The Working On Womanhood program empowers young women to own their narrative and become advocates for the world they want to live in.

Why Wow Works

- **It’s an evidenced-based program**
  - that is backed up by a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) conducted by the University of Chicago’s Urban Labs.

- **It supports young women with significant risk factors**
  - to exposure to traumatic stressors in high risk and under-resourced communities.

- **It delivers on our mission**
  - of “meeting students where they are,” by providing ongoing basic, social-emotional, and mental health supports to our students.

How Wow Works

- WOW is a two year school-based curriculum, delivered through 39 weekly group counseling lessons.
- Circles are led by WOW counselors, who are college-educated, Youth Guidance staff, many of whom are from the neighborhoods they work in and/or have shared lived experiences.
- Group sessions include 10-12 young women and each counselor has a case-load of roughly 50 young women per-school.
- Counselors embed themselves into our partner sites’ ecosystem by joining school teams, including Behavioral Health Teams, and provide a level of student support that is uncommon in many urban school environments.

Wow in Chicago

The Working on Womanhood (WOW) program was launched in Chicago in 2011 as an innovative response to the urgent need to reach girls and young women of color across under-resourced Chicago communities. Currently, WOW is serving 2,600 students in 41 schools in Chicago and the south Chicago suburbs.
WOW CORE VALUES

The WOW curriculum is informed by cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance commitment therapy, and narrative therapy and is organized around five core values:

→ **SELF-AWARENESS**  
I have power. I know who I am. I accept who I am. I inspire other to become who they want to be.

→ **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**  
I am resilient. I recognize and use all of my emotions. I respond in healthy ways to other’s emotions.

→ **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**  
I respect myself and others. I maintain healthy boundaries in my relationships. I communicate my needs and wants. I advocate for myself.

→ **LEADERSHIP**  
I am a leader. I set goals. I am accountable. I seek mentors to show me the way. I take a role in improving my community.

→ **VISIONARY GOAL-SETTING**  
I have goals. I am motivated. I overcome barriers. I work on my goals every day.

At the start of high school, I was the oldest of five children, and most of my time went to helping my mom whenever I could. As a result, I struggled with confidence and started to believe college wasn’t a possibility for me. It caused me to withdraw from social activities and to under-perform in school.

It was my WOW Counselor who affirmed me and told me to set my sights higher. Because she believed in me, I was able to believe in myself.

**EVERYONE AROUND ME HAS SEEN THE DIFFERENCE WOW HAS MADE IN MY LIFE FIRSTHAND. MY FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND TEACHERS HAVE ALL BENEFITTED FROM THIS VERSION OF ME THAT FIERCELY BELIEVES IN HERSELF.**”  
– WOW ALUMNA

To learn more about the WOW program in Chicago, please scan the QR code or email info@youth-guidance.org.

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