



BACKGROUND

Historically, sex education (sex ed) has been shaped by patriarchal, religious, and political forces that restrict open, accurate discussion of bodies and sexuality, especially for girls, gender-diverse youth. Growing limits on sex ed leaves many adolescents without inclusive, practical guidance.¹

OT views sexuality, identity, body literacy, and relationships as meaningful parts of everyday life.

OT Dilemma

Many OTs feel under-trained, uncomfortable, and unprepared to address sexual health.

This mismatch matters: clients report sexuality and intimacy as highly important to their well-being, yet OTs feel unprepared to address it.⁴

Gaps & Misinformation

Limited sex ed leads youth to rely on peers and social media for information.

Impact on Youth

Misinformation=shame, unsafe online behaviors, unhealthy relationships, poor body literacy.

OT Gaps

When OT avoids sexual health, body autonomy, and puberty education we fail to treat the whole person.

BE YOU

An evidence based, OT-led, interactive 2-hour workshop with reusable materials, games, and discussion prompts that practitioners can adapt across settings.

GOAL & PURPOSE

GOAL

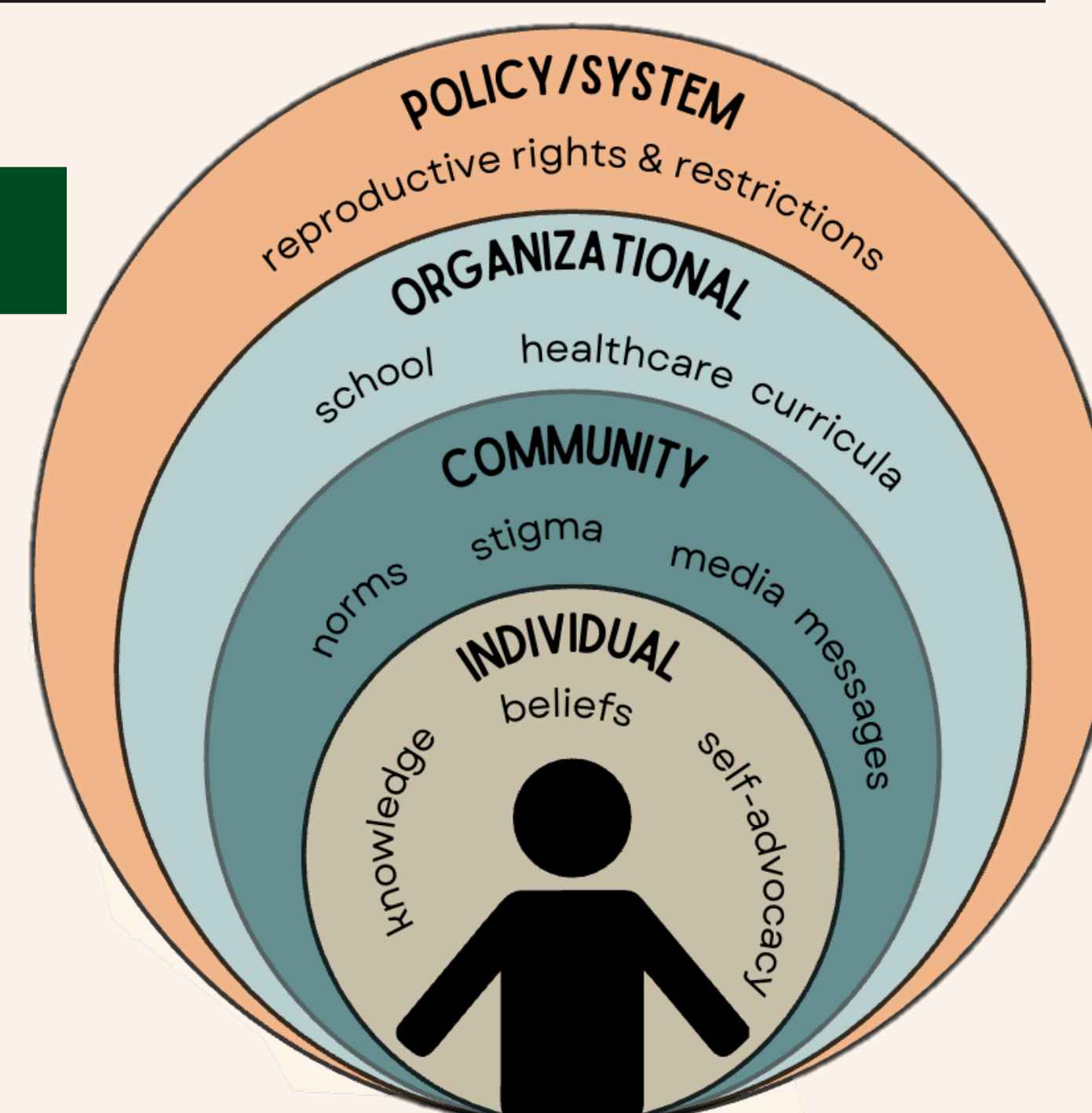
To develop a workshop series covering puberty, menstruation, body literacy, consent, boundaries, gender identity, online safety, and relationship and sexual health basics.

PURPOSE

To equip adolescents with the knowledge, tools, and confidence needed to support lifelong occupational engagement and body autonomy.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Be YOU is designed using the Social-Ecological Model, recognizing that puberty and sexual health are shaped by many layers of a young person's life.³



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

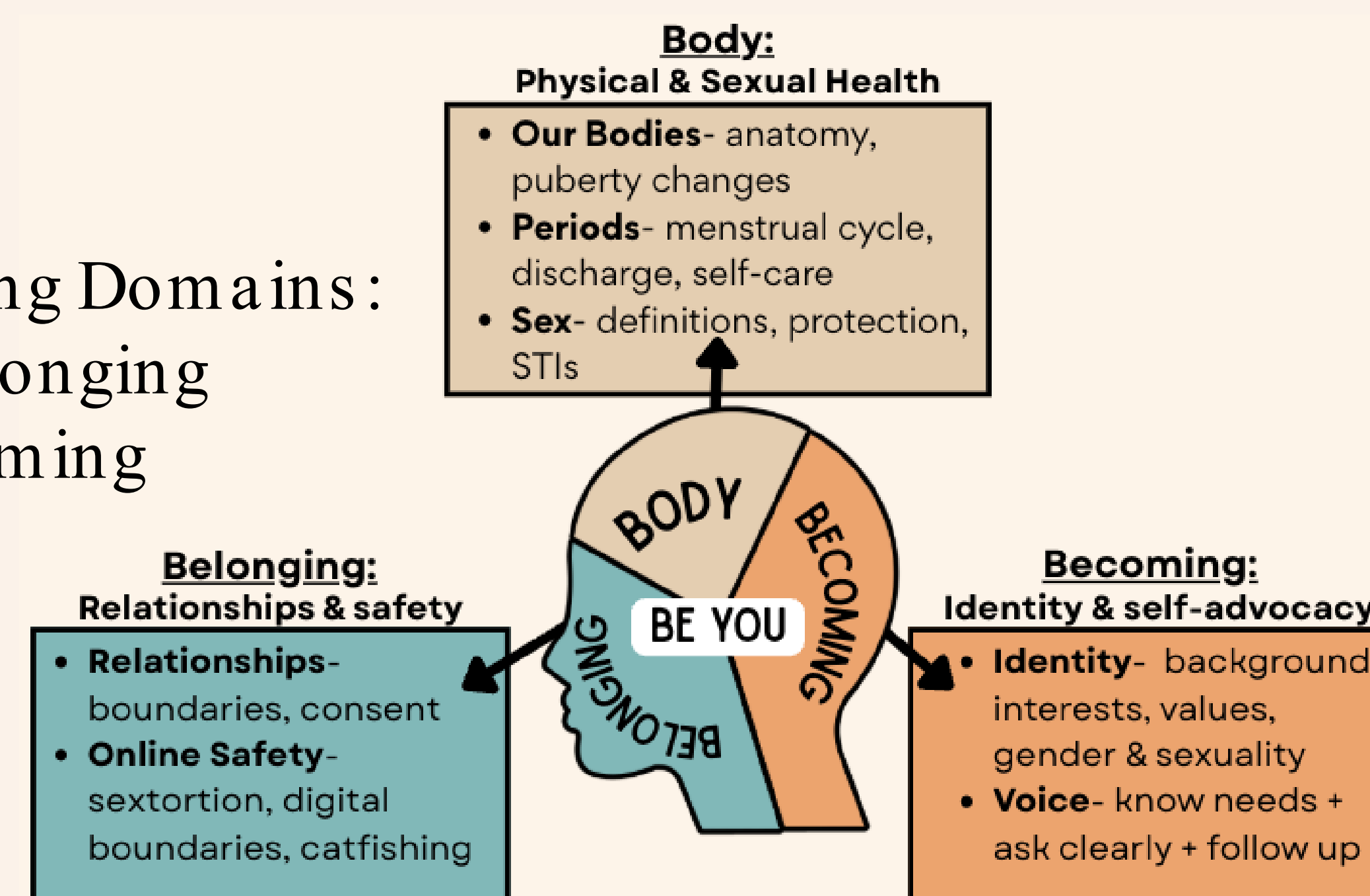
Capstone Partner Site: Free To Be Wellness Center



A Fort Collins-based program "on a mission to create experiences that invite self-acceptance, self-love and empowerment in girls." Groups address friendships, body image, bullying, stress, self-care, and self-love.⁵



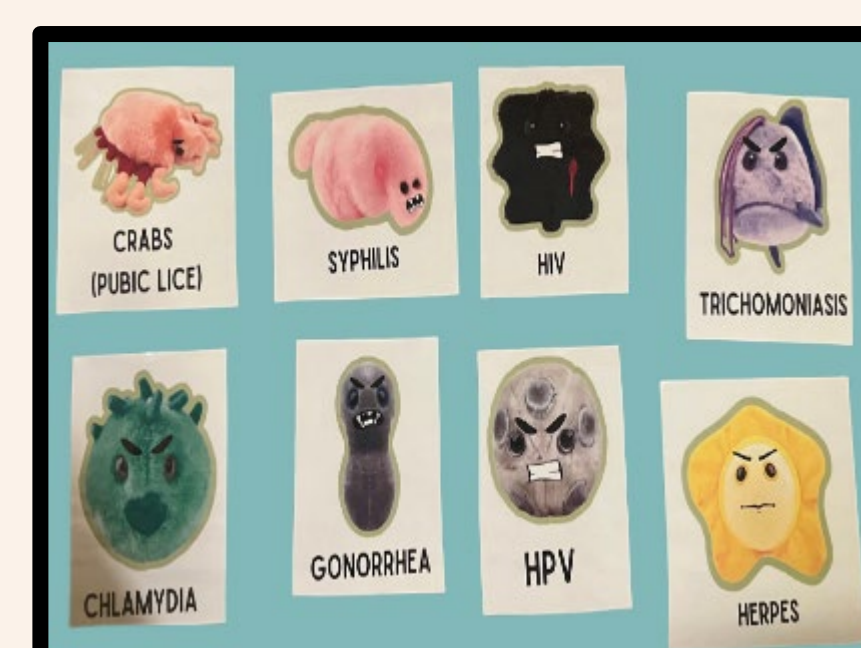
Be YOU Teaching Domains:
Body, Belonging
& Becoming



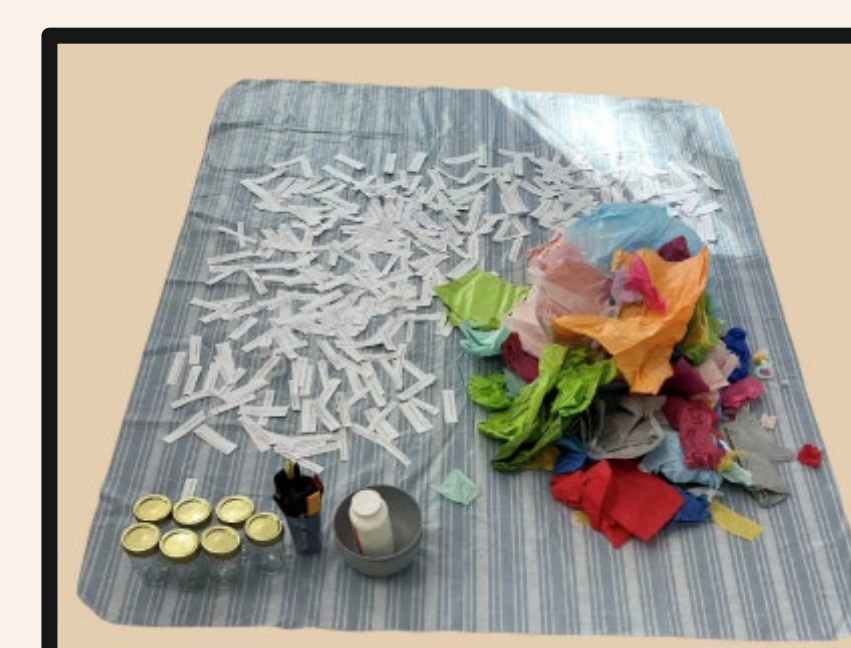
Project materials included a facilitator-led presentation, an interactive student booklet, hands-on learning stations, and games and crafts.²

Learning Stations

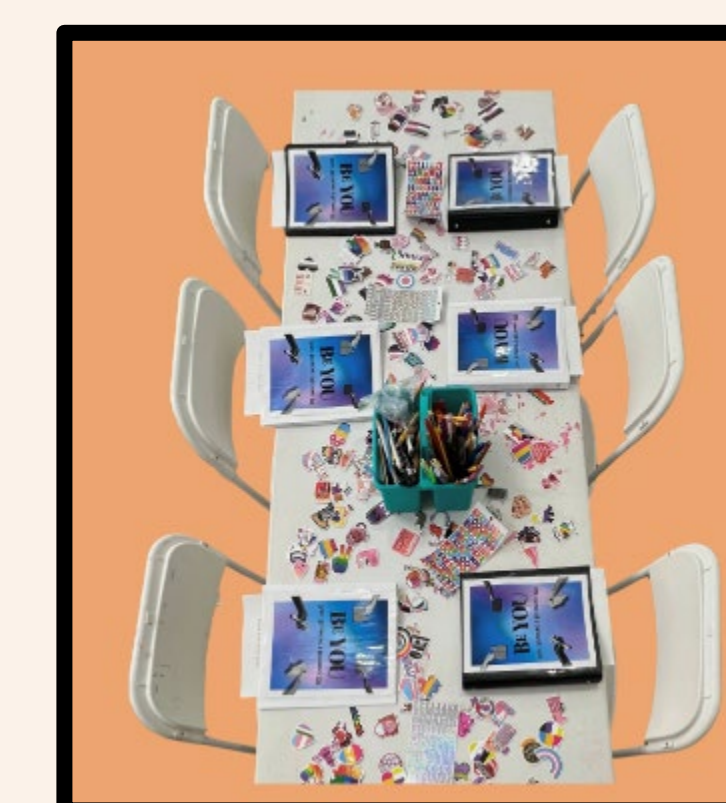
Station 1: Our Bodies	Anatomy and puberty changes using accurate, age-appropriate visuals to build body literacy and reduce shame. Activity: Decorate personal booklets.	Station 2: Periods	Covers what periods are, what's typical, and how to use menstrual products. Game: Period Myth Dash – movement-based MYTH/FACT race to bust common period myths.
Station 3: Relationships	Explores healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, boundaries, and consent. Game: Relationship Game – listen to scenarios and throw balls into green, yellow, or red baskets to show whether the behavior felt healthy, unsure, or not okay.	Station 4: Sex	Provides medically accurate basics on sex, contraception, and safer choices with a strong focus on consent and autonomy. Game: Nerf Knockdown – teams use "protection blasters" to hit the STI microbe that matches each clue.
Station 5: Online Safety	Sexting/sextortion risks, privacy skills, and how to get help when something feels unsafe online. Activity: Read social story about sextortion.	Station 6: Identity	Affirms gender, self-expression, and values, helping youth explore who they are and how to respect differences. Craft: Identity Jars – youth decorate jars and fill them with affirming phrases.



Scan to view workbook and program resources

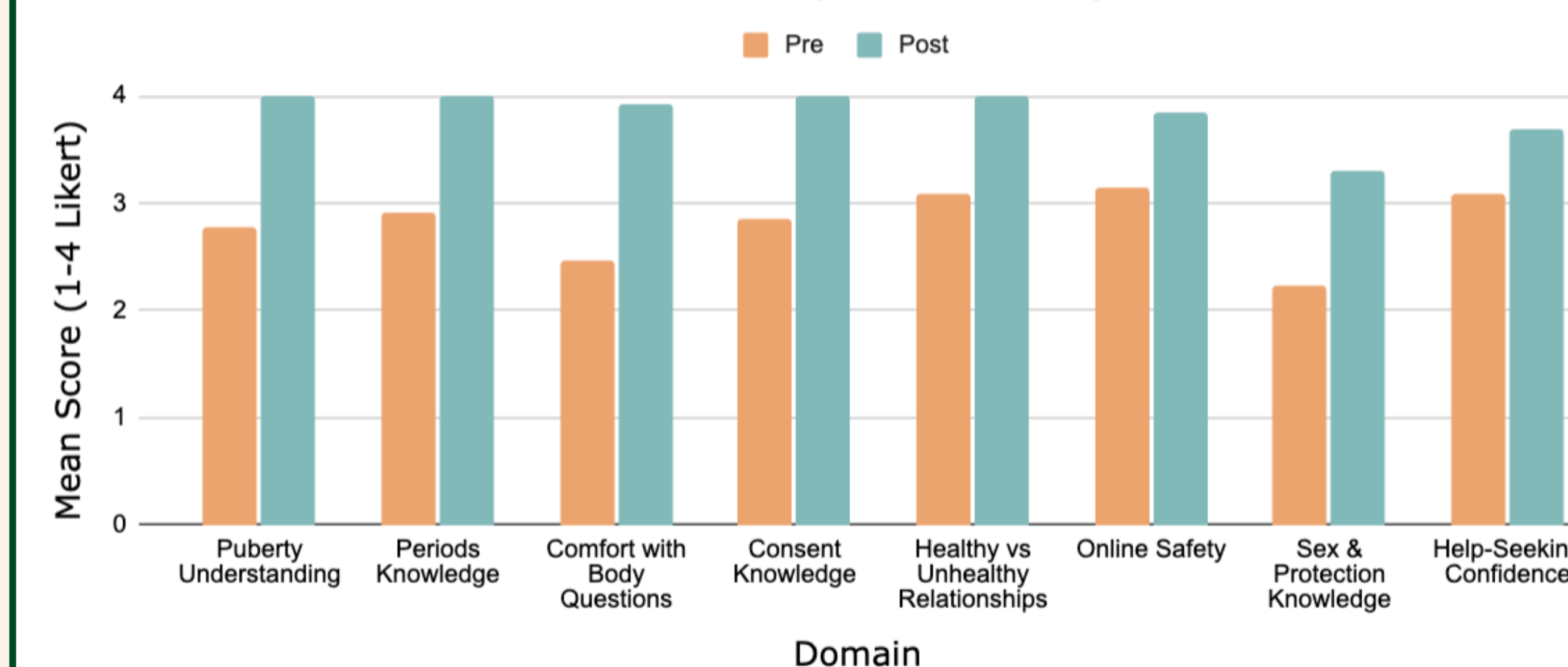


OUTCOMES



A total of 17 youth participated in two sessions.
13 completed anonymous pre/post surveys.

Pre vs Post Survey Results by Domain



Mean scores increased from 2.82 to 3.86—a 37% gain. All post-items reached 100% Mostly/Totally, indicating meaningful improvements in body literacy, safety, knowledge, and communication confidence.

FINAL REMARKS

OT plays a critical role in supporting identity exploration, belonging, and well-being for youth. The Be YOU program offers an affirming, occupation-based model that can be implemented in community settings.⁴

REFERENCES



A special thank you to the youth who participated in this pilot program and inspired the development of this capstone project.