

## **MEDIA FACTS**

### **Media Consumption**

- Today children and young adults watch more than 10 hours of media a day (Rideout et. al., 2010).
- In a climate of a 24-hour media cycle and the proliferation of infotainment and reality television, media has become the predominant communicator of cultural values and gender norms, telling us who we can and cannot be.
- In the past stories were passed down to us by family, friends, and religious and community leaders, and now stories are passed down to us by Youtube, reality television, “chick flicks”, gossip magazines, talk shows, sitcoms, and Superbowl commercials.
- Through the media, young people are being sold the concept that women and girls’ value lies in their youth, beauty, and sexuality and not in their capacity as leaders.
- An individual’s brain does not fully develop until the age of 24, which means our children and young adults are our most vulnerable class of citizens to the proliferation of the media’s messages.

### **Media and Sexualization**

- Approximately 20% of news articles are about women, and many of these stories are of violence and victimhood.
- Media provides a disproportionate number of images of women as young, white, heterosexual, and underweight.
- Reality television portrays women as catty, manipulative, vindictive, and on display for male judgment and objectification.
- Through media and advertising, boys get the message that they should be violent, in control, unemotional, and that women should be treated like objects and second-class citizens.
- The U.S. has the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the industrialized world—twice as high as the UK, four times as high as Germany, and eight times as high as Japan (“Teen Pregnancy Rates in the USA”, 2011).

### **Self Esteem and Abuse**

- Rates of depression are the same among boys and girls until puberty, but twice as many women are diagnosed with depression post-puberty (“Depression”, 2010).
- Sixty-five percent of American women and girls have an eating disorder (“Fact Sheet: Women and Eating Disorders”, 2011).
- Studies estimate that 13% to 25% of youth have some history of self-injury, such as cutting, and most studies show that cutting is more common with girls (Whitlock, 2009).
- The number of cosmetic surgery procedures performed on youth 18 or younger has more than tripled from 1997-2007 (Sweeney, 2009).

### **Violence**

In the United States:

- Twenty-five percent of women are abused by a partner during their lifetime (“Domestic Violence Statistics”, 2011).
- One in six women are survivors of rape or attempted rape (“Domestic Violence Statistics”, 2011).
- Fifteen percent of rape survivors are under the age of 12 (“Rape and Sexual Assault Statistics”, 2011).

### **Women’s Leadership**

In the United States:

- In the 2010-midterm elections, women lost seats in Congress for the first time in 30 years (O’Keefe, 2010).
- Women make up 51% of the population and only 17% of Congress (“Women in National Parliament”, 2011).
- The U.S. ranks 90th in the world for women in national legislatures (“Women in National Parliament”, 2011).
- Women are merely 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs (“Women CEOs”, 2010).
- Women hold only 3% of clout positions in the mainstream media (telecommunications, entertainment, publishing, and advertising) (“Research & Stats”, 2009).
- Women comprise 7% of directors and 13% of film writers in the top 250 grossing films (Lauzen, 2003).