



# DESIGN TO EMPOWER

Giving teenage girls  
the strength to find  
their voice.

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7 in 10 girls believe they do not measure up with peers.

Em+pow+er: Make (someone) stronger and more confident especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights.

# Objective

Enabling teenage girls to reach beyond the everyday to develop the values and skills that will give them the support they need in their present endeavors and future prospects.

*Design to Empower* consists of a series of workshops created to educate and inspire young girls to embrace their potential. The exercises address some of the challenges that the participants currently face as well as those they have already moved past. I worked with girls at the Good Shepherd Center, a treatment facility in Baltimore for young girls who are experiencing personal, family and societal conflicts.

IN  
TRO  
DUCE



# Reflect

The *Design to Empower* workshops are not just about finishing the exercises. The girls who participate can also acknowledge and reflect on what they've done in each session and how they can grow from this experience.

The girls who participate *learn* while doing the workshop exercises.

# Learn

## These four workshops:

- will help girls identify their strengths and future goals as well as develop new skills and encourage personal interests.
- will help foster leaders

Here are a few **tips** that can help while running the workshops.

1. In the first session explain the following:

- *the purpose of the workshops*
- *what is a zine*
- *how an 11" x 17" sheet becomes a booklet*
- *various informal styles of drawing*

2. Every workshop begins with a simple writing exercise that asks each girl to identify certain people, places, items, or words that correspond to that workshop. Use this as a conversation starter. Encourage the girls to pull from their own experiences.

3. Don't be afraid to share your own experiences.

4. At the end of each workshop session, introduce them to the next workshop so that they can collect their thoughts and arrive ready for the next session.

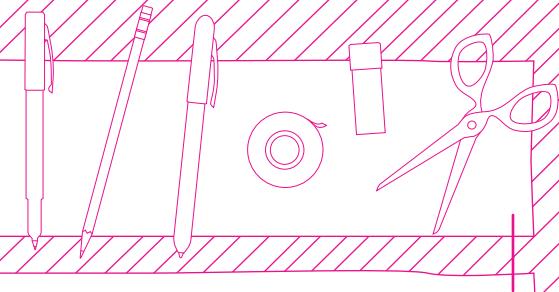
**Sample Timeline:**

10 minutes: discuss the subject of the workshop

40 (+) minutes: work on activities

10 minutes: reflect on the material that has been shared

2 minutes: discuss the next session



Some necessary components to your **tool box**:

- printed workshop pages
- 11" x 17" sheet of paper to illustrate how the zine will take shape.
- resource material (these worked for me but there are other books out there that can help set up the look and feel )
  - \* *Hand Job: A Catalog of Type* by Mike Perry
  - \* *Street Sketch Book* by Tristan Manco
  - \* a collection of zines
- Sharpies®, pencils, markers
- scotch tape, paper glue, scissors, magazines

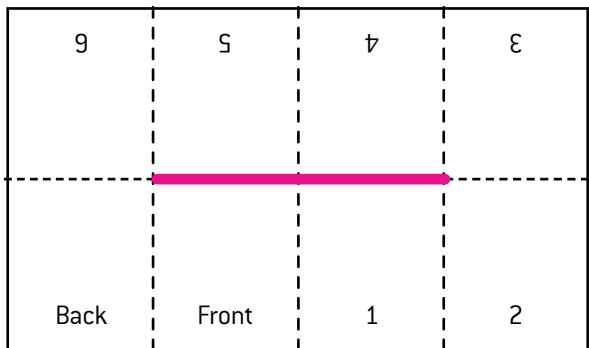
**Suggestions**  
Tips, Trials and Numbers

# ZINE

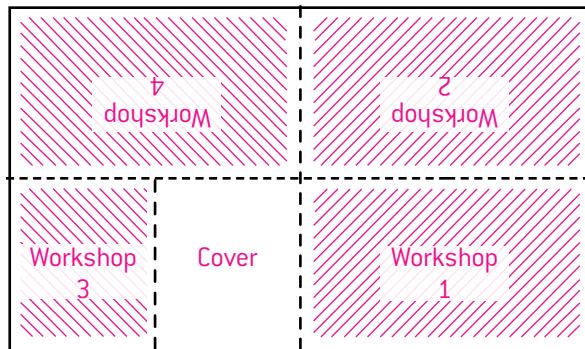
A zine is an inexpensively produced, self-published, underground publication. The format, size, content, purpose, and periodicity vary, but usually a zine is created to share insight into topics outside of mainstream media. The zine produced in this workshop consists of a 11" x 17" sheet of paper folded down to the shape of a booklet (as shown below). This format does not require binding, and it is easy to reproduce.



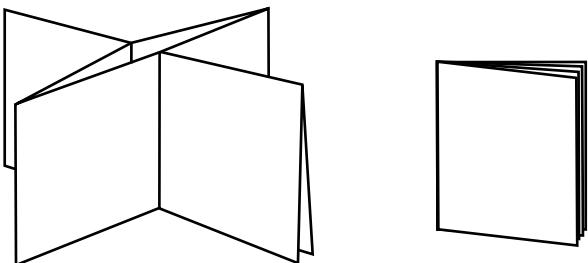
11" x 17" sheet of paper



Fold  
Cut



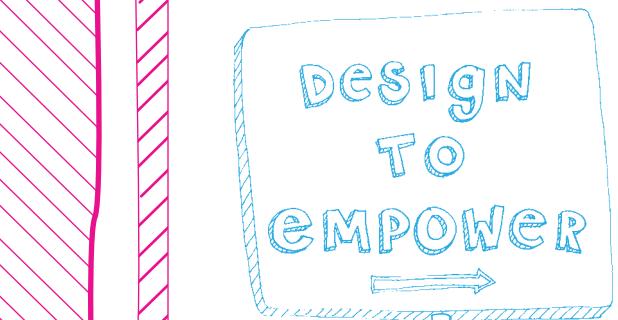
The sheet folds down to a book (5.5" x 4.25")



For more information on zines check out these books and links:

- *Whatcha Mean, What's a Zine?*  
by Esther Watson and Mark Todd
- *Make a Zine!: When Words and Graphics Collide*  
by Bill Brent and Joe Biel
- <http://zinelibrary.info>





### Objective

Helping girls identify their strengths today and the future goals that they strive for.

### Supplies

- Workshop sheet
- Sharpies®, pencils, markers

### Directions

- In the space provided to the right, list six (6) people, places, events or items that have influenced you.
- Combine sketches and descriptive words to describe and document what has been listed.

EN  
GAGE

Life is going good!!



GOOD





### Objective

*Encourage participants to look within themselves and share their insight of the world around them.*

### Supplies

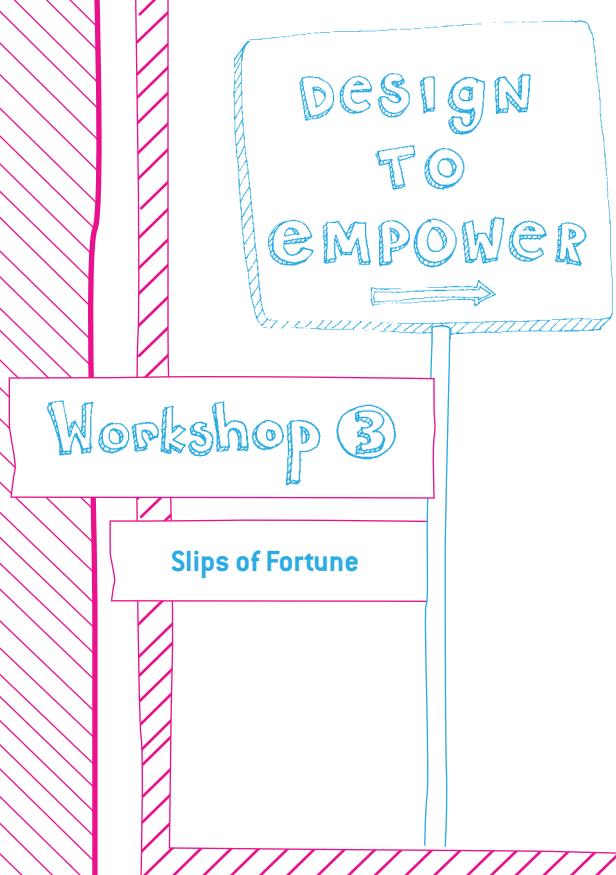
- Workshop sheets: 2 pages  
(I recommend printing the second page on sticker paper)
- Sharpies®, pencils, markers

### Directions

- Describe what you have learned from your own personal challenges.
- List a series of single words based on your own way of seeing the world.
- Design stickers using these words.

EN  
GAGE





### Objective

*By looking back at their experiences and sharing what they've learned from each experience, each girl will embrace and share the strength she has achieved.*

### Supplies

- Workshop sheet
- Sharpies®, pencils, markers

### Directions

- Write notes of advice and encouragement to your friends.

**EN  
GAGE**

Drop the drama and claim time in a higher power!!!

Youself.

Keep your head high when times get tough

Get over yourself

Be respectful to everyone

Never talk down about yourself or others will do the same!!!

Spend money wisely

Finish school while you can



### Objective

*Helping girls identify their strengths today and the future goals that they strive for.*

### Supplies

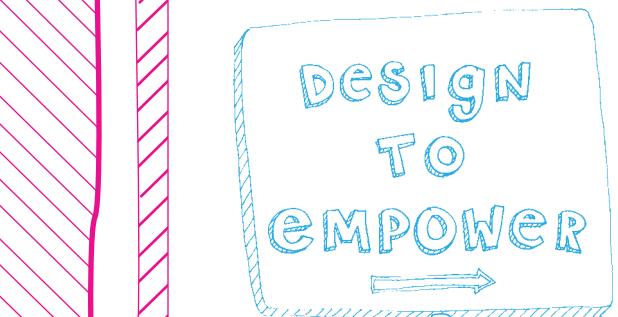
- Workshop sheet
- Sharpies®, pencils, markers

### Directions

- Trace the outline of the hand.
- Within the shape of the thumb and palm, illustrate who you are today.
- Within the shape of the second, third, fourth and fifth fingers, illustrate personal goals to be achieved one, two, three and four years from now.

EN  
GAGE





### Objective

*Empower participants to connect everything they've learned and experienced in the workshops to create an image that reflects their growth.*

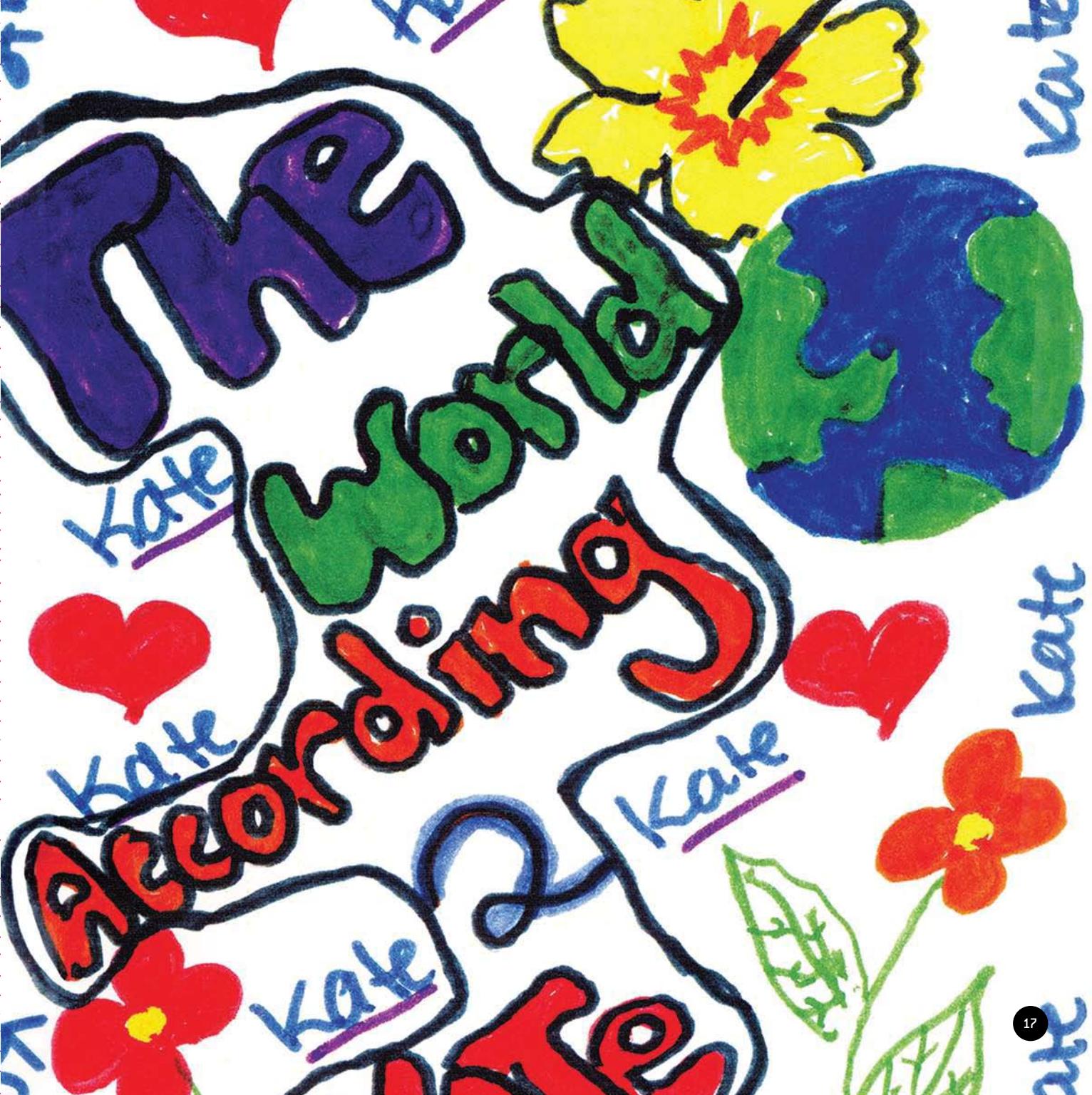
### Supplies

- Workshop sheet: 2 pages
- Sharpies®, pencils, markers

### Directions

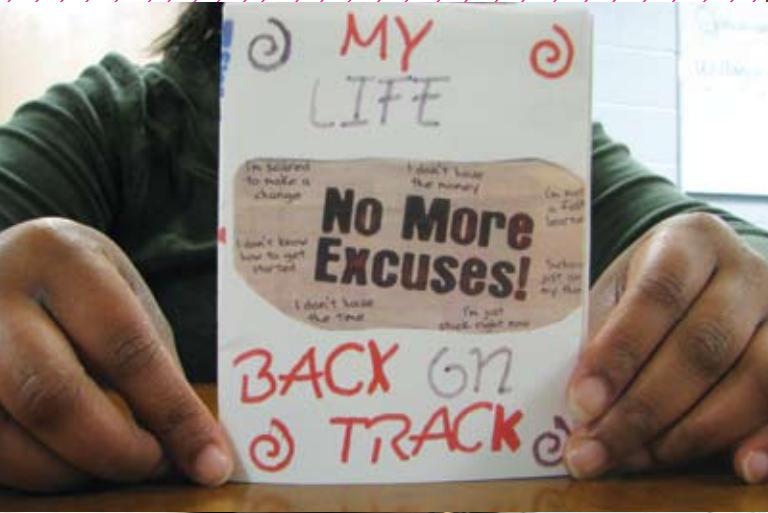
- *Discuss the activities and art that have been created in the workshops.*
- *On the page provided, write the chosen name of your zine.*
- *On the second sheet provided, design the cover.*

**EN  
GAGE**



KATE  
Good Shepherd Center  
Age:16

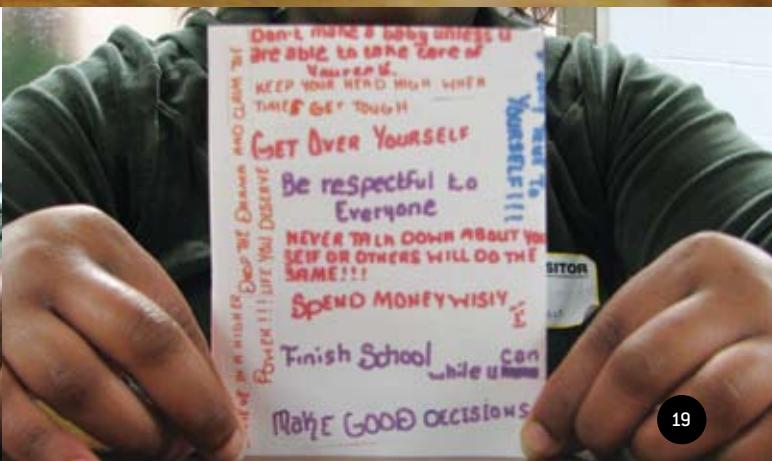
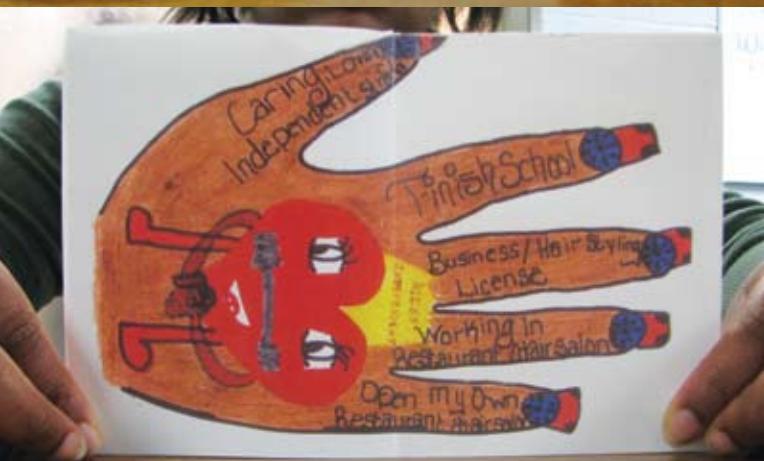
*"I learned that I have a lot to be thankful for and yes, I am a future leader."*



SIERRA  
Good Shepherd Center  
Age:15

*"My favorite exercise is 'Today and Tomorrow' because I liked to look at my future and how I'm doing now."*





The following paragraphs are the journal entries from workshop sessions that I coordinated. The sessions took place at the Good Shepherd Center in Baltimore, a residential facility that is home to over one hundred girls. Each session was about one hour in length.

**DAY 1 //** I arrived at the Good Shepherd Center for the first workshop session, which would run from 4-5 pm. I was ushered in to a conference room at 4:05 pm. Outside of their rooms, the girls are always chaperoned by staff, so Teresa Jones, the Director of the Resident Facilities, was assigned to monitor our sessions. As Teresa went off to get the two girls who had been selected, I set up my materials.

I designed the workshops with troubled teenage girls in mind with the hope that design would help empower them in their future adventures.

I began the session by showing Kate and Sierra, my two participants, a variety of zines in different formats presenting different topics. I also showed them mixed styles of sketching. They loved the playful style displayed in Mike Perry's book.

Sierra asked the question of the day, "What is a zine?" At this point I gave them each an envelop containing the workshop pages, and we began reading through the definition of a zine. Then, I took an 11" x 17" sheet of paper and demonstrated how the sheet would fold down to a 4 1/2" x 5 1/2" booklet.

We proceeded to read through the first workshop, titled *Guiding Influences*. The instructions ask that participants identify at least six people/events/items that helped shape the person they are today. Sierra shared that she had lived a street life prior to her time at GSC. We talked for a while about images that could reference the experience—street lamps, benches, isolation. Kate talked about the love for her family, her dog and her faith.

We also read through the other workshops so that they would have an idea of what lay ahead. By 4:50 pm, they were excited about the prospect of creating their own zine, and they even suggested that I help them create other zines in which they could share other subjects in larger formats.

When Teresa returned after escorting the girls back to their rooms, she asked to keep a copy of the workshop as she thought the project would be very helpful to the other staff and residents at GSC. Very exciting!

**DAY 2 //** We started the first workshop exercise today. At the end of our meeting yesterday, I had given both Kate and Sierra homework to think about in order to get them ready for today's workshop.

*The Homework: List ten things/people/events that have helped shape who you are today. Also think about how they could be represented visually.*

Kate walked into the room with a huge smile on her face and immediately displayed the work she had done overnight. Sierra was a little less enthusiastic but excited nonetheless. She had been having trouble trying to think of ideas. We sat and regrouped and talked about the lists they had made. I think I should have gone through each list and had them describe what each item meant in their development. Because time was limited though—we only had one hour each day to do these workshops—I felt the need to move quickly.

At first it seemed awkward, as I wasn't sure how to fill the silence as the girls drew. Kate, who wants to be an art therapist, dove right into the workshop. Sierra stumbled and grew increasingly bothered by what she felt was a lack of progress. She disliked everything she drew, and I found it difficult to find a solution that would appease her. Sierra continued to work, but she shut down somewhat and seemed unresponsive to my queries.

At 5 pm, we started to pack everything up. Sierra expressed disappointment that she hadn't finished while Kate beamed at me as she gave me back her envelop. Teresa, who had been sitting in the room quietly, escorted the girls back to their residential areas; when she returned she asked that I make sure that I had every item (including pencils, pens, markers, etc.) that I had brought with me. I confirmed that I did, then left the facility.

**DAY 3 //** I arrived at the center a little late today, at 4:10 pm. I have to make this up to them on Thursday. Sierra already feels that the time is so short. When Teresa arrived to escort me from the reception area, she thankfully had both Sierra and Kate with her already. We all walked into the conference room together and sat down. I asked Kate and Sierra how they had progressed overnight.

*The Homework: List ten words that describe your world as you see it today.*

Kate placed her list of words on the table while Sierra explained that she hadn't found the time to wrap her mind around it. She was having trouble brainstorming. She did however come up with some more additions to her collage for the first workshop. I explained to Kate what the second workshop needed and she jumped into it. Sierra continued to work on her collage for the first workshop, and it seemed like she still hadn't shaken the idea that

she just wasn't performing. I countered and continuously reminded her that this was not a race, there was no right or wrong answer, and that her work was good.

As I was documenting the progress, Sierra said—without looking up from her paper—that she didn't think she should return tomorrow. I felt like I had failed her. Somehow I think I failed in explaining the purpose of this project. I failed in relaying to her that the visual representations she used were her choice. Again though, we were running out of time. It was 5:05 pm and we had to pack up because it was dinner time. Sierra had made nice additions to her collage, and Kate was almost finished with her stickers for the second workshop.

**DAY 4 //** I arrived at GSC a few minutes before 4 pm hoping to give Kate and Sierra the maximum amount of time to work on their workshop materials. Teresa brought the girls to the reception area, and we all went into the usual conference room. I had been worried that Sierra would not show up today but she had a smile on her face, and she was listening to the music blasting through the headphones around her neck.

As Sierra finished up her collage for the first workshop, she began to talk about her group therapy session with her family. She had met one of her uncles for the first time that she could remember. She didn't go into detail about the session but she talked about a boardgame her therapist had them play. She said that the name of the game was the Ungame—a family communication activity that fosters listening skills as well as self-expression by encouraging players to describe how they've been affected by feelings of frustration, success, excitement, anger, worry, affections and loneliness.

When Sierra began working on the second workshop, I had them both pause so that we could look at some of the words they had listed as descriptive of the world as they see it. Kate's words included learning, love, depression, and success and Sierra's list included surprises, happiness, cultures and peace. They each took a moment to describe how these were referenced in their lives. Kate for instance, loves her family, loves learning new things in school, especially within the subjects of art and science. She does occasionally become overwhelmed by depression which is one of the reasons she came to GSC. Sierra feels that whereas she once faked her happiness she is happier today. She enjoys contact with various cultures and wishes the country was at peace.

Kate finished the second workshop soon after and moved on to the third workshop. At the end of the session I gave Sierra instructions for the third workshop so that she could prepare for the next day.

**DAY 5 //** At the beginning of today's session, I began by again demonstrating the fold of the booklet they were going to make. I had photocopied their completed workshop sheets earlier in the day. I wanted them to be able to keep the work that they had done in the workshops, so I cut their work out of the photocopies rather than the original pages.

Today's session progressed quite routinely. At the end of the last session, Sierra and I had discussed the third workshop so Sierra had prepared herself overnight. We discussed the history and reasoning behind each piece of advice that Kate and Sierra proposed and why they felt it was important to share.

Sierra found it hard to complete the fourth workshop. Her main goal was to graduate from GSC. I wanted to encourage her to look even further into the future so I asked her to tell me what she felt would be her ultimate success story. She told me that opening her own restaurant would be that goal. So we talked about the steps she'd need to take to complete this pursuit and incorporated them into her art for the fourth workshop.

While they worked, I took two 11" x 17" sheets of paper—one for each girl. I folded each sheet as I would the zine booklets in order to mark the grid. A couple of minutes before the end of the session, I showed each girl where the products of each workshop should be placed on their individual sheets. They placed and taped the first workshop and then stuck their stickers on the sheet as well.

**DAY 6 //** Within the first ten minutes we got caught up with placing the workshop art in the 11" x 17" sheets. We then moved on to covers of their zines. We tossed ideas for covers back and forth, and eventually Kate settled for *The World According to Kate* and Sierra chose *My Life: Back on Track*. While they were working on the artwork for their covers, Sierra talked about music, her family and the street life she had endured. I was so touched by her willingness to share these personal stories.

**DAY 7 //** All of the components to the 11" x 17" sheets were complete, so I took the sheets that had everything stuck to them and made 20 copies of each. I brought the copies to them and we began to fold the booklets. While they folded the sheets, I cut the slit down the center. Once we'd finished folding each sheet we sat and read through each one and shared comments on what had been presented in each zine. They each expressed the desire to create more zines and were happy to share what they had created so far with their family.



[www.designtoempower.com](http://www.designtoempower.com)