

Spring 2016

Research & Action Report, Spring/Summer 2016

Wellesley Centers for Women

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Recommended Citation

Wellesley Centers for Women; Gannett, Ellen; Gladstone, Tracy; and Grossman, Jennifer, "Research & Action Report, Spring/Summer 2016" (2016). *Research & Action Report*. Book 29.

<http://repository.wellesley.edu/researchandactionreport/29>

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Research \ Action

Report

WCW Scholars Offer Policy Recommendations for the Next U.S. Administration



Featuring:

Quality Out-of-School Time for All • Preventing Depression in Young People • Recommended Reading for the Next President • Research Informing Practice & Policy • Let's Talk about #Sex • The Power of Data to Advance SDG-5

Shaping a
Better World
through
Research
& Action

**Wellesley
Centers for
Women**

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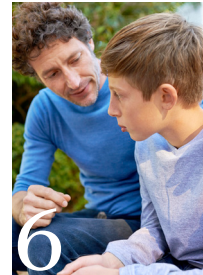
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- “We Talked about Sex,” “No We Didn’t”: Teen-Parent Match in Reports of Sexuality Communication
—Jennifer Grossman, Ph.D. and Prioty Sarwar

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A world that is good for women is good for everyone.™

Research & Action Report is published in the spring and fall by the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW).

Our mission is to advance gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing. We shape a better world for women and girls, families and communities through our innovative research, theory, and action.

While women's and girls' perspectives and experiences are at the center of our institutional identity, we recognize that the conditions of women's and girls' lives are shaped not only by their sex and gender, but also by other important factors: race, ethnicity, and culture; social class and economic status; nationality and religion; sexual orientation and gender expression; age and ability status; level of education; geographic context (urban, suburban, or rural); and a host of other factors. We share the conviction that the lives of men and boys—indeed, people of all genders—are as valuable and important as those of girls and women.

We work with the understanding that the change we seek occurs simultaneously at micro and macro levels, encompassing individuals, dyads, families, communities, and society-at-large. Only when social equity and equality, psychological wellbeing, peace, and freedom from violence and want evince for all people will our research and action programs have reached their true aim.

From the Executive Director

This spring, we launched a very timely initiative focused on “Policy Recommendations for the Next U.S. Administration.” Research and program staff from the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW), throughout the next several months, will offer insights, policy approaches, and recommendations on issues that can inform policymakers, practitioners, and the general public. We’ll be disseminating these through public panels, blog articles, podcasts, and infographics. You can read in this issue about some of the recommendations that have already been shared, and you can listen to others online: (www.wcwonline.org/Recommendations). The themes to date cover a variety of issues important in the lives of women and girls, families and communities—from child care quality and women in leadership, to depression prevention and gender-based violence interventions. The initiative will culminate with a special spring 2017 conference, which I will tell you more about in the fall/winter issue. In the interim, I hope you will follow us on social media or visit www.wcwonline.org to stay informed of our scholars’ perspectives and insights. And equally as important, please share these with your colleagues, friends, and elected officials!

As a precursor to this special campaign, the March/April 2016 issue of *Women’s Review of Books* included the feature, “Recommended Reading for the Next President.” **Amy Hoffman**, editor-in-chief, invited some of the publication’s favorite feminists to recommend books, and the reading list compiled includes some expected titles, as well as many surprises. You can read more about it on page 12, and you can also download the special section from the publication’s webpage: www.womensreviewofbooks.org.

Here at the Centers we are also committed to strengthening our international connections and collaborations in order to build our knowledge and share our expertise

in meaningful collaborations globally. Our nongovernmental organization (NGO) status at the United Nations (UN) facilitates some of this work. For example, this past March, we organized

a parallel event, “The Power of Data: How Women-and Gender-Focused Research Institutes Can Advance SDG-5,” held during the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meetings in New York, NY. This panel featured WCW Senior Research Scientist **Linda Williams**, as well as partner-colleagues **Clementina Furtado**, with her translator **Paulo Borges**; **Shiv Datt Sharma**; and **PeiYao Chen**, from the University of Cape Verde, Ashoka University in India, and the Global Fund for Women, respectively. You can read more about this event on page 12 or download the podcast at: www.wcwonline.org/UN2016.

As you’ll read in the next several pages, our research and program staff has been undertaking work that informs policy and practice across specific communities and broad regions. In the featured commentary, for example, **Jennifer Grossman** shares perspectives on communicating about sex, sexuality, and sexual health with adolescents. She highlights what can we learn from best practices as well as what more we need to assess and understand. As scholars, it is imperative that we examine relevant questions that can truly inform. I am proud of the rigor we maintain in our research, of the measurable impact our action programs have, and of the meaningful foundations our theoretical work provides. I hope you value our work, too, and that you will share it with others. Thank you! ■



Layli Maparyan, Ph.D.
Katherine Stone Kaufmann ’67 Executive Director



New Findings, Presentations, & Publications

Research Informing Practice & Policy

■ **Sumru Erkut**, Ph.D. and **Ineke Ceder** are presenting findings from the “Women in Theater Leadership Project” in Washington, D.C., during the National Conference of the Theatre Communications Group in late June. In 2013, the leadership of the American Conservatory Theater (ACT) in San Francisco, CA, and Sumru Erkut and Ineke Ceder, at the Wellesley Centers for Women, partnered to study gender equity in League of Resident Theatres (LORT) leadership. Women have not held more than 21 percent of artistic leadership and 38 percent of executive leadership in these theaters. After examining what is needed in a career profile to become a candidate for these positions and looking at the experiences of those aspiring to the positions, Erkut and Ceder, joined by ACT’s Associate Producer Erin Washington, will share research findings and recommendations on how to level the field for leadership in large theaters in the U.S., both along gender and racial backgrounds.

■ **Ellen Gannett**, M.Ed. is serving on an Out-of-School Time (OST) Book Series Afterschool Advisory Group for Information Age Publishing, which will assist in developing parameters, including the purpose, scope, and structure of the series; the first two book themes; manuscript review protocols; and the advisory board’s long-term communication and engagement. Gannett is also serving on the committee Defining and Measuring Character and Character Education: A Workshop, through the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education.

■ **Georgia Hall**, Ph.D. is serving on a planning committee to develop a public workshop highlighting summertime opportunities to improve child and adolescent education and

health outcomes. Hall is sharing her expertise in the evaluation of out-of-school time environments that can promote healthy behaviors and thereby reduce children’s risk of obesity



and chronic disease. The workshop, organized by the Board on Children, Youth, and Families at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and sponsored by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, is slated for this summer in Washington, D.C.

■ **Erika Kates**, Ph.D. was invited this past winter, by a planning committee with the co-chairs of the Committee on Justice-Involved Women and the Massachusetts Caucus of State Women Legislators, to present data on probation and corrections services for women. In April, she was interviewed by researchers for the Council of State Governments Justice Center, with whom she provided data on justice-involved women for a statewide review of criminal justice agencies. Kates served as a panelist for an Action for Community Development—Boston program on “Parenting from Prison,” the first of a three-part series on the effects of trauma on families.

■ **Allison Tracy**, Ph.D. presented a study showing the psychometric validity and reliability of the Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT), developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) during the Annual Meeting of the

American Educational Research Association in Washington, D.C., in April. With her research colleagues, **Linda Charmaraman**, Ph.D., **Ineke Ceder**, **Amanda Richer**, M.A., **Kathy Schleyer**, M.S., and **Ellen Gannett**, M.Ed., Tracy conducted a multi-phase assessment of the observational instrument designed to assess the social quality of out-of-school time youth environments, the results of which showed strong structural validity and test-retest reliability. The most recent phase of the project has resulted in tools that can be further developed to create a rigorous and intensive reliability training protocol to increase inter-rater reliability.

■ **Nan Stein**, Ed.D. presented “Teenage girls learn their rights about sexual harassment in schools: Case studies from Sweden and the USA” with Katja Gillander Gådin, Ph.D., Mid-Sweden University, during the 2016 Law and Society Association Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, in June. Sexual harassment in schools is a global phenomenon affecting both boys and girls, although girls are exposed more frequently. The session focused on lawsuits and complaints in both countries, while reviewing and exploring how girls in several lawsuits/complaints came to learn about their rights and how their legal mobilization may have impacted social movements among their peers. Stein will also present “Building Comprehensive Middle School Initiatives with *Shifting Boundaries*” during the 2016 National Sexual Assault Conference in August, in Washington, D.C. She will discuss her partnership with California’s Rape Prevention and Education Program to translate the evidence-based program, *Shifting Boundaries*, into a comprehensive approach to prevent sexual violence and harassment for middle-school-aged youth in two communities. The session will review challenges and successes and how they developed an evaluation plan to address system changes and school-wide outcomes.

■ Stein also co-authored with Carrie Baker, “Obscuring Gender-Based Violence: Marriage Promotion and Teen Dating Violence Research,” included in the *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* (Volume 37, Issue 1). This article argues that U.S. public policies have prioritized marriage and healthy relationship promotion over research and education about gendered violence in teen dating relationships, despite evidence of the prevalence of intimate partner and teen dating violence that disproportionately impacts women and girls.

■ The **Justice and Gender-Based Violence Research Initiative** team launched a study, “Responding to Sexual Assault on Campus: A National Assessment and Systematic Classification of the Scope and Challenges for Investigation and Adjudication,” funded by the National Institute of Justice. The scholars have begun the first of a three-phase study that involves collecting information on sexual assault investigation and adjudication practices at a sample of U.S. colleges and universities. More than 20 Wellesley College students have been hired as research assistants on the project to collect data. The results of this phase will be completed in summer 2016 and will be used to develop typologies describing how colleges and universities are responding to sexual assault. **April Pattavina**, Ph.D., principal investigator; **Linda Williams**, Ph.D., co-principal investigator; **Nan Stein**, Ed.D., co-investigator; and **Alison Cares**, Ph.D., co-investigator, presented the study plan to the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault in February. Williams and Pattavina also presented during the June Law & Society Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, where they offered the paper, “How do we measure prosecutorial outcomes in cases of rape in the U.S.? Shifting numbers and meanings reveal differential legal response to a serious crime.”

■ **Joanne Roberts**, Ph.D., **Pat DiBlasi**, and **Wendy Wagner Robeson**, Ed.D., of the **Work, Families, and Children Team** (WFCT), presented during the 2016 QRIS Improvement Grantees Training Conference, sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, with separate presentations in three large urban communities in April 2016. Members of the WFCT also presented “Improving Quality in Community-Based Early Education and Care Programs: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned” in June. They shared results of Boston KIDS, an innovative partnership between Boston Public Schools and Thrive in 5 to pilot high-quality K1



(pre-K) in community-based centers, as well as results from the Ready Educators Quality Improvement Project (REQIP), a pilot of targeted technical assistance for family child care and center-based programs serving infants through preschoolers to improve child outcomes based on data, experiences, and what may inform future quality improvement efforts in Boston, MA, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Adolescent Development, Identity, & Behaviors

■ In March, **Linda Charmaraman**, Ph.D. screened her documentary, *It’s Our Time: The empathy gap for girls of color* at Northeastern

University, in Boston, MA, co-sponsored by the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program and the Department of Music. This 30-minute documentary highlights the academic, cultural, and social/emotional needs of girls of color, through interviews with Boston-area teen girls, teachers, counselors, afterschool staff, administrators, and policy-makers, in an era where media is saturated with messages that promote invisibility of this overlooked population. Learn more at www.wcwonline.org/RoadToEducationalEquity.

■ In April, Charmaraman presented two posters at the Society for Research on Adolescence Biennial Meeting held in Baltimore, MD. Co-authored by **Amanda Richer**, WCW research associate, and two former Wellesley College students, **Haruka Notsu** and **Kieran Parmelee**, the poster entitled, “How early adolescents define sex: Longitudinal associations with Facebook friendship networks and sexual activity,” illustrated that sexual definitions most associated with delayed sexual debut were those considered technical and medically accurate. Teens who friended neighborhood peers were more likely to define sex as physically pleasurable, which in turn, is significantly associated with sexual debut by ninth grade. Charmaraman co-presented with graduate students Ashleigh Jones and Joey Merrin at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the poster “Predicting early adolescent online sexual harassment: Associations with dismissive attitudes, peer support, and school belonging.” Despite the fact that cyber sexual harassment occurs on the internet—a context outside of the school walls—the scholars demonstrated that school belonging is a potentially protective factor against cyber sexual harassment victimization. In April, at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Jones and Merrin continued to present their collaborative



Global Connections

work with Charmaraman on a panel, “School climate, gender, context, and consequences: Effectively addressing middle school sexual harassment at school.” This talk illustrated that the highest sexual harassment victimization across four waves of middle school data were associated with high levels of dismissive attitudes about sexual harassment, high levels of caring and prosocial behaviors, and low levels of school belonging.

■ In late June, Charmaraman kicked off the 2016 Social Media and Adolescent Health Research Team Conference held at Seattle Children’s Hospital, with a presentation on adolescents and social media use. With the purpose of engaging health care providers, researchers, educators, and parents, the conference sessions focused on cyberbullying, problematic internet use, social media in schools, community organizations and their use of social media to connect to teens, and applications of social media in research. In August, former WCW intern and current graduate student in the Department of Education and Counseling at Xavier University of Louisiana, **Temple Price**, will present a paper, co-authored by Charmaraman, her former WCW mentor, at the 48th Annual International Association of Black Psychologists Convention to be held in Arlington, VA. The talk, “Social media: A potential tool for black women’s mental health,” is an extension of their recently published book chapter, “Women of color cultivating virtual social capital: Surviving and thriving” (In Tassie and Givens (Eds), *Women of color and social media multitasking: Blogs, timelines, feeds, and community*, 2015).

Implementing Social & Emotional Learning

■ **Open Circle** is collaborating with the Wellesley College Education Department to provide Wellesley students with opportunities to learn about and practice implementing social and emotional learning (SEL). Eight Wellesley seniors are participating in a pilot program this spring to study and implement Open Circle’s SEL program as part of their

teacher practicums in local elementary schools. As part of the pilot, the Wellesley seniors are teaching social and emotional skills using the *Open Circle Curriculum*, learning and practicing facilitation skills, and exploring ways to integrate SEL throughout the school day. A research study of this pilot will examine formative and summative feedback as well as impacts on participants’ comfort with and commitment to SEL. **Jennifer Grossman**, Ph.D., WCW research scientist, is serving as principal investigator and Noah Rubin, Ed.D., director of the Elementary Education Program at Wellesley College, is a co-investigator.

■ Open Circle is developing and piloting new professional development for educators and curriculum for students in Grades 4 and 5 to strengthen their practice of grateful thinking. Based on findings from these pilots, new gratitude modules will be integrated into Open Circle’s core programming for teachers and made available to new and past participants of Open Circle’s teacher training. Research shows that gratitude is positively related to hope, forgiveness, pride, contentment, optimism, and inspiration.

Depression Prevention Research

■ **Tracy Gladstone**, Ph.D. is an author of the article, “A Preventive Intervention Program for Children with Depressed Parents: Protocol for an Acceptability and Feasibility Study” (De Angel, V., Prieto, F., Gladstone, T.R.G., Beardslee, W.R., & Irrarrazaval, M.), which will be included in a forthcoming issue of the journal, *Trials*. One of the most important risk factors for childhood depression is being the child of a depressed parent. These at-risk children have two to four times the probability of having an affective episode compared with their peers. Preventive interventions, such as Beardslee’s Preventive Intervention Program (PIP), that are targeted at children of depressed parents have proven effective in many countries. The PIP is a family-based approach that works by promoting resilience in children and increasing positive interactions within the family. In this pilot randomized controlled

trial, the authors determined the acceptability and feasibility of an adapted version of this intervention in Chile.

■ Gladstone is also an author of “Prevention of Depression in At-Risk Adolescents: Predictors and Moderators of Acute Effects” (Weersing, V.R., Shamseddeen, W., Garber, J., Hollon, S.D., Clarke, G.N., Beardslee, W.R., Gladstone, T.R., Lynch, F.L., Porta, G., Iyengar, S. and Brent, D.A.) included in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. The researchers assessed predictors and moderators of a cognitive-behavioral prevention program for adolescent children of parents with depression using a sample of



310 youth in four sites. Researchers concluded that depression in adolescents can be prevented, but programs may produce superior effects when interventions are at moments of relative wellness in high-risk families. Future programs may be enhanced by targeting modifiable negative clinical indicators of response.

■ Gladstone co-authored “Prevention of Depression in At-Risk Adolescents: Moderators of Long-Term Response” (Garber, J., Weersing, V.R., Hollon, S.D., Porta, G., Clarke, G.N., Dickerson, J.F., Beardslee, W.R., Lynch, F.L., Gladstone, T.G., Shamseddeen, W. and Brent, D.A.), which will be included in a forthcoming issue of *Prevention Science*. In a randomized controlled trial, the researchers found that a cognitive behavioral program (CBP) was significantly more effective than usual care in preventing the onset of depressive episodes, although not everyone benefited from the CBP intervention. The present paper explored this heterogeneity of response.

Gender, Equity, & Privilege

■ **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D. and **Peggy McIntosh**, Ph.D. were featured during “Some Dynamics of Privilege: A Conversation between Peggy McIntosh and Layli Maparyan,” part of the ongoing Actualizing Equity a Partnerships Learning Series at Wellesley College. Among numerous engagements, Maparyan presented, “What it means to care about women’s equity today,” during the YWCA Boston’s Annual Meeting in Boston, MA, in November 2015, and “Womanism and Girls,” during the 2015 See the Girl Summit in Jacksonville, FL. She was a panelist for “Author meets critics session: Transformation now! Toward a post-oppositional politics of change” during the National Women’s Studies Association Annual Conference in Milwaukee, WI, in November.

Relational-Cultural Theory

■ The **Jean Baker Miller Training Institute** held the 2016 Advanced Summer Institute, Transforming Community: Radical Reality of Relationship, in early June. Co-sponsored by and held at The College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, MN, the conference highlighted evidence-based approaches to community transformation and built upon the Relational-Cultural paradigm. Participants connected across professional disciplines and communities to envision and co-create new possibilities exploring inclusive healing and community transformation; collaborated and explored ways to improve education and health care; and addressed environmental and social justice issues through integrated relationship-based practices grounded in neurobiology and social action. **Amy Banks**, M.D., **Judith Jordan**, Ph.D., and **Maureen Walker**, Ph.D., WCW senior scholars, were among those who presented during the Institute.

In August 2016, **Linda Charmaraman**, Ph.D. will participate in the Mixed Methods International Research Association Conference to be held at Durham University, United Kingdom. The conference invited proposals under its theme, “Moving beyond the linear model: The role of mixed methods research in an age of complexity.” As a co-principal investigator, Charmaraman will be providing a methodological overview about recent work funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, in collaboration with **Allison Tracy**, Ph.D., senior research scientist, methodologist, and principal investigator. The talk is entitled, “Avoiding cultural bias in establishing program observation accuracy: Reflections on our evolving action-oriented mixed methods evaluation design,” which describes how the study began as a more traditional mixed method evaluation design with primarily a quantitative and qualitative, linear hypothesis-driven orientation (e.g., will raters improve in their program rating accuracy with different training enhancements over time?). The study program evolved into an action-oriented mixed method design that recursively used both quantitative and qualitative strands to continuously improve the online training system developed, after on-going consultation and feedback with stakeholders, community-based partners, and the study participants throughout the development and evaluation process.

Tracy Gladstone, Ph.D. will present at the symposium, “Current Challenges and Future Directions in the Prevention of Youth Depression,” during the 46th European Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies Congress in Stockholm, Sweden, at the end of the summer. She will present on “PATH: Promoting Adolescent Health

through an Internet-Based Primary Care Intervention.” The research team contends that internet-based interventions for preventing youth depression hold promise, but further research is needed to explore the efficacy of these approaches and ways of integrating emerging technologies for behavioral health into the primary care system.

Sari Pekkala Kerr, Ph.D. was invited to be part of a Finnish strategic research consortium, “Skilled employees—successful labor markets.” The consortium will be studying changes in job skill requirements over time, and projecting how that affects the Finnish labor market in the future, and exploring how the current education system should/can adjust to respond to the changing requirements. This will be done in 2017–2018. The consortium is a co-operation of several Finnish universities, the Research Institute of the Finnish Economy, and the Labour Institute for Economic Research.

Layli Maparyan, Ph.D. presented “The way forward and next steps,” with Abigail Burgesson, African Women’s Development Fund; Sienna Abdul-Baki, Deputy Minister for Gender, Liberia; and market women representing Nigeria during the West Africa Market Women’s Regional Research Validation Workshop organized by the African Women’s Development Fund and Sirleaf Market Women’s Fund. Burgesson is a member of the WCW Council of Advisors. Maparyan also presented “Leveraging investor and global alliances: Priorities and strategies,” with Abratha Doe from Liberia during the November 2015 workshop held in Accra, Ghana. Maparyan documented the trip with a special article and photos on the WCW blog, www.WomenChangeWorlds.org.

Let's Talk about #Sex

Think about it—in many of our parents' and grandparents' generations, there was little family conversation about sex. Often, for religious and cultural reasons, family communication about sex was considered taboo. Many teens did not know what sex was or how to protect themselves from pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This has changed in many families, as cultural expectations have shifted and there is growing recognition that teen-parent sexuality communication can protect teens from early pregnancy and STIs. Many parents also have reflected on the potentially harmful effects that ignorance about sexuality had on their own teenage years and lived experiences. Parents now often commit to talking with their children about sex, breaking from traditions of family silence from past generations, as a way to support their children's healthy development.

“Despite the importance of family communication about sex, only about half of teens report talking with their parents about sex. That puts a lot of adolescents at risk.”

And for good reasons. Talking with teens about sex can make a difference. Many studies show that teens who talk with their parents about sex are more likely to delay having sex and, when they do engage in sexual behavior, they are more likely to use protection. Research tells us that it is critical for teens to learn about sexual issues from a trusted adult *before* they have sex, which can be a challenge, because many parents underestimate their teens' sexual behavior. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost one-third of girls and boys have sex by ninth grade, which puts these young teens at risk for poor school and health outcomes.

It's my belief that family communication about sex is particularly important for the current generation of teens, who face new challenges of navigating media messages and online social networks that provide early access to sexual messages that may put teens at risk. Many parents are daunted by changing technology and are unaware or disconnected from their teens' online involvement. However, parents' awareness and engagement with their teens' social media are critical to supporting their teens' sexual health.

Despite the importance of family communication about sex, only about half of teens report talking with their parents about sex. That puts a lot of adolescents at risk. However, it is not easy to talk with teens about sex. Parents often struggle with how to initiate conversations about sex with their teens; they feel embarrassed talking about sexual issues, and many lack the skills, information, and confidence to talk comfortably or confidently about such a sensitive issue with their teens.

But, there is help. Increasingly, there are resources available to support parents and their teens. I have found that sex education programs provide a wide range of approaches for how parents can engage in talking with their teens about sex. These programs aim to increase the frequency and quality of teen-parent communication about sex as well as to increase parents' comfort and self-efficacy in talking about sexual issues. These skills are essential. We know that those teens who see their parents as being good listeners, comfortable talking about sex, and open to questions about sex are more likely to truly engage in the conversations.

The most common approaches to involving parents in sexuality communication programs involve face-to-face participation, with interventions for groups of parents alone, or parents and their teens together, often in clinics or other community settings. While these programs can be effective in increasing family communication about sex and reducing teen sexual risk behavior, they require a high level of investment of time by staff, parents, and teens. Alternately, some school-based sex education programs give students *and parents* “homework” activities to complete together. Such programs can provide greater outreach to parents with lesser burden on staff and families, however, they also provide little direct opportunity to enhance parents' actual communication skills. Several of these programs—which have explicit parent-teen communication modules—have shown effectiveness in delaying sex or reducing risky sexual behavior.

Here are some examples:

- *It's Your Game: Keep It Real* is a school-based sex education program for seventh and eighth graders that includes six teen-parent

homework activities each year, designed to promote conversation about friendship, dating, and sex. An evaluation of this program in an urban, predominantly African American and Latino school district in Texas found that teens in the comparison group (those who did not receive the intervention) were 1.29 times more likely to initiate sex by ninth grade than teens who received the intervention.

- *Get Real: Comprehensive Sex Education That Works*[®] is also a school-based comprehensive middle school sex education program with 24 lessons, which include a teen-parent activity in each lesson for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. An evaluation of a diverse, urban sample in the Boston area found that in schools where *Get Real* was taught, 16 percent fewer boys and 15 percent fewer girls had had sex by the end of eighth grade. The findings also showed that completing family activities predicted delayed sexual debut for boys.

- *Families Talking Together* is a clinic-based program for mothers of 11–14 year-olds that provides 30 minutes of individual parent support for teen sexuality communication, as well as a packet of written materials and family communication activities, and includes two booster phone calls. An evaluation of this program with African American and Latino families in New York, NY, found that nine months after the intervention, the group that did not receive the intervention showed an increase in teen sexual activity from six percent to 22 percent, while sexual activity remained at six percent for the group in the intervention condition.

- *Keepin' it REAL* is a community-based HIV prevention program for mothers and their 11–14 year-old adolescents. The life skills version of this program includes seven face-to-face meetings that mothers and teens attended as well as take-home communication activities, which addressed issues such as HIV prevention, communication skills, and talking about sex. An evaluation of the program with a predominately African American sample in Atlanta, GA, found that

teens in the intervention group were more likely than the adolescents who did not receive the intervention to use condoms when they had sex.

A recent area of program expansion that I think is crucial to teens' sexual health is support to help parents engage with their adolescent children's online activities. Some programs involve opportunities for parents and teens to do online skill-building activities and access information that can enhance their sexuality communication. While there have been few evaluations of online programs to date, recommendations include activities such as having teens give their parents a “tour” of their digital world, allowing the teen to serve as the “expert” while empowering parents with strategies to understand, monitor, and respond to teens' risky online engagement, such as setting parameters for provocative chats, not allowing the sharing of explicit imagery, and limiting video dating.

One concern that I have with existing programs that support parent-teen communication about sex is that the vast majority of parent participants are moms. While mothers are often their children's primary sex educators, fathers also play a key role in sexuality communication, and their interactions have been shown to protect some teens over and above communication only with mothers; specifically, fathers' involvement in sexuality communication may be of greater importance for sons, for example, as shared understanding and gender-based experiences, contribute to teens' comfort in talking with parents about sex.



Jennifer Grossman, Ph.D. is a research scientist at the Wellesley Centers for Women. Her research focuses on adolescent development and sexual health and risk-taking, with an emphasis on family communication about sex and relationships. She currently directs the federally funded project, “Communication about sex in the nuclear family and beyond: Implications for health interventions” and co-directed an evaluation of *Get Real*, Planned Parenthood's comprehensive middle school sex education program.

* Learn about the *Get Real* evaluation project, at www.wcwoonline.org/GetReal.

Finally, let's consider other caring adults in our teens' lives. Research on adolescents and risk-taking behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, school truancy, and risky sex have shown that having even one trusted adult can make all the difference in the life of a teen. In many families, that trusted adult may not be a parent. I believe we need to look at aunts, uncles, older siblings, cousins, and godparents—all those extended family members with whom teens often find it easier to broach sensitive topics like relationships and sex. As with fathers, these family members need to be recognized as part of teens' support systems and considered as potential resources for sex education programs.

However, unlike research with mothers and fathers, no studies have investigated whether teens' talk with extended family about sex and relationships can reduce risky sexual behavior. I aim to study this in my future research as well as how adolescents' conversations about sex with parents and extended family change as the teens move through their middle and high school years. Do older teens still talk with their parents about sex and relationships? Do they increasingly reach out to others in their family network? Do these experiences differ for young women and young men?

We can support today's teens' health by recognizing their social challenges, identifying diverse resources, and finding effective ways for adults to talk with teens about sex and relationships. ▀



Advancing the Status of Women & Girls, Families & Communities: Recommendations for the Next U.S. President

What should the next President of the United States—and her/his Administration—understand in order to further advance the status of women and girls, families and communities over the next four-plus years?

This year, researchers and project directors from the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) are offering insights about data, policy approaches, and recommendations on issues that can inform policymakers, practitioners, and the general public. The scholars are sharing their expertise via public dialogues, blog articles, podcasts, infographics, and other forums. Visit www.wcwonline.org/Recommendations to learn more, and to download or listen online to podcasts by WCW researchers and project directors.

QUALITY OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

Ellen Gannett, M.Ed. and Elizabeth Starr, M.Ed., National Institute on Out-of-School Time

Quality Out-of-School Time Begins with Investment in Staff

As expectations for high-quality afterschool and out-of-school time (OST) programs continue to rise, a skilled, stable and committed OST workforce is critically important. Yet supports for youth workers, and resulting staff quality, remain uneven at best due in part to a highly fragmented landscape. Compensation remains stagnant and opportunities for professional advancement and public recognition remain practically non-existent.

A Snapshot of Quality OST

Over 25 years of research in the field has demonstrated that youth who participate in high-quality OST programs show: increased self-confidence and self-esteem; improved social skills with peers; increased pro-social behaviors; intrinsic motivation, concentrated effort, and positive states of mind; improved attitudes and feelings towards school; reduced problem behaviors; and reduced engagement in risky behaviors (Bartko &



Eccles, 2003; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002; Larson, 2000; Shernoff & Vandell, 2007; Vandell, Resiner, & Pierce, 2007).

Research also shows that participation in high-quality OST programs helps to close the achievement gap, has positive long-term effects on school attendance and task persistence, has positive effects on school grades and academic work habits, and improves achievement test scores (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Vandell, 2013).

This research on quality and child/youth outcomes raised new questions about the workforce and the beginning of a national conversation on professionalizing the field. The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) knows from its Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study, completed in 2005 (www.wcwonline.org/MARS), that having effective staff is the key to quality. But how much do we know about youth workers and afterschool staff? And once we know, how can we build a strong, stable, committed workforce and professional identity?

In 2013, the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) conducted a survey of its members to test long-held assumptions about the low pay, experience, and education levels of those involved in the afterschool industry. The survey demonstrated that the afterschool and OST workforce has higher levels of education, more longevity in the field, and better compensation than previously reported. Survey findings include:

- 34 percent have a master's or doctorate degree, and 11 percent have completed some postgraduate work;
- 39 percent have been with their current employer for more than ten years;
- 47 percent have been in the afterschool field for more than ten years;
- 70 percent are salaried employees.

Historically, the field of youth work has been fragmented by different goals, regulations, funding streams, auspices, and locations. For example, afterschool, juvenile justice, summer camp, and residential care have been considered distinct fields, and in some communities of practice, “youth work” implies working primarily with adolescents. However, these kinds of programs all involve working with young people to achieve similar positive youth outcomes. A broad definition of youth work unites the field and creates a stronger profession and discipline.

Approaches & Recommendations

A strong and well-prepared workforce is key to quality and to meeting the increased demands being placed on OST to contribute to both social/emotional and academic success of children and youth. While the recent survey results demonstrate a better-than-gloomy picture of the state of the workforce, we still have a lot to do in terms of stemming turnover, strengthening retention and recruitment efforts, and building a professional identity.

STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE POLICIES:

- Support the creation of State Career Pathways that connect increased training and qualifications with advancements in role, salaries, benefits, and status.

- Support creative experimentation to address compensation concerns, such as loan forgiveness and partnering with the business community.

- Provide incentives and tiered reimbursements for programs that hire certified and credentialed staff.

- Earmark funding dedicated to professional and career development.

- Support the visibility of this workforce through communication, advocacy, and public awareness efforts.

TAKE A SYSTEMS APPROACH:

- Connect and strengthen all elements of a career development system—including quality program standards, core knowledge and competencies for staff, professional development opportunities, such as training and higher education, and career pathways that allow for advancement and recognition in the field, all accompanied by increases in compensation.

- Advocate for a broad definition of youth work so we can break down the silos of the work and encourage blended funding across settings and ages.

- Align and encourage pathways between education and other related human service fields.

PARTNER FOR SOLUTIONS:

Public-private collaborations—between municipal, state, and federal agencies and departments that are committed to education, children, and families—could be the solution. For example, what would happen if more public colleges would commit to offering certificate and degree programs, and if non-profit and for-profit direct-service providers would offer meaningful paid internships and career ladder opportunities for the youth workers, program directors, and managers who complete these educational requirements? The systems would be strengthened by shared commitments and pursuit of policies and practices that promote high-quality OST for youth and children.



LISTEN TO Ineke Ceder, WCW research associate, share findings related to **women's leadership in the U.S. theater industry**, and how this work and other research on a critical mass of women in board leadership, could inform investment in building a pipeline of women and underrepresented communities for leadership roles (originally presented June 3, 2016): www.wcwonline.org/Recommendations



LISTEN TO Wendy Wagner Robeson, Ed.D., senior research scientist on the Work, Families, & Children Team, discuss the need for **better wages and professional development** to more positively impact quality child care and working families in order to support school readiness of more children via a stable workforce (originally presented May 12, 2016): www.wcwonline.org/Recommendations



PREVENTING DEPRESSION IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Tracy R.G. Gladstone, Ph.D., WCW associate director and senior research scientist, director of the Robert S. and Grace W. Stone Primary Prevention Initiatives

Depression is Prevalent but Prevention Programs Are Limited

According to the World Health Organization, depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide—it is the most common psychiatric disorder in the U.S., and is particularly common among lower income populations, and among women beginning in adolescence. The average age of onset for depression is 15, and about 20 percent of

Although depression is among the most treatable of all mental illnesses, and although we have evidence-based treatment approaches for depressed youth, the reality is that only about half of all depressed children and adolescents ever receive treatment, and only about half of those who do receive treatment actually improve as a result. Nearly all of those who recover from depression will experience a subsequent

and debilitating. Funding for depression prevention efforts is limited, and preventive programs are difficult to access.

Promising Prevention Efforts

Youth depression is a problem of major proportions, affecting millions of children and families and interfering with children's social, emotional, and academic functioning. Although evidence-based treatments for youth depression have been found to work well, treatment resources often are difficult to access. Most adolescents who recover experience relapse, and the long-term consequences of youth depression are significant.

Recently, promising research has suggested that depression is among the most preventable of major mental illnesses. We now know of strategies that work to prevent youth depression, including providing cognitive behavioral interventions to adolescents at high risk and helping youth to strengthen social relationships. Based on this research, many European colleagues now encourage a focus on preventive efforts for youth at risk for depression. Although funders and policymakers in the U.S. support preventive efforts for medical concerns, such as healthy eating and exercise to address heart disease, prevention, unfortunately, is often overlooked in mental health. Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners should focus attention on identifying youth at risk for depression, providing evidence-based preventive interventions to at-risk youth and families, and assisting at-risk youth in accessing preventive and/or treatment resources, as needed.

Approaches & Recommendations

Recommendations for enhancing a focus on the prevention of youth depression include:

- Increase use of depression prevention interventions by increasing funding for research. Although several depression prevention interventions have been found to decrease the onset of depressive



symptoms or disorders among at-risk youth, such programs are still not readily available in community-based mental health settings, and many practitioners do not know how to implement evidence-based protocols. More funding is needed for large-scale effectiveness trials that examine ways of disseminating evidence-based interventions in real-world settings and for large-scale trials that compare the efficacy of different evidence-based programs for different populations.

- Attend to family processes that influence depression risk and that promote depression prevention. Research suggests that parental depression is a significant risk factor for depression onset in youth, and that family processes both maintain and may help alleviate depression. Policymakers,



funders, and practitioners must attend to the important role of families in identifying and supporting youth at risk for depression who are appropriate for preventive efforts. In addition,

interventions to prevent youth depression may benefit from a focus on enhancing family understanding of youth depression, improving parenting skills, and also on addressing parental depressive symptoms that may affect the efficacy of interventions targeting at-risk youth.

- Integrate youth depression prevention efforts into places where youth are most readily accessed. Efforts to prevent youth medical concerns are an established focus of public health strategies, resulting in, for example, vaccinations from physicians and auditory screenings



at school. Unfortunately, routine screening for depression and suicide risk is generally overlooked both in primary care and in schools, although these are the places that youth are most readily accessed and serviced. Policymakers, funders, and practitioners must support additional training for school and medical personnel in identifying at-risk youth, evaluating youth for mental health concerns, and connecting youth to appropriate mental health services. Additionally, research is needed to evaluate primary care and school-based depression prevention interventions, so that, when at-risk adolescents are identified, evidence-based depression prevention services are readily available in locations that are comfortable and accessible to those in need.



LISTEN TO Linda M. Williams, Ph.D., senior research scientist and co-director of the Justice and Gender-Based Violence Research Initiative, discuss the need for investment in comprehensive **education, health, and safety research related to gender-based violence and domestic sex trafficking** prevention and intervention initiatives (originally presented May 12, 2016): www.wcwonline.org/Recommendations



LISTEN TO Linda Charmoraman, Ph.D., WCW research scientist, discuss policy and practice considerations that promote: clinician screenings of **adolescents' media and internet use, cyber harassment** prevention and intervention programs, and appropriate labeling of "educational" versus "entertainment" in the marketing of electronic games (originally presented June 3, 2016): www.wcwonline.org/Recommendations



all people will have experienced an episode of depression by the end of adolescence. Youth depression is associated with a host of negative and long-term consequences, including poorer school performance, difficult peer and family relationships, increased risk of substance abuse, and poorer functional outcomes in adulthood. Of particular note is the connection between youth depression and suicide. Although not all people who commit suicide were depressed at the time, depression and suicidal behavior are indeed linked. Suicide is a tremendous problem in the U.S. and is the second leading cause of death among American adolescents.

depressive episode within a few years. Specifically, 40 percent of youth who have experienced a past episode of depression will relapse within two years, and 75 percent will relapse within five years. This means that a typical 15 year-old who develops an episode of depression, if she is fortunate enough to receive treatment and benefit from it, will experience another depressive episode while she is graduating from high school and transitioning to adulthood.

Although nearly one in five young people experience an episode of depression by the end of adolescence, treatment protocols for youth depression only help about half of those they target, and relapse is common

RECOMMENDED READING FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

The March/April 2016 issue of *Women's Review of Books (WRB)* was quite different from the publication's usual offering. **Amy Hoffman**, M.F.A., editor-in-chief, included a special section featuring *WRB* writers and some other favorite feminists sharing recommendations of what they thought the next U.S. president should be reading in preparation for taking office. Additionally, Cartoon Editor Jennifer Camper illustrated the special section and added brevity with her artwork. The list that resulted is fascinating—and could probably keep even the most well-read person productively busy for the entire next presidential term. But it wasn't quite what Hoffman expected.

The first person to respond to Hoffman's query was the poet Alicia Ostriker. She did not recommend poetry—although others did. Her priority was for the next president to read the most recent edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*—and she specified, “cover to cover.”

“This is the book that more than any other begins to make clear what life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness equally for women and men should mean,” she wrote. Ostriker was not the only respondent who prioritized women's bodily integrity and agency. Katie Grover, a former member of WCW's Council of Advisors and former president of the Ms. Foundation, recommends that the next president read *From Outrage to Courage: Women Taking Action for Health and Justice*, by Anne Firth Murray, founder of the Global Fund for Women.

Other health-based recommendations took a different direction. Many of the respondents were concerned not only about the health (in all senses) of women—but of the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of the president her- or himself. Thus, womanist scholar AnaLouise Keating suggested *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation*, by Thich Nhat Hanh; WCW Council of Advisors member Courtney Martin recommended *The Art of the Commonplace*, by Wendell Berry; WCW Executive Director Layli Maparyan recommended *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: When Things Fall Apart*, by Pema Chodron; *Peace Is Every Step*, by Thich Nhat Hanh; and *Your Invisible Power*, by Genevieve Behrend.

Several recommenders wanted the president to take a deep look at U.S. international policy and its underpinnings. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Spelman College's Women's Research & Resource Center director, focused her recommendations on the Middle East, in particular, “because of the absence of attention to Palestine from the vantage point of Palestinians,” she explained. Jennifer Camper, too, wanted more focus on Palestinian perspectives, recommending *People Like Us: Misrepresenting the Middle East*, by Joris Luyendijk. Other books on international relations on the recommenders' lists were *Half the Sky*, by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn; *Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls Are Not for Sale*, by Rachel Lloyd; *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*, by Dambisa Moyo; and *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China*, by Evan Osnos.

Another major concern of the recommenders was the politics and perspectives of women of color—African American women in particular. *Sister Outsider*, by Audre Lorde, and *Citizen*, by Claudia Rankine—both cross-genre works by poets—appeared on more than one list. The president was also advised to read the classic anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, as well as other works by Anzaldua, including *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Alternative histories were on several recommenders' minds, including *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, by Roxane Dunbar Ortiz; *A People's History of the United States*, by Howard Zinn; *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*, by Craig Wilder; and *A Shining Thread of Hope: Black Women in America*, by Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson.

Several works of literature, poetry, and photography/art were also recommended in this special feature. Listen to Hoffman's full account of the recommended readings and download the special section: www.wcwonline.org/Recommendations

UN Event 2016

The **Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW)** presented, “The Power of Data: How Women- and Gender-Focused Research Organizations Can Advance SDG-5,” a parallel event during the 60th UN Commission on the Status of Women this past March. Presenters included: **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D.; PeiYao Chen, Ph.D., Global Fund for Women; Clementina Furtado, Ph.D., Center for Research and Training in Gender and Family (CIGEF), University of Cape Verde (with translation by Paulo Borges); Shiv Datt Sharma, Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality, Ashoka University, India; **Linda M. Williams**, Ph.D., Justice and Gender-Based Violence Research Initiative, WCW.

Rigorous research measurement, disaggregated data, and gender-informed interpretive frameworks are essential to advancing women's and girls' equality and empowerment. For research to be effective in moving the needle on social change, women- and gender-focused research institutes all around the world are needed. Their ability to work both independently and in collaboration with governments helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The panel of social science researchers and international advocates for women and girls engaged in conversation about how women-and-gender research institutes around the world can and should serve as key partners in advancing development and other social change initiatives. They also shared examples of work from their individual centers, which could frame ways NGOs and other actors can access and collect data.

Audio, slides, and handouts from the presentation and Q&A session, and additional post-event Q&A, can be found online: www.wcwonline.org/UN2016.



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Artwork by Jennifer Camper



Recommended Reading for the Next U.S. President

Some of our favorite feminists recommend books for the next U.S. president's reading list—see page 12!