

Atlantic Centre
of Excellence for
Women's Health

www.acewh.dal.ca
acewh@dal.ca

CONFERENCE SESSION:

IN ORDER TO
CHANGE _____,
WE CAN _____:
CHANGE IN
PRACTICE

In order to change _____, we can _____: Change in practice GIRLS 2012: A National Conference

By Andrea Papan (andrea.papan@dal.ca)

Where Did We Go?

ACEWH presented at the GIRLS 2012: A National Conference hosted by the Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS. The two-day national conference was held on 8-9 March 2012 and involved visual arts, performances, screenings, panel discussions, workshops, and presentations. See Program: <http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/Girls%202012%20programv3.pdf>

What Did We Do?

ACEWH Researcher, Andrea Papan, presented the closing plenary presentation entitled: "In order to change _____, we can _____: Change in Practice." After an exciting 2 days of sharing and learning at the Conference, the aim of this session was to identify and breakdown core dimensions of the practical processes of change and focus specifically on the "what next?".

What Was Discussed?

The room was made up of both girls and young women as well as academics, policy researchers and service providers working on gender issues. The presentation was made up of three parts. Firstly, Andrea outlined key concepts including agents of change, types of change, and

stages of change. Secondly, participants were asked to break into small groups of 2-4 people and discuss the following:

1. Where are you located in the change process?
2. From your location: What do



Sunduslive/Thinkstock

you see as the main challenges? What do you see as emerging opportunities?

3. Identify one next step.

After 15-20 minutes of small group discussions, the participants came together in plenary to voice their reflections.

What Key Themes Emerged?

The plenary discussion included a spectrum of experiences. Participants who had been working on gender issues professionally, were able to identify their location in the process of change and noted the challenges they regularly face. The girls assessed key gaps, focussed on

opportunities, and were able to identify tangible next steps. For example, one girl spoke about her individual efforts to address bullying, something she had been challenged with directly. She explored the issue through viewing other young peoples' stories on youtube.com, and then successfully advocated to have a film on bullying shown at her school.

Throughout the conference girls and young women gave evidence of seeing a need, interest or idea and engaging with it almost immediately—usually through the use of social media. The willingness to promote change by experimenting, supporting like-minded peers, and taking action is evidenced by the efforts of such groups as the *Miss G Project for Equity in Education* from Ontario, the Girl Talk Video Project from Nova Scotia, and Ms. Sasha Hart's global work with *The Equality Effect*.

It was an exciting and inspiring event, and a great chance to meet and support a next generation of future leaders working on gender issues.

What Feedback Did We Get?

Response to the session was very positive, and the plenary ended with a round of applause for the girls!

