Week Four Theme: **MY PERSONAL HISTORY**

Through purposeful activities and discussion, the women will explore their family histories and personal life events and discuss how it has shaped their development, growth, and who they have become as a woman today.

**ACTIVITY**
- My Family Tree
- My Personal Timeline
- Journaling

**MATERIALS**
- Legal size or 11 x 14 size paper
- My Family Tree Template
- Markers and crayons
- Pencils or pens
- Journals
- Journal Questions
- Instructions for Taking the Kiersey Temperament Sorter (Personality Type Assessment)
- Instrumental Music and CD or MP3 Player

**PURPOSE**
- To explore family relationships and dynamics
- To identify personal experiences, trends and patterns within each woman
- To acknowledge successes and challenges in personal and family history that shaped and influenced each woman’s development and identity

**FACILITATOR PREPARATION**
1. Make copies of the “My Family Tree” template – one for each woman.
2. Set aside paper (1 piece for each woman), markers, and crayons for the Personal Timeline activity.
3. Make a copy of the Journal Questions at the end of this unit and cut into strips. Copy and cut enough for each woman.
4. Make a copy of the Instructions for Taking the Kiersey Temperament Sorter (Personality Type Assessment) – one for each woman.
5. Set up the music selections for play during the creative activities.
Week Four

OPENING RITUAL

Do the same opening ritual each time.

THEME INTRODUCTION

Introduce the theme of the week, “My Personal History,” wherein women will explore their family histories and their own personal life events.

CHECK-IN

Go around the circle and have each woman “check-in” as to what is going on in her life.

ACTIVITY 1

My Family Tree

1. Introduce the Family Tree activity. Say:
   - In today’s circle we would like to begin to identify and explore your family relationships and history which may have had an influence on who you are today.
   - You will be creating a “Family Tree” of sorts. Typically, family trees include individuals’ names and dates of birth and death. In your tree, we would like you to think about other factors instead such as: family dynamics, relationships, roles, power dynamics, character traits, and identifiers, which will be explained.
   - For some of us, remembering our childhood family relationships is a source of comfort and happiness, while for others, family histories have been more complicated and challenging. Finally, for some, our histories with family have been truly painful.
   - For these reasons, we invite everyone to approach this activity in the way that feels most comfortable and safe. We are interested in your family tree to the extent you are interested to focus on and share about it with us.

2. Pass out one “Family Tree” template to the women along with markers and crayons.

3. Instruct them to create a Family Tree using the template. Remember to be sensitive to individuals coming from different family systems and backgrounds. Say:
   - As you begin to create your family tree, we encourage you to define for yourself what you mean by “family,” i.e. your family of origin, the people you grew up with, your friends, or perhaps those you live with.
   - We would like you to focus on those family members that come to mind most easily. You do not have to include biological family members if these people are not significant to you.
• You should decide for yourself who you would like to include and where to write each person’s name on your tree.

• After you have decided which individuals to include in your tree, take a moment to add identifiers or characteristics to each person. Some examples of these are:
  a) Education
  b) Occupation
  c) Major life events
  d) Chronic illnesses
  e) Social behavior
  f) Nature of their relationship with the family
  g) Emotional relationship
  h) Social relationship
  i) Family role

4 Encourage women to use colors, symbols, or other creative means to identify each of these types of characteristics.

SHARING OF ACTIVITY

1 Go around the circle and invite the women to share her Family Tree with the group. Suggest that she identify one or two key individuals to share about and to express why they are significant in the family.

2 Ask:
  • What thoughts did you have as you filled in your Family Tree?
  • Who (or what roles) were missing from your Family Tree that you might have wanted in your life?
  • How do the different characteristics of each person shape his/her role in your life?
  • Did you notice any trends or patterns among the family members you listed on your Family Tree?
  • What are your feelings about sharing your Family Tree with others in the group?
  • What did you notice about your Family Tree? In what ways is it similar or different from others in the group?
  • What did you recognize or reveal about your Family Tree and how it has influenced and shaped your identity?

3 Take time to summarize what the women shared and thank them for participating and sharing.
ACTIVITY 2

My Personal Timeline

1. Introduce the activity. Say:
   - Each one of us has a personal timeline that began the day we were born.
   - Putting this timeline on paper can be a good way to record events and to notice any important events, experiences, and trends in our lives.
   - The timeline should consist of significant events and experiences in your life thus far.
   - The timeline can help us see accomplishments, milestones, setbacks, hardships, and other vital information about our lives and can help create ideas about our future.

2. Instruct women to open their journals to a blank page.

3. Ask them to divide the page into 3 sections/stages of their lives as follows:
   - Early (birth – age 7)
   - Middle (age 8 – 14)
   - Late (15 – now)

4. For each stage of their life encourage women to think about 3-5 major life events or experiences and write in their journals. Say:
   - Take time now to jot down 3-5 distinct or major life events, memories or experiences during each of the three “stages” of your life.
   - These significant events or experiences may have been joyful and celebratory or sad and perhaps even traumatic.
   - You should decide for yourself which experiences to include and who else may have been involved. (*Examples may be illness, transitions, traumatic events, awards/accomplishments, celebrations, etc.*)
   - Others involved may be parents, siblings, friends, teachers, significant others, etc.

5. Allow about 5 minutes for women to identify their timeline events.

6. Hand out a legal or larger sized paper to each of the women.

7. Instruct the women to draw a timeline on their page. It can be a straight line or it can curve if they wish.

8. Encourage women to record their events on their timeline.

9. Women should be encouraged to be as creative as they like, using pictures, symbols, or words to illustrate the events or experiences. Remind them that there is not a right or wrong way to create the timeline.
10 Tell them that when they have completed the timeline to date, that they can go beyond the present time to include what they might want to experience or see for their future.

11 Allow about 20 minutes for women to create their timelines and play soft, instrumental music during the activity.

1 Go around the circle and have each woman share her timeline with the group. Suggest that she identify one or two key events or experiences on her timeline to share with the group in a little more detail and to talk about its significance to her development.

2 Then, open the floor up for the women to share some of the thoughts they had while going through the experience. Possible questions to ask:

- What was it like creating this timeline? What thoughts or feelings came up for you?
- Did you notice any trends or patterns in your own timeline or others?
- What are some things that surprised you and why?
- What areas in your timeline were cathartic or life-changing? Where in your timeline were some of your major life lessons learned?
- Which events came to mind first or almost immediately? What feelings came up associated with those events?
- How did you define your personal history (e.g. by events, themes, relationships, based on culture, etc.)? Why do you think you did it that way?
- As you look at your Timeline and Family Tree, do you notice any similarities and/or differences? How are they connected?
- If someone from your Family Tree were to inform your timeline, what else might they have included? What event might they be surprised that you included as significant?
- What did you learn about your personal history today?
- How have you grown from these events?
- How it has impacted and shaped your identity?

3 Summarize some of the key points that were made and the discussion as a whole. Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each woman respond to the following question:

- What is one thing you can do this week to honor yourself, your past experiences, and celebrate who you are as a woman today?

4 Thank the women for their participation and for sharing their timelines with the group.
Week Four

JOURNALING

1. Handout the journaling reflections for Week 4. The take home journaling reflections for Week 4 are:

   Reflect on your family tree and timeline by answering the following questions.
   
   • What are you proud of in your family and your personal history?
   • What relationships or experiences may need some mending, healing or support and how might you tend to them?
   • In what ways can you utilize the experiences from the family tree and personal timeline activities to strengthen your sense of who you are as a woman today?
   • Do you feel you already are the woman you want to become? If so, why? If not, why not?
   • What is one thing you can do this week to move towards those goals?

2. Remind the women to bring their journals to circle with them next week.

Taking the Kiersey Temerament Sorter – Personality Type Assessment

1. Inform the women that, before the next circle, they will need to go online and visit http://www.keirsey.com to take the personality type assessment and print the results. Tell them that the results will be used in next week’s circle. You, as the facilitator, will also take the assessment.

2. Handout the instructions for taking the assessment. Explain to them that after they take the online assessment, they should print the “mini report” which is offered at no cost. (The other more detailed reports cost money.) Review the instructions with the women and answer any questions.

3. Survey the group to make sure that each woman can get access to a computer to take the assessment. Brainstorm solutions if there are challenges, i.e. women can team up or support each other, women can use a computer at the library, etc. Be prepared to support any women who may not have a computer, access to a computer, or who may have trouble with taking the online assessment. Plan accordingly.

4. Inform them to bring the printed report to the circle next week as most of the discussion and activities center around the results of the assessment, discussing personality styles, etc.

CLOSING RITUAL

Bring the women together for your closing ritual.
My Family Tree
Week Four Journal Reflections
Theme: My Personal History

Reflect on your family tree and timeline by answering the following questions.

• What are you proud of in your family and your personal history?
• What relationships or experiences may need some mending, healing or support and how might you tend to them?
• In what ways can you utilize the experiences from the family tree and personal timeline activities to strengthen your sense of who you are as a woman today?
• Do you feel you already are the woman you want to become? If so, why? If not, why not?
• What is one thing you can do this week to move towards those goals?
Instructions for Taking the Kiersey Temperament Sorter
(Personality Type Assessment)
Cut the following instructions into strips – one for each woman.

INSTRUCTIONS for Taking the Kiersey Temperament Sorter (Personality Type Assessment)

1. Go to www.kiersey.com
2. In the top upper right hand corner, there is a box titled “Take the KTS-II! Free Sorter Access, Free Temperament Report.
3. Click to take the assessment.
4. Answer all the questions in the assessment. There are 71 questions.
5. When complete, follow the instructions at the bottom to enter your name as you wish it to appear on the report, your email address, etc. Then, click on “Score it!”
6. You will then see an option listed as “The TEMPERAMENT MINI Report – View Report.” Click on that option for your free mini report.
7. Print and bring to the next circle session. The report will be discussed in group and the activities in the next group will center on discussing our personality styles, if we felt the report was accurate or not, etc.
8. If you have trouble with taking or accessing the assessment, please contact your facilitator.