share a huge amount of familiarity within our experiences, social issues and family background"

Two things that stood out for the girls the most were sharing their stories and experiences, and being involved in the conferences.

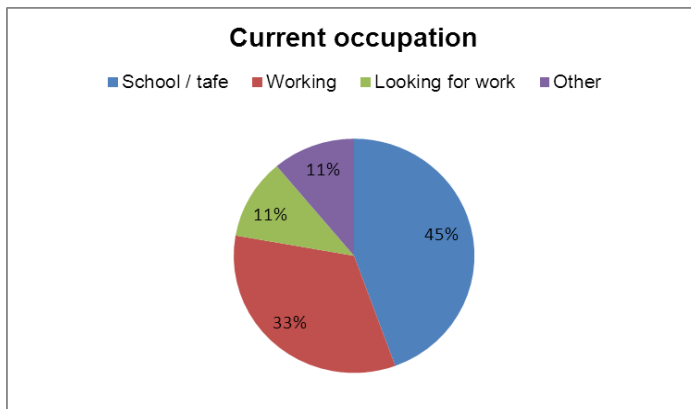
"Going to other schools and showing other girls who needed Chrysalis what its about"
"Showing other schools around the area what Chrysalis is about and now those schools have Chrysalis is a huge standout"

One girl responded remembering having the feeling of security and empowerment because of Chrysalis. Another girl remembers how they had to put their differences aside, and were "supported, united and strong". One girl said that school was a scary place for her but Chrysalis was a safe place to her, "creating a feeling of love and belonging in an otherwise terrifying place". For another girl it was making friendships that have now lasted years.



To the question of how Chrysalis is helping them today, the girls respond that it has helped them in many ways and shaped who they are today. A few responded that they look back on the advice that was given, how they have better relationships because of it, how it has made them more confident and happy in life and a reminder that “no obstacle is too hard to overcome”.

We also asked the girls what they are doing now. From the nine girls that responded, the vast majority was either engaged in school or Tafe training, an outcome that was perhaps not anticipated for some of the girls.



Graph 3: Current occupation, graduated Chrysalis girls



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The evaluation findings have been grouped according to the three evaluation questions that we posed at the start of our evaluation; what are some of the indicators that tell us that Chrysalis is meeting its objectives, what is the value of Chrysalis to the schools, and what are some of the challenges for the program.

1. What are some of the indicators that tell us that Chrysalis is meeting its objectives?

The Chrysalis program implements a range of evidence-based interventions relevant to the target population, adolescent girls identified as being at-risk. The overwhelming positive feedback from everyone that has been part of the program, either as participant or stakeholder, indicates that Chrysalis is achieving incredible positive outcomes. Responses that indicate how Chrysalis is meeting each of its objectives are summarised here.

Reduce impact of trauma

Chrysalis gives presence and access to specialist skills and knowledge that can support young women to deal with past trauma. An increase in referrals to the Sexual Assault Service is one indicator that Chrysalis has been able to provide increased access to support that can assist them in the healing process after experiencing sexual abuse. By coming together and breaking the silence of issues affecting them, the Chrysalis girls have been able to find much needed support.

There are many other ways in which Chrysalis helps reduce the impact of trauma. Experiencing trauma can have significant impact on a young person's self-worth, self-esteem and ability to trust. Some of the feedback received from girls, facilitators and schools, they have observed positive changes in self-esteem, trust and feeling safe to talk about their problems. As healing of trauma can only take place in the context of positive and trusting relationships, the creation of safety is primary.

Amie observes that once their self-worth and self-esteem grows symptomatic behaviours such as self-harm, promiscuity, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and anger related issues start to drop away. As positive behaviour change is an indicator for emotional healing, these observed changes indicate that by participating in Chrysalis, some of the emotional trauma that these girls are carrying has begun to heal.

Previous evaluations have also indicated that the majority of girls say that Chrysalis has helped them emotionally. Quotes that verify this are "Chrysalis has taught me there are other ways to deal with anger, because I used to self-harm" and "I used to be depressed all the time, there has been a huge change in my life since started going to Chrysalis".



Re-engage with school

One objective is to re-engage young women with school. In particular the feedback from school stakeholders tells us that since participating in Chrysalis, some of the girls are not only truanting less, they are also more engaged with the school as a whole. Their attention in the classroom has improved and they are more motivated. Stakeholders say the program has a reciprocal effect; girls know the school is providing the program to them, that they are valued and this is reciprocated by their attitude towards the school.

One girl said that Chrysalis created a safe place for her within the school. Stakeholders have also mentioned that they feel that by offering Chrysalis they are able to provide a safe and supportive place for the girls, something they need but may not have outside of school.

Group facilitators have also experienced that once the girls have a more positive outlook on their future and realise their potential, they start to see that education is a stepping stone towards a more self-empowered future. School becomes more relevant and girls start to take their education more seriously.

Young women themselves also say that because of Chrysalis, they are going to school more and that their attitude towards school has changed. Some of the quotes from Chrysalis girls that substantiate this are “I have a more positive attitude towards school”, “I pay more attention in class and actually love school now”, “I’ve learnt to respect myself and go to school and try” and “I got a lot of stress of my mind so I could focus and learn more, like I have been lately”. The final quotes also show that by addressing the underlying issues that are impacting on the girls’ ability to concentrate in class their attention and engagement with school can be improved.

Empowerment

Chrysalis creates many opportunities for young women to become empowered. The program is client-driven and constantly evolving through the vision of its participants. The facilitators promote participation in decision-making creating a sense of ownership for the girls. Facilitators encourage girls to come up with ideas and will support them to realise these such as the sexuality conference coming up in October 2012.

Also, by increasing their level of knowledge and awareness of issues affecting them such as sexuality, sexual assault, grief and loss, substance abuse or anger management, the girls are better informed about how to tackle these. As one girls point out “It has given me insight into what life’s like for other people and helped me not get to that point”.

Previous feedback also tells us that the majority of girls felt they were more self-aware and behaved towards intimate relationships in a healthier, self-empowered way. As one girl says, “... I have learnt how some boys can act to be careful and how you should wait for the right guy who will treat you right”.



Participation in the self-empowerment conferences are a great example of ways that Chrysalis promotes empowerment. Through the delivery of the conferences, the girls share their increased awareness of issues related to violence and abuse with their peers, learn communication, facilitation and leadership skills while building their confidence and self-esteem. Participation in the conferences has been a memorable experience for most of the graduated Chrysalis girls. They remember a sense of empowerment, feeling united and strong.

Feedback from graduated girls gave a strong indication that Chrysalis has empowered them, as one girl says “Chrysalis is a reminder that no obstacle is too hard to overcome”, indicating a greater sense of control over the problems they encounter in life.

Observations from school stakeholders also give a strong sense of empowerment that is generated by attending Chrysalis, as they note the empowering experience of participating in conferences, increased support for each other and increased levels of self-esteem and confidence. Another indicator that tell us that Chrysalis is empowering for young women is the feeling to able to make better choices and have opportunities in life as some of the quotes demonstrate “Chrysalis has helped me make better choices”, “I feel so much more confident”, “Chrysalis has shown me I can be strong and I can do whatever I want in life” and “I have so much more confidence in myself to believe in the things I want to do”.

A sense of empowerment is further fostered through increased awareness and skills to respond to the challenges the girls encounter in their lives. As the facilitators state, girls are taught that ultimately they are responsible for their lives, that life can be positive and girls are encouraged and supported to “be the change you wish to see in the world”, reflecting Wageman’s (2011) definition of youth empowerment “the process by which adolescents develop the consciousness and skills necessary to envision social change and understand their role in that change”. Jasmine’s story is a beautiful example of this and is reflective of other girls’ stories.

Awareness, skills and tools to deal with life challenges

Throughout weekly group sessions, girls develop an increased awareness of issues affecting young women in the group. As the girls indicate, they learn that they are not alone and develop ways to cope with their problems. An example can be around anger management, where the girls share their own difficulties they have with managing their anger, and the group facilitator provides insight and information around what anger is and how to safely express and release our anger. As one girl states, “Anger management has been the thing I’ve learnt most, because for years before it was a huge problem for me and now it’s not”.

Another indicator that Chrysalis develops tools to deal with life challenges is the response of one girl that says “I am so much more emotionally stable and have learnt better ways to deal with my crap”.



Jasmine' story is another example where through attending Chrysalis, she gained insight into how childhood trauma and family circumstances were influences her choices and behaviour. Through her new found awareness and development of other ways of dealing, she was better equipped to deal with the challenges she faced in life.

The creation and sharing of 'The Game' is another illustration that through increased awareness of patterns of abuse and the discussion of how to deal and respond to this, the girls feel empowered and more able to handle complex situations and issues in their relationships.

Other skills that were identified by stakeholders and facilitators were communication skills; the ability to understand and articulate their needs, feelings and opinions as well as conflict resolution skills.

Increase connection with self, their peers, family and wider community

The Chrysalis girl group provides a range of opportunities for young women to become connected with themselves and others. The range of expressive therapies used in the program, promote self-awareness and connection to their body and emotions. The Chrysalis facilitators say the girls resonate extremely well with these activities.

As the girls describe, Chrysalis gave them a sense of belonging and a place they were able to share their experiences and make new friends. School stakeholders have also observed positive changes in the way the girls interact with each other and how it has brought girls together that otherwise may not have connected. Chrysalis brings girls together from year 7 to 10, creating a bridge for younger girls to connect with and learn from older girls.

Other indicators that Chrysalis has increased connections for girls, is when asked if the program has changed the way they interacted and felt about their families, the majority said it had.

“Chrysalis has helped me mend my relationship with my mum and it’s given me suggestions on how to act when something goes wrong”

“I have heaps more respect and understanding towards my family”

Through participation in the Young Women’s Self-Empowerment Conferences, the girls were able to connect with girls from other Chrysalis groups, creating a sense of unity and belonging. In addition, the conference in Bangalow built regional networks not only between Chrysalis girls but also introduced them to other girls in the community and health professionals. The connection to health professionals is in particularly facilitated through the presence of a health professional as part of the Chrysalis group, developing trusting relationships with young people and health services and improving access to support.



The Facebook page brings girls from all schools, current and past participants together. The group has about 160 members and the page is actively used by girls to share stories, keep each other up-to-date of any conferences but also to provide each other with support when going through a difficult time. The Facebook page is also another way for the girls to connect to the group facilitators.

Other indicators

Another indicator that Chrysalis is meeting its objectives is the **demand from other schools** in the Northern Rivers for the program. Unfortunately, both facilitators are at capacity and unable to run more than five groups a week. The demand for the program suggests that Chrysalis has built a reputation in the area and its positive outcomes are known and shared within the school community.

Both stakeholders and facilitators have seen increased levels of **empathy** develop amongst the girls. As empathy comes from our own experiences of feeling heard and valued, increased levels of empathy could be attributed to the positive experience gained from their interactions with others in Chrysalis. As empathy is essential for healthy development into adulthood, this observation is very positive.

The feedback received from participants does not only indicate that Chrysalis has generated positive change in multiple areas, the girls also love coming to group. The evaluation findings are overwhelmingly **positive** indicating participants are more than satisfied with the quality of delivery and content of the program. When participants are asked for suggestions or input, they mostly say Chrysalis is perfect the way it is.

“It is the highlight of my week”

“Just a good environment”

“It’s amazing and all the people who support it and all the people who make it, thank you!”



2. What is the value of Chrysalis to the schools?

Creating a supportive environment

All school stakeholders found that the girls attending Chrysalis are in need of support that the school is unable to offer; it is important because it addresses a need that is not being met by society or any other educational program. Chrysalis offers a safe space for students and schools feel a responsibility towards their students to provide this. Of great value to the school is the presence of specialist skills and knowledge that have experience in dealing with the overtly complex issues some of these girls are dealing with. An added benefit to the school is reduced pressure on school counsellors to respond to the needs of some high need students, and appears to be an effective way to cope with increased workloads for school staff.

School engagement

Feedback shows that one outcome of attending Chrysalis has been a reduction of problem behaviour reflected in the girls' RISC statistics, indicating that participation in Chrysalis had positive outcomes for the girls in terms of behaviour and performance at school. But not only school stakeholders identify that Chrysalis has a positive impact on the way the girls feel and act towards education, there is overwhelming evidence from girls themselves that because of Chrysalis they have changed their attitude towards school and are able to focus better on their school work.

3. What are some of the challenges for the program?

A recurrent response to the challenges of Chrysalis is funding. While the issue of funding is not the same for each school, they all point out that while it is an extremely worthwhile program, they are concerned that they may not be able to continue funding it. One suggestion was to seek external funding.

Non-favourable attitudes from the school community towards the program have also been mentioned in conjunction with concerns regards funding. As a few stakeholders indicated, they have been asked why this program is funded for girls that are 'misbehaving' and feelings that these girls don't deserve special treatment. This report hopes to provide some context to the sometimes disrupting or self-destructive behaviours the girls engage in, and help people understand the importance of Chrysalis in helping these girls address the issues impacting on their behaviour.

Another challenge could be the continuity of staffing, not only within the schools to secure support for the program but as the two facilitators are an important part of the program's strength, this also brings a challenge for the programs future, and the question: will Chrysalis be able to continue to run in the absence of Amie Dreyer and Jane McGowen?



CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

It has become evident that Chrysalis is important for young women 'at risk' for many different reasons. For some it has been a lifesaver, for others an opportunity to gain awareness, learn new skills and feel more confident and positive about themselves and the future. The evaluation findings indicate that in particular a supportive, safe environment where the girls feel heard, understood and can learn from each other is most valued.

The improved skills, awareness, beliefs, self-esteem and self-worth the girls take away from the program are invaluable as well as the improved educational outcomes and relationships they have with peers, their families, the community and service providers as a result.

We have learned that besides the importance of Chrysalis for participants, the flow on effects to the school, families and the wider community needs to be considered to fully appreciate the overall impact of the program.

The future direction of the program will largely depend on security of funding but also on the direction the Chrysalis girls take it. As the facilitators say, the girls would like every school to have Chrysalis but this would only be possible with ongoing financial support and additional suitable staff that shares their vision and expertise. For the moment, securing funding to keep the program running in the five High Schools would be a great achievement.



REFERENCES

- Weisz, A. N. and B. M. Black (2010). Peer Education and Leadership in Dating Violence Prevention: Strengths and Challenges, *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 19 (6), p. 641-660
- Asbury, J. (2006). Services for victim/survivors of sexual assault. Identifying needs, interventions and provision of services in Australia. Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. Retrieved from: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/issue/i6.html>
- Better Mind (2008). Sun salutation benefits. Retrieved from: <http://www.better-mind.com/sun-salutation-benefits>
- Black, D. R, Foster-Harrison, E., Tindall, J., Johnson J., Varenhorst, B. and S. Moscato, *Selected Peer Resource Literature*. Retrieved from: http://www.peerprogramprofessionals.org/publications/publications/publications/Selected_Peer_Resources.pdf on 9 August 2012
- Carmody, M. (2009). Conceptualising the prevention of sexual assault and the role of education. *ACSSA issues*, 10.
- Emerson, D., Sharma, R., Chaudry, S and J. Turner (2009). Yoga Therapy in Practice: Trauma-Sensitive Yoga: Principles, Practice, and Research, *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 19, p. 123-128. Retrieved from: <http://www.traumacenter.org/products/publications.php>
- Ford-Martin, P.A (2012) *Art Therapy*, Caremark Inc. Retrieved from: <http://www.expressivetherapies.com.au/scripts/openextra.asp?extra=47>
- Forneris, T., Stewart Stanec, A.D. and Theuerkauf B. (2010). Yoga in school communities, [*Strategies: A Journal for Physical and Sport Educators*](#). 23(3), p. 17
- Geldard, K. and D. Geldard (1999) *Counselling Adolescents. The pro-active approach*. London: SAGE publications.
- Integral Yoga Magazine (2009) Yoga and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: An Interview with Bessel van der Kolk, M.D., p.12-13. Retrieved from <http://www.traumacenter.org/products/publications.php>
- Kaley-Isley, L.S, Peterson, J., Fischer, C and E. Peterson. (2010) Yoga as a Complementary Therapy for Children and Adolescents. *Psychiatry*, 7(8), p.20–32.



Mellanby, A. R. Newcombe, R. G. Rees, J. and J. H. Tripp (2001). A comparative study of peer-led and adult-led school sex education, *Health Education Research*, 16(4): 481-492

Pearson, M. (2003). [Guidance officer and counsellor perspectives on using expressive therapies to support students.](#) *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 13(2), p 205-224.

Pearson, M. and Wilson, H. (2009). [Using expressive arts to work with mind, body and emotion.](#) *Psychotherapy in Australia*, 16(1), p. 55 - 64.

Perry, B. (2005) *Applying principles of neurodevelopment to clinical work to maltreated and traumatized children*. In: Webb, N.B. (ed) (2006) *Working with Traumatized Youth in Child Welfare*, Guilford Press : New York

Perry, B and M. Szalavitz (2010). *Born for love*. New York: HarperCollins

Perry, B. (2009) Examining Child Maltreatment Through a Neurodevelopmental Lens: Clinical Applications of the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics, *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 14, 24- - 255

Perry, B. (2012). Neuroscience approach to trauma and recovery. *ABC Radio National*. <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/tuesday-7-august-2012/4181786>

Rutherford, M. (2006) *Inside Out Counselling*. Accessed via: <http://www.insideout-counselling.com.au/>

Schwartz, R.C and Thompkins, S.M (2009). Enhancing resilience in youth at risk. *Annals of the American Psychotherapy Association*, 12 (4), 32-39

Sriranganathan, G., Jaworsky, D., Larkin, J., Flicker, S., Campbell, L., Flynn, S., Janssen, J. and L. Erlich (2010). Peer sexual health education: Interventions for effective programme evaluation, *Health Education Journal*, 71(1) 62–71

Toseland, R. and R. Rivas (2012). *An Introduction to group work practice*. Boston, USA: Allyn and Bacon.

Wageman, A. (2011) Social Empathy as a Framework for Adolescent Empowerment, *Journal of Social Service Research*, 37 (3), 278-293

Zinck, K., and J. Littrell (2000). Action research shows group counseling effective with at-risk adolescent girls, *Professional School Counseling*; 4 (1), 50 - 59



Website used

<http://www.amiedreyer.com>

<http://www.expressivetherapies.com.au/>

<http://www.insideout-counselling.com.au/>

<http://www.markpearson.com.au/publications.php>

<http://www.traumacenter.org>





APPENDIX I: CHRYSALIS GROUP RULES

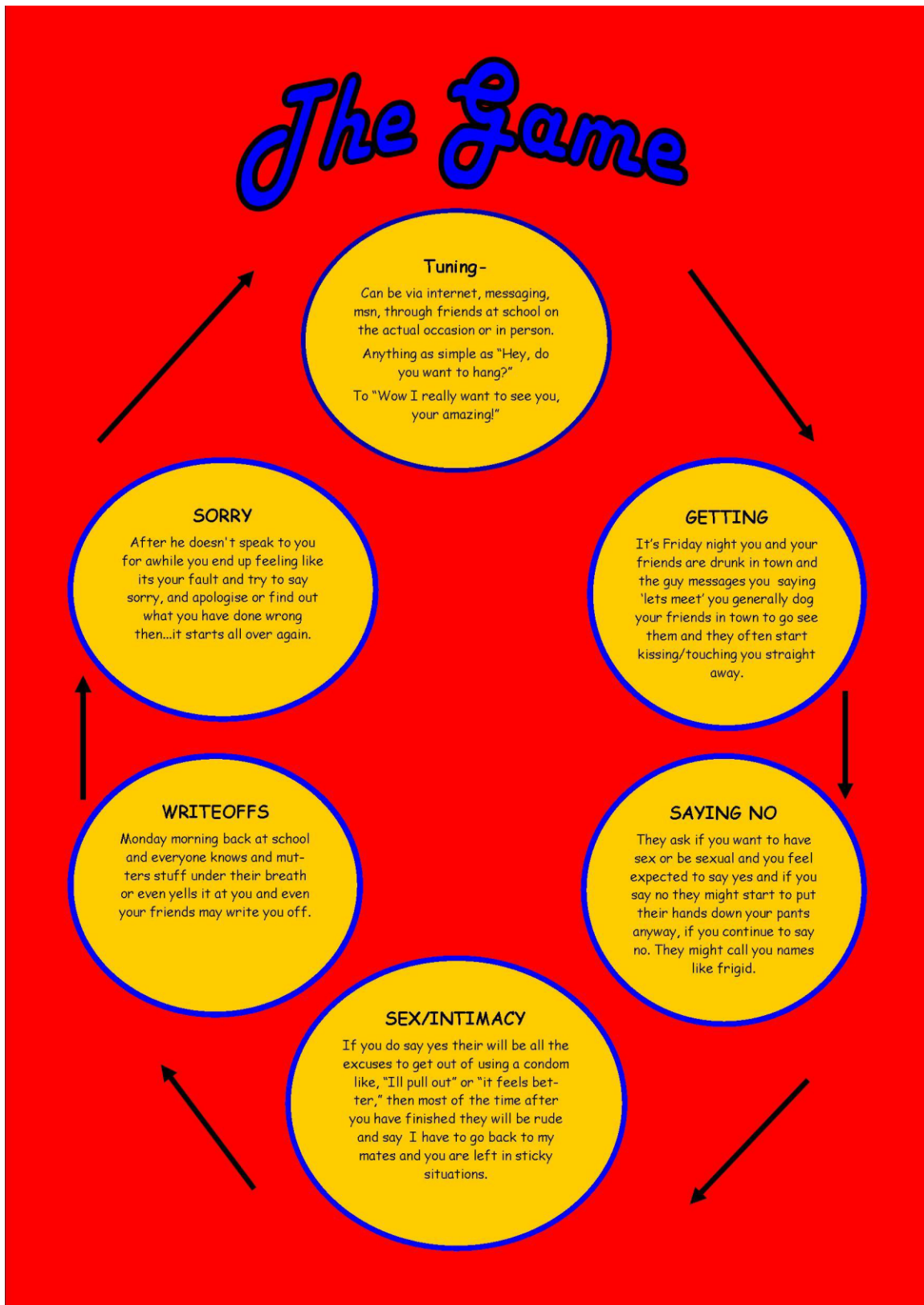


rules

- **Group confidentiality.** "What's said in the group stays in the group."
- **No 'put downs'** - if this happens accidentally then an apology is required.
- **No names.** This is to keep the focus from becoming gossipy. When someone is discussing an issue relating to another person outside the group they must keep the discussion directed to their feelings about the situation or themselves.
- **Be on time** and get back to class on time.
- **Everyone must catch up on** school work they may have missed through attending the group.
- **Conflict stays outside the group.** Any conflicts that cannot be resolved may lead to a periodic suspension from the group.
- **Acknowledgment of other members outside of the group.** This requires that all members at least nod (and do not ignore) one another if seen on the playground or outside of school. This builds trust, respect and support for each other.
- **"Lu-Lu"** If needed the hypothetical name Lu-Lu is used when a member feels uncomfortable about disclosing their own experiences.
- **Chrysalis is a voluntary** experience so no one can force anyone to join or participate.



APPENDIX II: THE GAME



APPENDIX III: FOUR MONTHS BEFORE HAND

"Four months before hand" (Anonymous – 14 yrs)

"It's okay", he told me.

"Are you ready?" he whispered.

Four months beforehand I couldn't have pictured myself in this situation. I wouldn't have ever imagined it.

Four months beforehand I didn't know feelings such as mistrust, lost love, pain, deep and searing pain, gullible and naïve could even exist in a 14 year olds mind frame. Four months ago I wouldn't have believed – I wouldn't have ever guessed – I could feel as disconnected as I did.

Four months beforehand I guess I was naïve. I was walking towards the canteen. Little did I know this walk would change my perspective of life as I knew it.

He bumped into me, more like a brush, actually. I stopped to mumble a quick apology. He did the same. Looking into each other's eyes, he smiled and said "Your eyes are intoxicating". Now it seems corny, but in that moment I thought It was sweet. From that point on we were constantly smiling and waving and chatting, until it grew more into phone conversations, computer, messaging and talking. It didn't matter what form of communication it was, it was always there every day. Eventually I would start visiting his house on weekends, sometimes even after or during school. He really had me going. Once he stood in the rain waiting for me to hop off the bus to visit him at his home until his mum told me to leave, usually around 12 or 1.

It was fine by us. Usually we would be seeing each other the next day anyway. He never did try any funny business with me as he never knew my beliefs. I wanted to be in a serious relationship. I wanted to be in love.

About three months into whatever was going on, we were getting pretty heated while watching a movie, when he slid his hands down my undies. Immediately I pushed this boy off me. I wanted to know what the hell he was thinking! He knew I didn't do any of those sorts of things. He said "sorry", but seemed annoyed but so was i.

I wasn't even his girlfriend yet. By the time I returned home I had been sent a MySpace message saying he was sorry, but didn't want what was going on anymore. I was devastated, all wrong. He waited for the big bang that never came, so he gave up. Sex never came and neither did my idea of a serious relationship.



Friday morning came and left and my alcohol arrived. I think I ended up drinking six UDLs, some goonsack vodka, and even a little red wine. I was so drunk and intense, my friend told me not to bother coming back to her house. I made my way into town and we instantly spotted each other. He said the crappiest apology I still have heard to this day. It was shit and I was desperate. Upon hearing of my “no place to stay” that night, he kindly offered his house like the gentleman he was. So he “knew I was safe”. I again accepted, he helped me walk back to his place, to his room and to his bed. I began freaking out about his mum, but he assured me she was away. I remembered needing to vomit.

He undressed me. I wasn’t used to his being so rushed in doing so. Usually he was tender. This time he knew what he wanted. He took off my undies. I was so embarrassed and uncomfortable; I told him repeatedly that this was a bad idea. He proceeded to get naked in front of me. I remember cringing at the sight of his penis. He clambered up on top of me and I said “No”. He hushed me with a kiss. “It’s okay”, he told me. “Are you ready?”

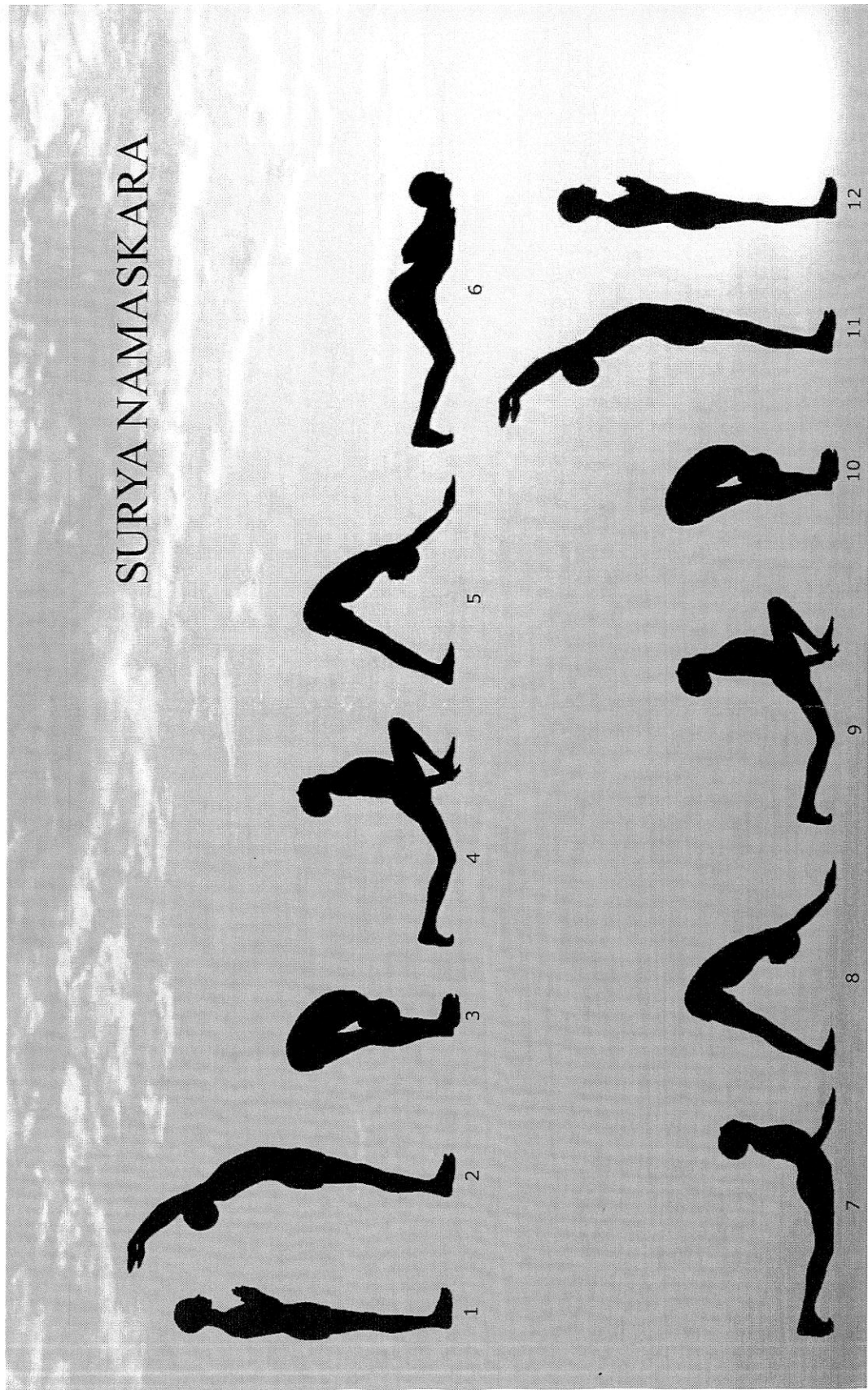
I couldn’t breathe, I couldn’t move. I didn’t want to be there. I hated him. He then proceeded to take my virginity. He took it from me; he stole my magic moment in life that is meant to be shared with someone special. Only once do you experience it, and I have to shut mine out of my mind. I began to drift in and out of awareness. Sensing this, he made me get on top so I couldn’t zone out. I couldn’t escape. I don’t know if it was more physically or emotionally painful.

I woke up the next day to him shaking me and saying can I leave, before his mum woke up. It was 7.30 am. I was so upset, I knew she wasn’t there. Walking to my friend’s house forty minutes away, I wondered if he had ever liked me. Or would he ever talk to me again. He didn’t.

Four months afterward I didn’t care. I didn’t care about much. In one way I’m a little thankful. He taught me that even someone you pretty much love can lie to you and change your thoughts forever. Four months before though, I cared I cared a lot.



APPENDIX IV: YOGA, SUN SALUTATION



APPENDIX V: CHRYSALIS PRE-TERM QUESTIONNAIRE

Chrysalis – Name _____ (Optional) – June 2012

Please fill out this form to help us identify how we can support your participation in Chrysalis

On a scale of 1 to 10 – where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest – where do you sit with these...

How do I feel about myself?



1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



How well do I feel connected to my body?



1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



How well do I cope when things challenge me?



1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



How well am I in control of my actions & feelings?



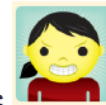
1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



Write a few words about the good things in your life



Write a few words about the not good things in your life



How am I hoping Chrysalis will benefit me? (like – help me to be more positive about myself, help me to not feel so alone, help me to manage my feelings, get help on how can I deal with parents, school, give me a safe space to talk about things, etc)



APPENDIX VI: CHRYSALIS POST-TERM QUESTIONNAIRE

Chrysalis – Name _____ (Optional) – September 2012

Please fill out this form to help us identify how we can better support your participation in Chrysalis

On a scale of 1 to 10 – where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest – where do you sit with these...

How do I feel about myself?



1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



How well do I feel connected to my body?



1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



How well do I cope when things challenge me?



1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



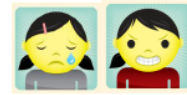
How well am I in control of my actions & feelings?



1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10



How has your experience of Chrysalis been so far?



Anything you have learned in Chrysalis so far?

Is there anything you would like to change in Chrysalis?



APPENDIX VII: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE CHRYSALIS GRADUATED GIRLS

1. What was the reason you joined Chrysalis?
2. Looking back at your Chrysalis experience, what memory stands out the most?
3. When you joined Chrysalis, what changes did you observe in your life?
4. How is Chrysalis helping you today?
5. If you have left school, what are you doing now?
 - ☐ Looking for work
 - ☐ Working
 - ☐ Training or study
 - Other (please specify)

