



girltopia

DIGITAL BOOKLET

70 cards for creating conversations with girls
(from 10 to 18 years) and women about body image,
self-esteem, identity, feelings and relationships.

Author: Jane Bennett
Illustrator & designer: Robyn Spicer

A World of Real Conversations for Real Girls



Welcome to the Digital Version of *Girlltopia!*

First published as a hard copy card set in 2010, this set of 70 cards is now available in this interactive, user-friendly, digital version.

'I am often approached by parents expressing concerns about the impact of media and global marketing on their daughter's self-esteem and body image, or the escalation in conflict and depression at puberty and menarche. How wonderful that Jane Bennett has created Girlltopia a card set that uses pithy questions and fun quotes to inspire curiosity and encourage dialogue in a safe and non-threatening way. Robyn Spicer's whimsical illustrations—bursting with quirky plants, animals and insects—remind us that our bodies, feelings and thoughts are all part of nature. This resource is perfect for school programs aimed at girls' personal development, health and physical education, or discussions within families, workshops or counselling.'

Shushann Movessian, psychotherapist, educator and author of *Puberty Girl*

You can:

- swipe through the 70 digital cards, one at a time
- swipe through a row of thumbnail images at the bottom of the screen
- bookmark/tag images
- add and drag notes to anywhere on the images
- write, scribble or draw on the digital cards—circle or underline a relevant word, phrase, question or image, or write your own words on the card
- highlight, draw and write in multiple colours
- take a screen shot and access the image in your photo gallery (you can't print directly from the digital images)
- then you can save a personalised image for your records, or send it as an email attachment.





What is the purpose of this resource?

Girltopia is a set of 70 cards designed to support developmentally-appropriate conversations with girls from about 10 years old, and women, about body image, self-esteem, identity, confidence, feelings and relationships. Such conversations can also be part of strategies for working with many issues facing girls and young women including depression, eating disorders, sexualisation and bullying. These cards are powerful triggers for stories, questions, reflection, curiosity and learning which can help name, heal and prevent many of these problems.

Girltopia can be used to support girls in:

- exploring who they are, where they've come from and what's important to them
- becoming more aware of feelings, boundaries and choices
- growing their understanding of connection, communication, empathy and assertiveness in relationships
- enhancing awareness in relation to media, advertising and stereotypes
- experiencing healthy self-esteem and a positive relationship with their own body.

'A successful and happy adolescence entails hundreds of conversations about what matters, who you are and what you stand for.'

Steve Biddulph, author and educator





Who is this resource for?

This resource was created especially for use with girls approaching puberty (from about 10 years old), adolescents and women of any age. Teachers, counsellors, family workers, mentors, coaches, workshop facilitators, women's groups, wellbeing coordinators, mental health care professionals, youth workers, parents and ... anyone who cares for, or works with, girls: this resource is for you! These cards can be used with individuals or groups and are suitable for classrooms. They can be used for studying human development, social and emotional literacy, health and wellbeing, ethics, identity and so on. *Girltopia* can also be used privately for personal development, self-care, reflection and journaling.

'With the huge amount of social and technological change that has taken place in recent times, too often our girls have been left to find their own way forward, causing them to turn to peers and popular culture for answers to the many questions they face.'

Maggie Hamilton, author of *What's Happening To Our Girls?*





How many cards are in the digital set and how are they arranged?

There are 70 digital cards in the set. Each card is beautifully illustrated with hand-cut collages made from Japanese papers by artist, Robyn Spicer. The cards are arranged into five colour-coded suits:

- **Me** (8 cards, blue): telling our stories and communicating who we are, where we are from, what our family culture is like, and what's important to us.
- **Doing** (11 cards, green): strengthening girls' capacity to act and achieve, supporting the development of a healthy, centred will.
- **Feeling** (21 cards, cherry): learning to recognise and manage a wide range of emotions and triggers.
- **Body** (17 cards, orange): deepening girls' and women's appreciation for, and understanding of, their bodies.
- **Us** (13 cards, purple): exploring the complex territory of relationships and social situations.

The suits provide a useful guide to topic area. However, this is not meant to be prescriptive. In conversations there are likely to be pauses, changes of direction, interesting detours and unexpected pathways. Therefore, the cards can be used flexibly and in any way that works.

Who is the author?

Jane Bennett is the author of *Girltopia*. Jane is a social worker, writer and educator. She is also the author of the book *A Blessing Not a Curse*, and co-author of *The Complete Guide to Optimum Conception*, *The Natural Fertility Management Kit for Contraception*, *WomanWise Conversation Cards* and *The Pill: Are You Sure It's For You?* She also created the programs *A Celebration Day for Girls* and *Fathers Celebrating Daughters*, and co-created *Mense-Ed* and *The Rite Journey* Year 9 program for girls. Jane now trains facilitators internationally to run these programs. In 2017, Jane founded the Chalice Foundation to champion positive menstrual culture.



What is a strengths-based, narrative approach?

As with all St Luke's Innovative Resources' card sets, *Girltopia* is a 'strengths-based' tool. At the heart of the strengths approach is a focus on capacities, resources and hopeful possibilities rather than deficits, problems and issues. This approach seeks to mobilise the strengths that each person has. Narrative practice focusses on the power of stories to frame and 're-story' our reality. *Girltopia* reflects both approaches.

(For a comprehensive text on the strengths approach, please see [*The Strengths Approach*](#) book)

What should I consider before using this resource with others?

Creating a safe, respectful environment for using the cards is critical. Look through the cards and get to know them yourself first. When you plan your session, consider the age and developmental stage of the participants, and the purpose of the session. You can leave some cards out, if you wish. Be aware that the cards and the discussion can trigger powerful memories and emotions, so please consider what support may be needed during or after a session. Will any follow up be required? Please also consider such things as how to protect people's privacy and dignity. Also take into account the timing of the session, and how you will help ensure that people listen respectfully, and that quiet or shy voices in the group can be heard, and that people can opt out or remain silent, if they choose. No one should be pressured to speak, if they do not wish to.



How do I use the digital cards?

'I have discovered in working with girls the magic of asking questions and creating opportunities for their natural wisdom to emerge. This in itself builds self-esteem and resilience. In addition, girls get to hear each other's views and ideas, stories and expectations as they talk.'

Jane Bennett, author of *Girltopia*

The cards can be used to enrich:

- class discussions
- small groups
- one-on-one sharing and listening
- counselling sessions
- journalling (this is useful for reflection and refocussing a class)
- research, reporting back or written projects
- parent/teacher evenings
- support programs for parents or carers of girls
- conversations with adults and teams working with girls
- conversations with women
- informal chats, wherever and whenever they happen.

How you use the cards will depend on your purpose, which may be to:

- nurture self-awareness and self-esteem
- explore diversity
- challenge stereotypes, expectations and what's fashionable





- promote body literacy
- explore feelings and build emotional literacy
- build group trust
- enhance social awareness and healthy relationships
- discuss risk, responsibility and staying safe.

Whatever the context, purpose or activity, there are two main methods for getting cards into people's hands: random selection or deliberate choice.

Random selection

A non-threatening and often fun way of getting started is to select cards randomly. If working with a group, you can project the cards on a large screen, if you wish. Here are some ideas for landing on a random card:

- Ask a girl or young woman, 'How old are you?' You or they can then swipe through the images and stop at the one that corresponds with their age. That card then becomes the starting point for the discussion.
- Then ask each person to pick a random number or a favourite number under 70, and then swipe through as above. Each person then has 'their' card.
- Ask an individual to close their eyes (or turn their back) and randomly say, 'Stop!' as the facilitator swipes through the images.
- Set a timer to a chosen interval—5 seconds, 8 seconds, etc. Stop on the image that is onscreen when the timer dings.

Then you can ask questions such as the following:

- Describe what is happening in the card.
- What stands out most on this card for you—a particular word? A part of the image?
- What does this card mean to you?



- Is this something you have thought about before or is it completely new?
- Can you tell a story about something you have experienced relating to this card?
- Does this card represent something that is important to you? How would you rate it on a scale of 1—5 where 1 is not important and 5 is very important?
- Does this card remind you of a person, event or a particular time in your life?
- What are society's views about this subject? What are your parents' or your friends' views? What are your views?

Deliberate choice

This is when a card is deliberately chosen in response to a prompt, perhaps a question or a sentence starter. The DOING, FEELING, BODY, and US suits are particularly suitable for questions and the ME suit is great for sentence starters. Here are some broad prompts for getting the conversation rolling:

- Is there a card that makes you laugh?
- Is there a card that makes you feel shy?
- Is there a card that makes you squirm?
- Can you tell a story from your own experience about one of the cards?
- How would you answer a question or finish the sentence starter on this card?
- Choose a quote or an illustration from one of the cards. What does this mean to you?
- Pick a card that represents something about your adolescence/family/school.
- Pick 3 cards to tell a story about your mother, grandmother or any generation of women in your family.
- Choose a card from the BODY suit, and then select one or more of the questions on the card to research and report back to the group.





Group warm ups

- Scroll through the ME and the DOING cards (remember, you can project them on a large screen if you are working in a classroom or group).
- Invite girls to select a sentence starter from the ME suit or a statement from the DOING suit to say something about themselves.
- Several rounds are fun and expansive, as long as the group remains focussed. To support re-focussing you can introduce this as a writing exercise followed by sharing with a partner or the whole group.

Naming and exploring feelings

Using the FEELING suit:

- Select two cards—a feeling you find easy or pleasant and one that you find difficult or challenging.
- Describe both of these feelings in as much detail as possible.
- What happens in your body when you are feeling these feelings?
- Do you always know straight away or does it take a while to notice?
- Can you think of any other words to describe those feelings?
- When have you felt this way?
- What is difficult about the challenging feeling?
- What kinds of thoughts do you have when you are feeling that way?
- How do you get through it?
- What or who helps you most when you feel this way?
- What or who could help you most if you were feeling that way today?
- Have you found this feeling easier or harder as you have gotten older?
- Is there anything you'd like to do differently when you experience this feeling next time?



- With the easy or pleasant feeling, what do you like about it?
- How does your body feel when you are experiencing this emotion?
- You can use the FEELING and US suits together to explore how you feel about specific relationships.

Developing body literacy

Use the BODY suit to develop vocabulary and knowledge about the female body, and also to challenge stereotypes and attitudes to the female body. Each of the BODY cards names a topic and features seven questions about that topic. Some answers are simple, and others will test the knowledge of most grown women. All are designed to help build a deep respect for the body.

- Invite participants to select 3 cards either deliberately or randomly.
- Create quiz games where participants ask each other the questions on the cards.
- The questions can also be used as 'research projects' for participants.
- Invite participants to discuss the body parts named. How do you feel about these parts of your body? Do you think about these parts of your body very much?
- What purpose and value do you think these body parts serve?
- How do they contribute to your health and wellbeing?
- What are various cultural stories and words attached to these body parts?
- Have these changed over time?
- Do social media and advertising affect how you view these body parts?
- What is your attitude to these body parts? Is it respectful? Painful? Curious? Accepting?
- If these 3 parts of the body were to have a conversation, what would they say to each other?
- What message do these body parts have for you?

- Using the FEELING and BODY suits together, you can explore: How do I feel about my changing body? About the cycles and processes of my body? About my body image?
- By adding the DOING suit you can explore how your body or body image affects your decisions, choices, identity and empowerment.

Relationships: developing social literacy

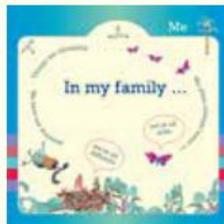
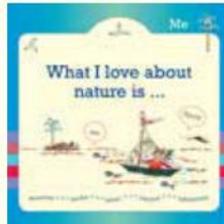
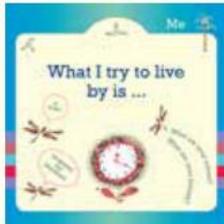
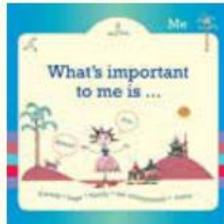
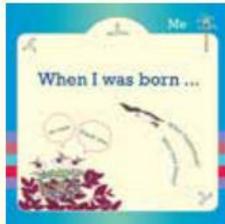
Use the US suit to explore the rich and often complex territory of relationships. With the questions and prompts on these cards, and in a supportive and respectful environment, you can open conversations about:

- friends and family
- boyfriends, girlfriends, dating and breaking up
- 'power-with', respect and dignity
- 'power-over', cliques, bitchiness, gossip and bullying
- sex, sexuality and sexual diversity
- gender identity and gender diversity
- values, attitudes and expectations
- connection, belonging and love
- risks, benefits and responsibilities.

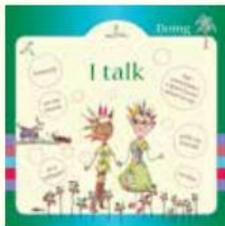
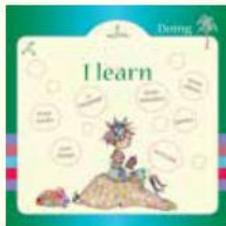
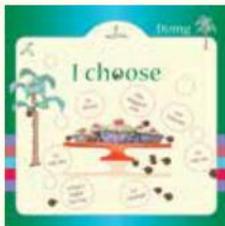
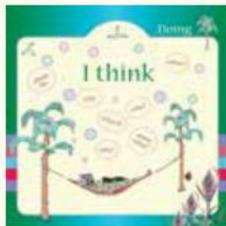
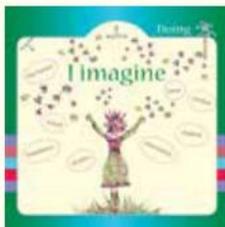
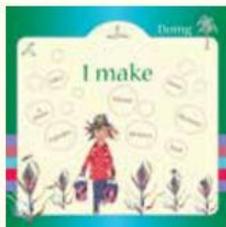


The Complete Set of Cards

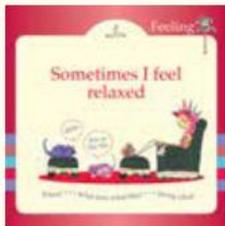
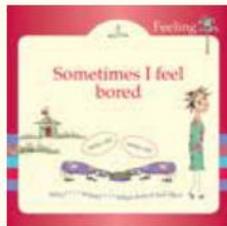
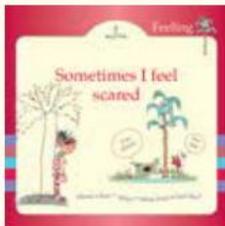
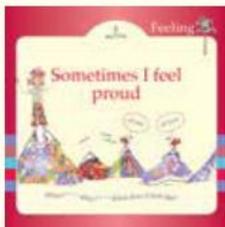
Me (8 cards, blue)

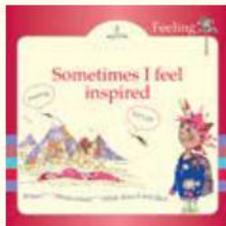


Doing (11 cards, green)



Feeling (21 cards, cherry)





Body (17 cards, orange)

hormones

Hormones are chemical messengers that travel through the bloodstream to regulate the body's functions. They are produced by glands and can affect almost every part of the body.

Key hormones include:

- Estrogen: Regulates the menstrual cycle and secondary sex characteristics.
- Progesterone: Prepares the uterus for pregnancy and maintains it.
- Testosterone: Promotes the development of male sex characteristics.
- Thyroid hormones: Regulate metabolism and energy levels.

Imbalances in hormones can lead to various health issues, such as irregular periods, weight gain, and mood swings.

puberty

Puberty is the period of development when the body begins to produce sex hormones and secondary sex characteristics appear. It typically occurs between ages 10 and 16.

Signs of puberty include:

- Development of breasts in females and testicles in males.
- Pubic hair growth.
- Changes in body shape and weight.
- Emotional and mood swings.

Puberty is a natural and necessary part of growing up.

first period

The first period, also known as menarche, is the first time a girl experiences menstrual bleeding. It usually occurs between ages 11 and 15.

Signs of an approaching first period include:

- Spotting or light bleeding.
- Cramps or abdominal pain.
- Mood changes.

It's important to understand that the first period is a normal part of the menstrual cycle.

menstruation

Menstruation is the process of shedding the lining of the uterus, which is then expelled through the vagina. It typically occurs every 28 to 30 days.

Key facts about menstruation:

- It is a natural and healthy process.
- It is regulated by hormones.
- It can be accompanied by cramps, bloating, and mood changes.

Understanding menstruation is essential for maintaining good health and hygiene.

moon

The moon is a natural satellite that orbits the Earth. It is the only natural satellite of Earth and is visible in the night sky.

Key facts about the moon:

- It is approximately 384,400 kilometers from Earth.
- It is the only celestial body that is visible to the naked eye.
- It has a diameter of about 3,474 kilometers.

The moon plays a significant role in Earth's tides and climate.

pads & tampons

Pads and tampons are used to absorb menstrual blood during menstruation. They are designed to be comfortable and effective.

Key facts about pads and tampons:

- Pads are used externally and are attached to underwear.
- Tampons are inserted into the vagina and absorb blood internally.
- Both pads and tampons come in various absorbencies.

Choosing the right product and using it correctly is important for menstrual health.

breasts

Breasts are the mammary glands that produce milk for breastfeeding. They are located on the chest and are a key feature of the female body.

Key facts about breasts:

- They develop during puberty.
- They are regulated by hormones.
- They play a crucial role in infant nutrition.

Understanding breast health is essential for overall well-being.

vagina

The vagina is the canal that leads from the uterus to the outside of the body. It is a natural part of the female reproductive system.

Key facts about the vagina:

- It is self-cleaning and has a natural pH balance.
- It is regulated by hormones.
- It plays a role in sexual intercourse and childbirth.

Understanding vaginal health is essential for maintaining good overall health.

vulva

The vulva is the external part of the female reproductive system, including the labia and clitoris. It is a natural and healthy part of the body.

Key facts about the vulva:

- It is self-cleaning and has a natural pH balance.
- It is regulated by hormones.
- It plays a role in sexual intercourse and childbirth.

Understanding vulva health is essential for maintaining good overall health.

womb

The womb, also known as the uterus, is the organ where a fetus develops during pregnancy. It is a pear-shaped organ located in the female pelvis.

Key facts about the womb:

- It is regulated by hormones.
- It plays a crucial role in pregnancy and childbirth.
- It is self-cleaning and has a natural pH balance.

Understanding womb health is essential for maintaining good overall health.

ovaries

Ovaries are the glands that produce eggs and hormones. They are located on either side of the uterus.

Key facts about ovaries:

- They produce eggs for fertilization.
- They produce hormones like estrogen and progesterone.
- They are regulated by the hypothalamus and pituitary gland.

Understanding ovary health is essential for maintaining good overall health.

clitoris

The clitoris is a small, sensitive organ located at the top of the vulva. It is a key part of the female sexual response.

Key facts about the clitoris:

- It is highly sensitive and can be stimulated.
- It plays a role in sexual pleasure and orgasm.
- It is regulated by hormones.

Understanding clitoris health is essential for maintaining good overall health.

Health

fertility

Fertility is the ability to get pregnant and have a healthy baby. It is a natural process that occurs in the body. Fertility is affected by many factors, including age, health, and lifestyle.

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pregnancy

Pregnancy is the period during which a developing fetus is carried in the uterus of a woman. It is a natural process that occurs in the body. Pregnancy is affected by many factors, including age, health, and lifestyle.

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Health

beauty

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Health

health

Health is a state of well-being, including physical, mental, and social well-being. It is a natural process that occurs in the body. Health is affected by many factors, including age, health, and lifestyle.

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Health

fat

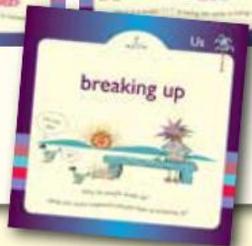
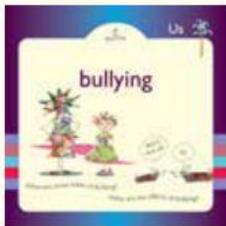
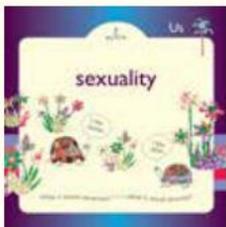
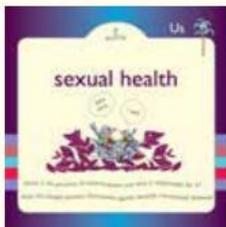
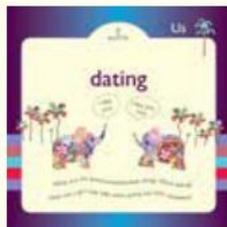
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Us (13 cards, purple)



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62 Collins Street Kangaroo Flat
Victoria 3555 Australia
p: + 61 3 5446 0500 f: +61 3 5447 2099
e: info@innovativeresources.org
w: innovativeresources.org

ABN: 97 397 067 466
Anglicare Victoria trading as St Luke's Innovative Resources

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70 cards for creating conversations with girls (from 10 to 18 years) and women about body image, self-esteem, identity, feelings and relationships.

NOW AVAILABLE DIGITALLY!

'I have had a chance to look through your fantastic resource Girlltopia—the presentation is brilliant ... They are a really great, positive and attractive tool and I think the topics you've covered are very diverse and relevant ... it'd be great if every person who worked with girls had these.'

Dannie Watts, The Butterfly Foundation



Swipe through these digital cards—write on them, draw on them, highlight and tag them, take screen shots and save them in your gallery.



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