

REAL STORIES

Motivate Middle and High School Students to Read, Think, and Explore Values Outside the Classroom

Benefits of the Real Stories Program

...for Teens

- Engages teens with stories about issues that are relevant to their lives, including identity, relationships, social justice, and more.
- Helps teens strengthen their social and emotional skills so that they can make healthier choices.
- Promotes reading as a pleasurable and useful activity, and motivate teens to become life-long readers.
- Encourages positive peer pressure through adult-facilitated group discussions and hands-on activities.

...for Educators and Youth Leaders

- Reduce resistance to reading! Teens are captivated by these stories. Many will actually read ahead and ask if they can take the books home (even teens who are ordinarily resistant to reading).
- The stories and activities are natural conversation-starters. They provide a focus for discussion, and the themes are so rich and compelling that you will often have to cut off discussion instead of prying it out of them.
- Adults report that the true stories by teens give them important insight in to teen feelings and experiences, which helps them be more empathic and effective in their teaching.

Content and Methodology

The *Real Stories*, Real Teens anthology includes 25 **true stories** by teens (and excerpts from three young adult novels). The anthology is supported by a *Leader's Guide* and a set of young adult novels for extended reading.

The **activities** in the *Leader's Guide* are carefully designed to promote exploration of key adolescent development issues—especially identity formation and relations with family and peers. They also prompt engagement with social issues, reflection, and planning for the future. Finally, the very nature of the program—reading stories and discussing their meaning and significance—promotes reading comprehension.

Training from Development Without Limits can help staff make the best use of the *Real Stories* program. Staff will learn how the activities support youth development needs and goals, how to use the lessons to facilitate a healthy discussion, and how to handle sensitive topics.