

Warning Signs: Understanding Sexual Abuse and Assault

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

PS.8.CC.1 – Describe situations and behaviors that constitute bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, rape and dating violence.

PS.8.CC.2 – Discuss the impacts of bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, rape and dating violence and why they are wrong.

PS.8.AI.1 – Identify sources of support such as parents or other trusted adults that they can go to if they are or someone they know is being bullied, harassed, abused or assaulted.

SH.8.INF.1 – Analyze the impact of alcohol and other drugs on safer sexual decision-making and sexual behaviors.

TARGET GRADE:

Middle School– Lesson 9

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Lesson PowerPoint
- Projector and screen
- Computer with Internet access and audio equipment
- White board and markers
- Butcher paper and masking tape (if pre-writing the chart as described on page 4)
- "Exit Slips" (one half-sheet per student)
- **Homework:** "Taking Action: Making Sexual Abuse and Assault STOP" (one per student)
- **Optional Homework Handouts:** From *Break the Cycle*, *loveisrespect.org*, and *Be the Jam* (for students who do not have Internet access)

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

Note to the Teacher: Please let students know ahead of time that you will be addressing this topic in the next lesson. This gives those who may be survivors of abuse or trauma, who may wish to miss this class session, the opportunity to avoid being triggered and re-traumatized. For resources on how to support the mental health of your students, please see SDUSD's [Mental Health Resource Center](#).

- Inform the school counselor that you will be addressing this topic in class in case a student discloses any current or past abuse or is triggered by what is discussed. If the counselor is not available, you may wish to follow up with them after the class as needed to let them know whether you observed anything in any of the students that would make you feel concerned and merit follow-up.
- If a student appears to be particularly distressed during the lesson, please send that student to see the school counselor immediately.
- Access the following videos and have them queued and ready to show to students:
 - "RAPE: Get the Facts" (rape and sexual assault): www.hrmvideo.com/catalog/rape-get-the-facts
 - "The Signs" (relationship abuse): www.youtube.com/watch?v=He1pu4VwKdM&t=8s
- Print out enough copies of the "Exit Slips" sheets and cut them in half so that each student will have one half-sheet.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name two different types of sexual assault. [Knowledge]
2. List one example of each of mutual consent, unfair pressure and threats, aggression. [Knowledge]
3. Describe at least two possible impacts of a sexual assault or abusive relationship on the person who was assaulted. [Knowledge]
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how to report a sexual assault or abusive relationship. [Knowledge, Skill]
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the warning signs of sexual harassment and sex trafficking. [Knowledge]

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A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar—using the pronoun “they” instead of “her” or “him,” using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to “someone with a vulva” vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Explain to the students that you are going to be talking about particularly intense topics today—sexual abuse, assault, harassment, and trafficking. Refer to your classroom's Group Agreements or Ground Rules. Ask students to be particularly sensitive and respectful during this class session. (2 minutes)

STEP 2: Say, “Talking about sexual abuse, assault, harassment, and trafficking can sometimes be clear and straightforward. For example, you may know already that rape and sexual assault are when someone is forced to do something sexual they don't want to do. Let's take a quick look at some basic information about sexual assault.”

Play the video clip, “RAPE: Get the Facts” (www.hrmvideo.com/catalog/rape-get-the-facts). Stop the video at 2:00 after McPherson says, “It's a men's issue.”

Ask the students, “**What facts stood out to you about this clip?**” Probe for the following:

- That sexual abuse and assault happens so often in the US
- That it happens so often to people when they're really young
- That most people know the person who assaulted them
- That it happens to boys and men, too
- That it happens to people of all races and ethnicities and other backgrounds

Ask, “**What do you think one of the women interviewed meant when she said, ‘rape is about power and control, it's not about sex?’**” As you ask this, be writing the phrase, “rape is about power and control, it's not about sex” on the white board.

Probe for:

- People who rape aren't concerned about what the other person wants—it's all about “conquering” the other person and getting them to do what they want them to do.
- Even though the overpowering is done through a sexual behavior, the overpowering of the other person is the turn-on, it's not the sex act. People of all ages, body types, and appearances are raped or sexually assaulted. It's not about physical attractiveness, it's about someone deciding that another person is vulnerable in some way and taking complete control away from that person.

Say, “**The social worker talking about boys and men who are sexually assaulted said, ‘For a boy or man to report a sexual assault really takes a lot.’ Why do you think it may feel more difficult for boys and men to report sexual assault?**” Probe for:

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- Often times, masculine people are worried that they will be perceived as feminine or gay if they disclose assault. Though there is nothing wrong with being gay, we live in a society that stigmatizes LGBTQ+ identities. Because of this, sometimes masculine people are afraid to report instances of assault. However, assault is about power and violence, and has nothing to do with a person's identity.
- If the guy who was assaulted is gay, he may feel that it is unsafe to report it to someone else because he might be worried they'll discriminate against him, further victimize him, or simply not care.
- If the rapist is a woman, he may feel like no one will believe him or won't understand why he could not overpower her or otherwise get away.

Say, **“Don McPherson, the last person who spoke in the clip, talked about how people often think of rape and sexual assault as women's issues, since the majority of people who report being assaulted are women. What do you think he meant when he said that rape is a men's issue?”** Probe for:

- Even though anyone of any gender can assault a person of any gender, the vast majority of rapes and sexual assaults in the world are committed by men. So in addition to helping people who are survivors of rape and sexual assault, we need to focus on trying to keep boys and men from ever believing they have a right to force someone else to do something sexual. (15 minutes)

STEP 3: Say, **“I mentioned before that when someone forces someone to do something they don't want to do, it's pretty clear cut that it's sexual assault. But what happens when it's unclear? What about when someone tells you sexual jokes over and over even after you tell that person to stop? What if someone teases someone else for being “gay”? When anyone is on the receiving end of something sexual like this—such as sexual notes, jokes, innuendos, texts, comments, or gestures—or if any of these are about someone's sexual orientation, than these are incidences of Sexual Harassment and are illegal in California public schools.”**

Explain the upcoming activity to the students by telling them, **“We're going to do an activity now where we look at what's okay and not okay when it comes to sexual touch and behaviors. How we can be clear about what we want to do and don't want to do? And how we can be sure to recognize whether the other person is really giving their consent—meaning, actively saying “YES”—and that you are sure they want to be kissed, or touched by you, or talked to in that manner.”** (3 minutes)

STEP 4: Either have the following written on the white board with the video screen covering it or have it pre-written on butcher paper and post it on the board at this point:



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Say, “I’m going to start at the far right, because as I said, rape and sexual assault are the most easily recognizable examples of sexual touch that are never okay and are illegal.”

Rape/Sexual Assault – When someone forces another person to perform a sex act, such as vaginal, oral, or anal sex. This includes when someone uses an object to penetrate another person, even a finger. Rape and sexual assault can be perpetrated by a stranger, but most often is committed by someone the victim already knows. Even if people are already in a romantic relationship and one person tells the other person to STOP or does not actively say YES to a sex act, if one partner still forces the other partner to have sex, then this is still considered rape or sexual assault.

Trafficking – Human trafficking, which includes labor and sex trafficking, is a form of modern-day slavery. Sex trafficking is when a person uses force, fraud, or coercion, which means tricking or pressuring someone, to control another person for the purpose of engaging in sex acts for money or other goods, including food and housing. If a person is under 18, there does not have to be force, fraud, or coercion for it to be sex trafficking. Minors are protected under the law and can safely seek help without fear of legal consequences. Traffickers may take a person by force, but are more likely to befriend someone through social media or gaming sites, schools, or other places teens hangout to try and gain their trust. The trafficker could also be a family member, friend, "boyfriend," or other romantic partner. The person being trafficked has sex with other people to please the person that is trafficking them, because they are in fear of being injured, or of their family being hurt, or for the promise of a certain lifestyle or basic needs. Sometimes it might even be another teenager who is trafficking people. Most people who are trafficked are targeted as young teens, on average 15 years old, but it can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, race, socio-economic status, or location. Studies estimate between 3,000 to 8,000 people are sex trafficked in San Diego County each year. In any form that it takes, sex trafficking—someone forcing or pressuring someone else to have sex with others—is illegal.

Aggression/Harassment – Some examples are when a person walks by and someone pinches them or touches a sexual body part, where the act is over before the person could have even given their consent. This is a type of assault, even if it may have been intended as a joke or as teasing. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature such as sexual notes, texts, or unwanted texts. If the recipient tells someone to stop this type of harassment even once, and it continues, then it is defined as sexual harassment. Both sexual aggression (if it is physical) and sexual harassment are illegal.

Threats – Refers to when someone tells the other person that if they don’t do something sexual with them, there will be consequences.

For example:

- ‘If you don’t have sex with me, I’ll go out and find someone who will.’
- ‘If you don’t have sex with me, I’ll just tell people you did anyway.’
- ‘If you don’t do this, I’ll forward those sexy pictures you texted me to everyone you know.’”

Pressure – When someone uses what they know is important to the other person to get that person to do what they want. It’s not restricted to sexual things, but we’re going to keep focused on that. For example:

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- When someone says, 'I love you' to someone even if they don't love them because they think saying that will get that person to do something sexual with them.
- When someone keeps pressuring the other person because they think that person will eventually give in just to make the pressure stop.

Mutual Consent – This is essential in any relationship. It's when both people actively say what they want, and both people agree to any behavior that they are going to do together. When we are talking about doing something sexual in nature, partners need to ask each other if they want to do it. Do they both want the same thing? Never assume that just because someone doesn't verbally say "no" it means that they are ok with it. Always ask and wait to hear an enthusiastic "YES." If someone can tell that their partner does not feel right about doing something, they need to back off and consider something else. Likewise, if someone does not feel right about doing something that their partner wants them to do, they have the right to speak up and say that.

Say, **"That was a lot to go through! What's your reaction to seeing and hearing all of this? Do you have any questions?"** (15 minutes)

STEP 5: After answering any questions or facilitating comments from the class, say, **"Remember the part in the last video when it said that in most cases sexual assaults are committed by someone who knows the person they assault? This can, unfortunately, also be a family member. When it's committed by a family member it's called 'incest.' Sometimes it can be a partner, girlfriend, boyfriend, or spouse who is abusive, whether physically or not. For the next part of class, we're going to take a look at some of the abuse that can happen in those types of relationships."**

Show the video clip, *"The Signs"* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=He1pu4VwKdM&t=8s).

Process by asking the following questions:

- **"How do you think Amanda is feeling when Nick first asked her out?"**
- **"What was the first sign that there was something off about the relationship?"**
- **"How did Nick respond after their first argument? Do you think this was a healthy way to respond? Why or why not?"**
- **"Where would you put the different interactions between them on the chart?"**
[Write these up on the chart on the white board or butcher paper.]
- **"When the relationship started moving from Mutual Consent to the right of the chart, what impact(s) did it have on Amanda? What about on her best friend, Ashley?"** (12 minutes)

STEP 6: Say, **"We often hear the term 'dating or domestic violence,' when abusive relationships may not be physically abusive at all. The point here—and the theme that runs throughout these videos and all the information we have been discussing during this class—is 'power and control.' And while you may hear 'power and control' and think that's something you'd want, it's not something that should be a part of a healthy relationship. So even if you're the one doing the manipulating and controlling, your relationship isn't healthy. And keep in mind, some of the behaviors we've been talking about are also illegal."**

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It can be hard to speak up when these things happen, to you or someone you care about, for many reasons, like fear, shame, or confusion. Identifying a safe and trusted adult is the first step in getting help. This could be a family member, someone at school, a neighbor, a medical professional, a faith leader, or someone else in your community. If you think that someone you know may be a victim of sex trafficking or in an unhealthy relationship, because of something they say to you or changes in their mood or behavior, tell a trusted adult if you can. You can also find resources on our *Student Support* webpage (www.sandiegounified.org/Support), which includes the websites on your homework and other crisis centers and hotlines.”

Say, “The first step in making it stop is to know how. So the homework for this class will be to visit some websites and answer some questions.” As you distribute the homework assignments, say, “This is a very intense topic we’ve discussed. The school counselor knows we were going to talk about this today. If you have more questions and you want to talk about this more, you can speak with the school counselor—and of course, you can always come to me to talk.”

Distribute the “*Taking Action: Make Sexual Abuse and Assault STOP*” homework sheet and answer any questions. Distribute the “*Exit Slips*” and collect them from students as they leave class. (3 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

This lesson is very affective and discussion-based; as such, the teacher will need to assess understanding of the material during the discussions as part of student participation. It is also important to keep in mind that if students have had any personal experience with sexual abuse or assault, they may participate less, which does not necessarily mean they are not understanding the material. The homework assignment will give students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of some of the class content while also achieving Learning Objective 5.

HOMEWORK:

Students will be given the “*Taking Action: Make Sexual Abuse and Assault STOP*” homework sheet listing several age-appropriate websites that list facts and information about sexual abuse, assault, trafficking, and harassment and how to report these incidents. Students are asked to visit at least one website and respond to several questions about it. If a student does not have access to the Internet at home, please give them the optional homework handouts to help answer the homework questions.

Note to the Teacher: Please return the homework sheets to students after you’ve reviewed them so that they can keep the website information. For any assignment addressing abuse, beware of the challenges that students may face, as they may live with their abuser. If possible, allow students to complete and keep the assignment in a safe place in class, or at least make sure to debrief this homework the following day. If you have a large population of students with no Internet access, consider doing this activity together in class so that students have the opportunity to visit the online resources; however, printouts of the information found online have also been provided for these students.

Note: Consent chart adapted from an activity in the curriculum “Sexual Violence in Teenage Lives: A Prevention Curriculum.”

Exit Slip – Before You Go...

Name: _____

1. Who is one person you could turn to if you or someone you knew were abused or assaulted?

2. Explain why *enthusiastic consent* is important in a relationship.

Exit Slip – Before You Go...

Name: _____

1. Who is one person you could turn to if you or someone you knew were abused or assaulted?

3. Explain why *enthusiastic consent* is important in a relationship.

Taking Action: Make Sexual Abuse and Assault STOP
Homework (Lesson 8-8)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please choose one of the following websites and respond to the questions listed below about that site:

- *Love is Respect*: www.loveisrespect.org
- *Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)*: www.rainn.org

Which site did you visit? _____

1. Name two facts about sexual abuse or assault from the site that you visited that you didn't know already:

a. _____

b. _____

2. What is this site's phone hotline or text line for talking with someone about a sexual abuse or assault incident?

3. If you knew someone who had been sexually abused or assaulted, would you refer them to this site? Why or why not?

Investigate Sex Trafficking: Visit the website "*Be the Jam – Stop Human Trafficking*" www.bethejam.org/tactics.

1. What are three (3) tactics that traffickers often use to lure their victims into having sex with other people in exchange for money or other goods?

2. Who is the intended audience for this website? (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, etc.). How do you know? _____

3. Do you agree with "*Be the Jam's*" decision to focus on this audience? Why or why not?

Investigate Sexual Harassment: Visit the RAINN website on "*Sexual Harassment*" www.rainn.org/articles/sexual-harassment. What are three (3) things you learned about sexual harassment after reading this page?

What are two (2) things you can do if you think that you or someone you know is a victim of sex trafficking or sexual harassment?

1. _____ 2. _____

People who have experienced relationship violence, sexual assault, and/or human trafficking are not at fault. All people deserve to be in a relationship where they feel supported and safe.

DATING ABUSE STATISTICS

Dating abuse affects people from all ages, backgrounds and identities, which is why it is important to talk about how abuse can happen in young people's relationships. Check out these statistics:

Dating Abuse Is a Public Health Crisis

- One in three high school students experience either physical or sexual violence, or both, that is perpetrated by someone they are dating or going out with.ⁱ
- Young women between the ages of 18 - 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, almost double the national average.ⁱⁱ
- One in ten high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) youth are more likely to experience physical and psychological dating abuse, sexual coercion, and cyber dating abuse than their heterosexual peers.^{iv}

The Abuse Starts Early

- More than half of women (69.5%) and men (53.6%) who have been physically or sexually abused, or stalked by a dating partner, first experienced abuse between the ages of 11-24.^v
- Of the 8.5% of middle school students who report having bullied a classmate, nearly 1 in 5 have been a victim of dating abuse.^{vi}
- Nearly half of female and 1 in 4 male high school students who report experiencing sexual or physical abuse by a dating partner, have also been bullied electronically.^{vii}

The Impact is Severe

- Among male high school students who have experienced sexual and physical abuse by a dating partner, more than 1 in 4 have seriously contemplated suicide, and almost as many have attempted suicide.^{viii}
- Among female high school students who have experienced sexual and physical abuse by a dating partner, nearly half have seriously contemplated suicide, and more than 1 in 4 have attempted suicide.^{ix}
- High school girls who have experienced dating abuse are 2.6 times more likely to report an STI diagnosis.^x

Break the Cycle inspires and supports young people to build healthy relationships and create a culture without abuse. Our dynamic and diverse team believes that all young people deserve to live in a world where they can thrive. Our values and work centers young people and their lived realities, leadership, vision, and hopes for the future.



**Because Everyone Deserves a
Healthy Relationship**

The Impact is Severe

- High school students who have been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their partner earned grades of C and D twice as often as earning grades of A or B.^{xi}
- Women who have experienced sexual assault, physical abuse, or stalking by an intimate partner are three times more likely to report poor mental health.^{xii}

It's Not Just Teens

- An estimated 20 - 25 percent of female college students will experience attempted or completed rape before graduation,^{xiii} and those are only the ones who self-disclose.
- Nearly half (43%) of all college women and one third (28%) of college men report having experienced either abuse or controlling behaviors in a dating relationship.^{xiv}

The Time to Talk Is Now

- Education and raising awareness is important! More than half (58%) of college students do not know how to help someone who is experiencing dating abuse, and nearly all (89%) are not confident in their ability to recognize the warning signs.^{xv}
- More than half of all college students report experiencing either abuse or controlling behaviors in a dating relationship while in college, with 70% reporting they were not aware they were in an abusive relationship at the time.^{xvi}

ⁱ Vagi, K. J., Olsen, E. O. M., Basile, K. C., & Vivolo-Kantor, A. M. (2015). Teen dating violence (physical and sexual) among US high school students: findings from the 2013 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169 (5), 474-482.

ⁱⁱ Breiding, M.J., Chen J., & Black, M.C. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in the United States — 2010. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kann, L., Kinchen, S., Shanklin, S.L., Flint, K.H., Hawkins, J., Harris, W.A., Lowry, R., O'Malley, E., McManus, T., Chyen, D., Whittle, L., Taylor, E., Demissie, Z., Brener, N., Thornton, J., Moore, J., & Zaza, S. (2014). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Report - United States, 2013. US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

^{iv} Dank, M., Lachman, P., Zweig, J. M., & Yahner, J. (2014). Dating violence experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43 (5), 846-857.

^v Breiding, M.J., Chen J., & Black, M.C. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in the United States — 2010. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

^{vi} Yahner, J. Y., Dank, M., Zweig, J.M., Lachman, P. (2015). The Co-Occurrence of Physical and Cyber Dating Violence and Bullying Among Teens. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 30 (7), 1079-1089.

^{vii} Vagi, K. J., Olsen, E. O. M., Basile, K. C., & Vivolo-Kantor, A. M. (2015). Teen dating violence (physical and sexual) among US high school students: findings from the 2013 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169 (5), 474-482.

^{viii} *Ibid.*

^{ix} *Ibid.*

^x Decker, M. R., Silverman, J. G., & Raj, A. (2005). Dating Violence and Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing and Diagnosis Among Adolescent Females. *Pediatrics*, 116 (2), 272-276.

^{xi} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). Unintentional Injury and Violence-Related Behaviors and Academic Achievement. Retrieved March 17, 2017 from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/unintentional_injury_violence.pdf.

^{xii} Breiding, M.J., Chen J., & Black, M.C. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in the United States — 2010. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

^{xiii} Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F.T., & Turner, M.G. (2000). The sexual victimization of college women. (NIJ Publication No. 182369). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

^{xiv} Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc. (Formerly: Liz Claiborne, Inc.), Conducted by Knowledge Networks. (June 2011). *College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll*. Retrieved from <https://www.breakthecycle.org/surveys.Poll>, Available at: <https://www.breakthecycle.org/surveys>.

^{xv} *Ibid*

^{xvi} *Ibid*

Healthy Relationships



Communication is a key part to building a healthy relationship. The first step is making sure you both want and expect the same things -- being on the same page is very important. The following tips can help you create and maintain a healthy relationship:

- **Speak Up.** In a healthy relationship, if something is bothering you, it's best to talk about it instead of holding it in.
- **Respect Your Partner.** Your partner's wishes and feelings have value. Let your significant other know you are making an effort to keep their ideas in mind. Mutual respect is essential in maintaining healthy relationships.
- **Compromise.** Disagreements are a natural part of healthy relationships, but it's important that you find a way to compromise if you disagree on something. Try to solve conflicts in a fair and rational way.
- **Be Supportive.** Offer reassurance and encouragement to your partner. Also, let your partner know when you need their support. Healthy relationships are about building each other up, not putting each other down.
- **Respect Each Other's Privacy.** Just because you're in a relationship, doesn't mean you have to share everything and constantly be together. Healthy relationships require space.

Healthy Boundaries

Creating boundaries is a good way to keep your relationship healthy and secure. By setting boundaries together, you can both have a deeper understanding of the type of relationship that you and your partner want. Boundaries are not meant to make you feel trapped or like you're "walking on eggshells." Creating boundaries is not a sign of secrecy or distrust -- it's an expression of what makes you feel comfortable and what you would like or not like to happen within the relationship. Remember, healthy boundaries shouldn't restrict your ability to:

- Go out with your friends without your partner.
- Participate in activities and hobbies you like.
- Not have to share passwords to your email, social media accounts or phone.
- Respect each other's individual likes and needs.

Healthy Relationship Boosters

Even healthy relationships can use a boost now and then. You may need a boost if you feel disconnected from your partner or like the relationship has gotten stale. If so, find a fun, simple activity you both enjoy, like going on a walk, and talk about the reasons why you want to be in the relationship. Then, keep using healthy behaviors as you continue dating.

What Isn't a Healthy Relationship?

Relationships that are not healthy are based on power and control, not equality and respect. In the early stages of an abusive relationship, you may not think the unhealthy behaviors are a big deal. However, possessiveness, insults, jealous accusations, yelling, humiliation, pulling hair, pushing or other negative, abusive behaviors, are -- at their root -- exertions of power and control. Remember that abuse is always a choice and you deserve to be respected. There is no excuse for abuse of any kind.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

Repurposing is allowed and encouraged.
Please contact loveisrespect for more information.

connect now!

chat at loveisrespect.org

text "loveis" to 22522

call 1-866-331-9474

Discuss your options confidentially.
Peer advocates are available 24/7.

If you think your relationship is unhealthy, it's important to think about your safety now. Consider these points as you move forward:

- Understand that a person can only change if they want to. You can't force your partner to alter their behavior if they don't believe they're wrong.
- Focus on your own needs. Are you taking care of yourself? Your wellness is always important. Watch your stress levels, take time to be with friends, get enough sleep. If you find that your relationship is draining you, consider ending it.
- Connect with your support systems. Often, abusers try to isolate their partners. Talk to your friends, family members, teachers and others to make sure you're getting the emotional support you need. Remember, our advocates are always ready to talk if you need a listening ear.
- Think about breaking up. Remember that you deserve to feel safe and accepted in your relationship.

Even though you cannot change your partner, you can make changes in your own life to stay safe. Consider leaving your partner before the abuse gets worse. Whether you decide to leave or stay, make sure you use our safety planning tips or take our Healthy Relationship Quiz on loveisrespect.org.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

Repurposing is allowed and encouraged. Please contact [loveisrespect](https://loveisrespect.org) for more information.

Types of Abuse



There are many types of abuse and they are all difficult to experience. Explore this section to learn the different ways abuse can occur so you can better identifying them. Remember, each type of abuse is serious and no one deserves to experience any form of it.

Emotional Abuse/Verbal Abuse

Non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring or “checking in,” excessive texting, humiliation, intimidation or isolation.

Stalking

Being repeatedly watched, followed or harassed.

Financial Abuse

Using money or access to accounts to exert power and control over a partner.

Physical Abuse

Any intentional use of physical force with the intent to cause fear or injury, like hitting, shoving, biting, strangling, kicking or using a weapon.

Sexual Abuse

Any action that impacts a person’s ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which sexual activity occurs, including restricting access to birth control or condoms.

Digital Abuse

The use of technology such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behavior is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated through technology.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

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Peer advocates are available 24/7.



Sexual Harassment

You should be able to feel comfortable in your place of work or learning. If you are being sexually harassed, you can report it to the authorities at your job, school, or local law enforcement.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature in the workplace or learning environment, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ([EEOC](#)). Sexual harassment does not always have to be specifically about sexual behavior or directed at a specific person. For example, negative comments about women as a group may be a form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment interferes with your performance by threatening your job security or becoming an obstacle to effective work.

Although sexual harassment laws do not usually cover teasing or offhand comments, these behaviors can also be upsetting and have a negative emotional impact.

What does sexual harassment look like?

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances. The harasser can identify with any gender and have any relationship to the victim, including a being a direct manager, indirect supervisor, co-worker, teacher, peer, or colleague.

Some forms of sexual harassment include:

- Making conditions of employment dependent on sexual favors
- Physical acts of sexual assault

- Requests for sexual favors
- Verbal harassment of a sexual nature
- Unwanted touching or physical contact
- Unwelcome sexual advances

Where can sexual harassment occur?

Sexual harassment can occur in the workplace or learning environment, like a school or university. It can happen in many different scenarios, including after-hours conversations, exchanges in the hallways, and non-office settings of employees or peers.

Where can I learn more about sexual harassment?

Visit the [EEOC](#) to learn more about sexual harassment laws. If you are a minor, you can learn more at [Youth at Work](#), EEOC's website for youth in the workforce.

Street Harassment

You might also encounter sexually harassing behaviors outside work or school. People experience catcalling, [being followed](#), sexual advances, groping or fondling, others exposing themselves, and many other unwelcome or threatening behaviors on the street or in public settings. The laws about these behaviors vary from state to state. You can find out more about this issues from your [local sexual assault service provider](#) or local law enforcement.

To speak with someone who is trained to help, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or chat online at online.rainn.org.



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TACTICS

BOYFRIENDING

Some boyfriends are not friends, at all. A typical human trafficker ploy is to win a girl's complete trust. The trafficker, or a guy used as a recruiter, then turns the girl over to traffickers. Sometimes, traffickers use another girl to win that trust. The result is the same... a trusting girl is ensnared into a life filled with brutality.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, texting and chat. Social networking is cool. Sometimes it leads to an off-line meeting and an uncool end-another social networker trapped by slave traders.

DRUGGING AT SOCIAL EVENTS

You meet interesting people at parties. But drugs secretly dropped into a drink or smeared on a glass can lead to an unexpected after-party, or more like an endless nightmare. Drugging at social events is a common tactic of human traffickers.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

The chance of a lifetime. A job too good to be true. The travel opportunity that can't be refused. Except that it leads to a place you cannot return home from. A place that is so very bad, and yet too true.

TARGETING VULNERABILITIES

No one ever told her that she is beautiful and seemed to mean it. And he wanted that concert ticket so much, he was willing to believe anything. We all have emotional needs. We all have dreams. Human traffickers know us all too well, and they are there to offer whatever it is you want or need. But they don't deliver.

FAMILY MEMBERS

Too often parents, or extended family, sell children, in exchange for drugs, alcohol or other gain. One family, for example, sold their child in exchange for van payments. An estimated 20% of victims are trafficked by their own family.



THREATS

Traffickers sometimes use coercion. One girl, for example, was approached when she was home alone, and told to pack her bags and come with traffickers or they would kill her family.

KIDNAPPING

Debbie goes out to the driveway at her family's home to meet a casual "friend," Bianca, who brings two men with her for a brief visit. When Debbie begins to hug Bianca good-bye, Debbie is shoved into the car and Bianca ties her hands as the men drive them away. With so many family and friends at the house that evening, Debbie's mother does not notice that she is gone.

Taken to an apartment 25 miles from her home, Debbie is drugged, threatened with a gun, repeatedly raped, made to live in a dog cage and subjected to other horrible abuse—all part of a process to break her into submission. The pimps make specific threats to harm Debbie's family

BLIND DATE

Kathy picks out the girls her pimp would like—the ones who might bring in the most cash. She befriends unsuspecting girls until they trust her enough to go on a blind-date that Kathy then sets up for them. Unfortunately, Sarah is one of the girls that Kathy befriends.

Finally sure she has gained Sarah's trust, Kathy suggests Sarah go on a blind-date with a "great medical student." Sarah readily agrees and meets her date at a local burger joint. He seems nice, but when the "date" pretends to walk Sarah to her car, he instead forces her into a locked vehicle and drives her to the pimp that both he and Kathy work for.

Sarah is drugged and

A PLACE TO LIVE

Desperate to find a new apartment before their lease is up, BFFs Jessie and Caroline search online ads for a new place to live. They are away from families and trying to get by on sparse funds. Then they read of a 2-bedroom apartment available. Peter, the landlord, takes pity on the girls and offers to let them rent for only \$200 a month. Overjoyed at this find, Jessie and Caroline readily accept the kindness and move in. What they don't know is that Peter has no pity, but rather makes the offer based on the pair's physical beauty and apparent vulnerability.

Over time, Peter furnishes the apartment for them with expensive furniture

members if she does not cooperate. And, so, she becomes the victim of forced prostitution and continued abuse for more than 40 days, until police enter the apartment and find her hidden away, crammed into a large dresser drawer. Too few enslavements end like this.

becomes another one of the pimp's forced prostitutes. She never even realizes that Kathy, the "friend" she had grown to love and trust over many months, works for the pimp. Sarah becomes the unwilling member of a prostitution ring in an area known for attracting sex tourists—men and women who travel to cities known to have the best in prostitution.

and wins Jessie and Caroline's trust through flirtation. They come to heavily rely on his seeming generosity. But, when the lease comes up for renewal, Peter tells the girls they owe him thousands of dollars for the furniture, and the rent is now \$600 a month. He convinces them they have no choice but to work as prostitutes to pay their keep, and he maintains control through drugging and beatings. With little money of their own and separated from family, Jessie and Caroline are trapped.

YOU SHOULD BE TREATED SO MUCH BETTER THAN THIS.

Even if you have already been tricked and trapped, you are not alone. And you are not at fault. Someone else made some bad choices and took advantage of your youth and vulnerability. Stop and think: Is this what you want for the rest of your life? You are worth **SO MUCH MORE**.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR OWN LIFE, SET THE GOALS YOU WANT AND START WORKING TO MEET THEM!
[CLICK HERE TO GET HELP.](#)