

## **Bet You Could Make It: A Second Look at an Intervention for Girls from Stigmatized Communities**

*Sigal Oppenheim-Shachar*

Avivit was defiant when she told the group facilitator, "Don't ask me to talk. I don't know how to talk. I have nothing to say." This typical utterance is an expression of resistance. An adolescent who had long experienced failure in school, Avivit expressed her accumulated frustration which led to a reluctance to cooperate and participate. She felt that even in a setting designed to assist her, she would not find her place, and once again, would not belong. Closely observing common resistance behaviors among participants in learning and intervention processes, Oppenheim-Shachar systematically follows a case study based on the experiences of adolescent girls from stigmatized communities who participated in workshops to strengthen occupational aspirations and foster efficacy. Avoiding the retrospective path, she focuses on the mechanism of missing out, without being lured into "success stories." Aiming to strengthen the participants' efficacy, the developers and facilitators often find themselves awakening additional negative experiences within the participants. The process analysis focuses primarily on the overall social aspect, seeking the reasons the programs miss their goals and do not have the desired impact on the participants.

*Bet You Could Make It: A Second Look at an Intervention for Girls from Stigmatized Communities* offers an innovative perspective that invites program developers and facilitators to examine the lacunae in current interventions, and offers ways of enhancing a collaborative dialogue. Its aim is to illuminate dark and forgotten corners of the intervention process, corners which can, without awareness or malicious intent, strengthen the participants' negative experiences of stigmatization, alienation, and exclusion.

This is an important discussion, of relevance to anyone interested in facilitating, identifying resistance and harnessing it into involvement. Of course, it is relevant to anyone seeking to expand their theoretical knowledge in the areas of wellbeing and education under conditions that enhance learning that is based on positive key experiences.

*The book clears a path to training facilitators to become allies, women who know how to provide adolescent girls in the process of learning with the feeling that they are not a pre-defined 'shelf product,' but rather, that they have a unique identity and varied needs.*

Prof. Orly Benjamin

**Sigal Oppenheim-Shachar**, PhD, is a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University in the Program of Gender Studies, the Sociology Department, and the School of Education. She also teaches at the School of Education and Faculty of Business Administration at Ono Academic College. Her research is devoted to teaching, supervising, and facilitating various learning processes, focusing on the resistance phenomenon, leadership efficacy and integrating ways to establish trust and create opportunities for active involvement in the learning process.