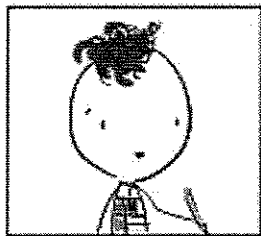# Why DIY?

By Maggie Pearson

What does it mean to "do it yourself"? And why is it such a good perspective from which to implement youth services and programming? These are the questions we tackle in our issue of *YA Hotline*. Whether it's building a website or a Little Free Library, the DIY ethos is what drives the articles on the following pages.

Independence and agency

DIY is about asserting independence. To "do it yourself" is to actively participate in the design, creation, and maintenance of the objects we use on a daily basis. If we need or want something done we ask not "can I buy it?" but "can I do it? Can I craft it, make it, fix it, or build it?" Firmly rooted in youth culture and counterculture, DIY is all about challenging the status quo and learning to assert identity through material culture.

Identity through making, learning by doing

DIY is sometimes referred to as "maker culture," particularly when applied to the use of computer technology. But DIY can also be as low tech as knitting or bicycle mechanics. Whether we use a computer or a crochet hook, when we make things with our hands, we have physical proof that we were there. When we learn by doing, we become experts in a way not possible through simply reading, watching, or listening. TED talker and founder of Make magazine Dale Dougherty puts it this way: "We are all makers...the common thread begins with an inspiration to invent, the spark that turns an individual from purely consuming products to having a hand in actually making them" (2011).

In this issue

Since DIY can mean many different things, the articles in this issue cover a wide range of topics. We have programming ideas for planning an alternative to high school proms, articles about zine libraries and tool libraries, and tips for building a Little Free Library. We have DIY fiction and non-fiction book lists, cooking program ideas, and a list of DIY crafts. There are articles on creating digital content through blogging and video making, as well as information on goal setting and action boards.

We know that teens want to exercise their autonomy and assert their identities, and we hope this issue gives you plenty of ideas to help facilitate this. Remember - "DIY is a theme anyone can implement with things that you have available anywhere. Don't think about what you cannot do - think about what you can do" (Avitable & Gibrich, 2014). Happy Making!

References

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Dougherty, D. (2011, January). We Are Makers [Video File]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/dale_dougherty_we_are_makers