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## High School Consent Education: Working to Eradicate Rape Culture

Katrina Garry  
Yale College, New Haven Connecticut

### Abstract:

This capstone project argues that in order to truly eliminate rape culture, our country needs to implement a robust program of consent education starting in high school. Consent education is defined as a teaching that identifies consent as the most important aspect of engaging with another person romantically or sexually and builds the skills, strategies and common tools that students need to foster a climate of respect in their different communities. Consent education focuses on creating a critical culture shift around sexual and romantic disrespect and broadens the conversation to neither alienate nor isolate individuals and their sexual choices. It strives to create an environment where mutually enthusiastic encounters are the norm for sexual or romantic situations. Most importantly, the type of consent education explored in this capstone is not a conversation just about sex. It is a form of education that fosters the habits, skills, and practices for students to practice and engage responsibly and respectfully in their romantic and sexual encounters. Rather than individualizing, criminalizing, medicalizing, or pathologizing sexual violence, consent education addresses the structural and cultural scaffolding of rape culture – thus providing a systemic solution. This capstone is structured in two parts. The first is an essay which provides the rationale and theory behind why there is a need for consent education, why it works, and what has been done thus far. The second is a consent education curriculum in five lesson plans and a facilitator guide that is appropriate for high-schoolers. Each lesson plan will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography that informs teachers and students of the concrete research and theory of how the education of preventing sexual violence actually works.

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Katrina Garry

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Advisor: Dr. Talya Zemach- Bersin

## I. Introduction

Across the country, American society is navigating a crisis regarding issues of sexual misconduct and sexual violence. This is a critical time in our nation, as widespread allegations against famous personalities are made public and as citizens are inundated with the profusion of stories, pain, and truth that have emerged from the #MeToo movement. Each year in America, 321,500 people ages 12 and older are sexually assaulted or raped (Department of Justice 2015). It has become clear that our society suffers from an extreme case of normalizing behaviors and attitudes that inflict violence against women, something feminist scholars have identified as "rape culture." (Powell & Henry, 2). Rape culture is defined as the "social-cultural and structural discourses and practices" in which sexual misconduct and violence are "tolerated, accepted, eroticized, minimized and trivialized" (Powell & Henry 2).

Sexual violence has been catapulted into mainstream media and it can no longer be ignored that these instances of disrespect are ubiquitous in everyday encounters. While the issues associated with rape culture are now acknowledged, it is becoming increasingly obvious that American society is ill-prepared to understand and rectify the problem. Indeed, the entire country (adults and teens) fumbles over vocabulary, reasoning, and punishment with instances of sexual misconduct today. Both the underlying problem and the current confused climate reflect a failure of our educational system. In American schools, there is no mandated education on what sexual consent is, how one gets it, and how everyday actions support the scaffolding of this problem.

Schools just barely approach matters of sexual conduct in the sex education unit of high school health classes. Sex education has always been a polarizing and controversial subject because of the rich, unique, and strong personal opinions most individuals hold about such a personal subject. Sex is a topic that is influenced and informed by a variety of factors ranging

from religion, culture and family background to experiences and society. While sex education has long been a debated part of public school classrooms, currently only 24 states and the District of Columbia mandate sex education and only 18 of those teach contraception (Guttmacher Institute 2018). All too often, even mandated sex education does not expand beyond abstinence, the scientific and health-related aspects of procreation, and contraception. High school health classes are typically preoccupied with discussions on drugs, alcohol, STIs, contraception, and abstinence. Rarely in these lessons or conversations are the emotional aspects of sex brought up, nor is the lesson that sex need be consensual- which requires voluntary, mutual, clear, unambiguous, and ongoing agreement between the parties involved. As a result, students exit American public schooling system perhaps knowing how to avoid unwanted pregnancies, but they learn nothing that could potentially help to eradicate the pervasive problem of sexual misconduct.

This capstone project argues that in order to truly eliminate rape culture, our country needs to implement a robust program of consent education starting in high school. Consent education is defined as a teaching that identifies consent as the most important aspect of engaging with another person romantically or sexually and builds the skills, strategies and common tools that students need to foster a climate of respect in their different communities. Consent education focuses on creating a critical culture shift around sexual and romantic disrespect and broadens the conversation to neither alienate nor isolate individuals and their sexual choices. It strives to create an environment where mutually enthusiastic encounters are the norm for sexual or romantic situations. Most importantly, the type of consent education explored in this capstone is not a conversation just about sex. It is a form of education that fosters the habits, skills, and practices for students to practice and engage responsibly and respectfully in their romantic and sexual encounters. Rather than individualizing, criminalizing, medicalizing, or pathologizing sexual

violence, consent education addresses the structural and cultural scaffolding of rape culture – thus providing a systemic solution. The need for this education is conspicuous.

Picking up where primary and secondary schools failed, colleges have pioneered in implementing consent education as a result of government pressure and legislation. While this is progress, college is unfortunately not an early enough point of intervention. **Sexual assault is a national issue, and not just at the college level - 58% of students from the ages of 7-17 have reported sexual harassment, and most of it is found to be peer-to-peer (Hill, AAUW Crossing the Line Study).** College is too “late” for this education because “attitudes, values, and behaviors” surrounding sex and consent are already formed by this time (Schwartz, 144). **Rape culture impacts people long before college, women that are 16-19 years old in America are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than any other age group (RAINN 2015).** Nevertheless, college is often the only place where a person living in the U.S. will have access to consent education, a fact made all the more troubling when one considers that many young Americans don’t attend college. College has become a place where sexual assault is addressed directly and transparently, but many of the issues that exist at a college level stem from the lack of education in early childhood, middle school, and high school. Furthermore, the college first-year experience is not an ideal place to start consent education given the fact that many students have had no prior knowledge of consent and this is coupled with the tidal wave of availability to alcohol, drugs, and living in close proximity to same-aged peers that marks an American college experience.

This capstone is fueled by the following question:

What could a consent education for high-schoolers look like that neither normalizes nor disapproves of sexual activity and reimagines the possibilities of consent curriculum in a way that will build up to an eradication of rape culture in the future?

To answer this question, this capstone is structured in two parts. The first is an essay which provides the rationale and theory behind why there is a need for consent education, why it works, and what has been done thus far. The second is a consent education curriculum in five lesson plans and a facilitator guide that is appropriate for high-schoolers. Each lesson plan will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography that informs teachers and students of the concrete research and theory of how the education of preventing sexual violence actually works. This part of my capstone will be the practical part that can be used in classrooms. This capstone is completed in conjunction with Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence. The Center for Emotional Intelligence at Yale is a pioneer in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and implements curriculum in primary and secondary schools nationwide. They will be distributing this curriculum as part of their high-school "RULER" program. RULER is a groundbreaking SEL model that focuses on the critical emotional skills of "recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions" (Brackett 2012). This consent education curriculum aligns well with RULER given the key relationship-building skills needed in fostering communities and relationships of respect, especially in romantic and sexual situations.

## **II. Rape Culture - The "cultural scaffolding of rape" (Gavey)**

Proper consent education is effective because it is designed to attack the problem at its source: rape culture. Rape culture refers to the way in which our everyday actions uphold the "social structures" that "underpin the perpetration of sexual violence" (Powell & Henry 2). Rape culture is a more recently understood phenomenon that names the dynamics and attitudes that exist where "victims" are "routinely blamed or disbelieved for their own victimization and perpetrators are rarely held accountable" (Powell & Henry 2). The understanding of the concept of rape culture

is a critical step in rape prevention given that it broadens the conversation and prevention from singular instances, that focus specifically on the survivor or the perpetrator, and instead calls out the larger trends and dynamics that exist that support and uphold these actions continuing. The term was coined by second-wave feminists as a way to raise awareness about how everyday discourse and actions support a society in which violence against women is normalized (Poskin). The focus on “rape culture” in consent education is an ever-evolving approach and it marks a critical transition in rape prevention work.

Abstinence-only education is a key proponent of supporting rape culture. What is being taught in the classrooms since the government mandated abstinence-only education in the 1980s, is grounded in the faulty belief that it is the most effective way to prevent adolescent sexual activity and thus consequent out of wedlock pregnancies (NCAC). However, over time, public health officials and researchers realized the opposite: that fewer pregnancies occurred if students were educated about birth control and contraception instead of just abstinence. Abstinence-based programs “do not produce positive, sexual health outcomes.” (Carmody 5) Aside from public health concerns, the cultural effect of abstinence-only education was similarly negative. Abstinence-only education promoted the narrative that sex was something to be disapproved of, and thus further entrenched sexual activity as something private, hidden, and not talked about. It relied on "risk and fear" and made sex something that young people “need’ to be “fearful”of despite many of them were engaging in these acts (Carmody 6). This fostered problematic dynamics of shame, guilt, and secrecy, surrounding sex which only increased victim blaming in instances of sexual violence. Thus, not only did abstinence-only education have an adverse effect on unwanted pregnancies and a negative impact on sexual health, it also has contributed to rape culture.

Rape culture at its foundation relies deeply on gender norms and power dynamics. These are the same gender norms and power dynamics that are supported in abstinence education; women are “alluring” and men are “powerful” and must “resist their temptations”. The “gendered patterns of our lives” have become so “familiar” they are accepted and are “no longer” noticed (Fletcher 126). Gendered patterns and norms are the stereotypical assumptions of men as dominant and “physically aggressive” and women as “passive, non-combative”, and all the assumptions one makes upon someone based on their gender (Powell & Henry 6). This begins to play out as soon as babies are born and brought into their painted blue or pink room. They are then “scolded for acting outside traditional roles” if young boys are playing with dolls or girls are playing with trucks or blocks (Schwartz 44). It is ingrained in young boys by “American society” that the only way to “achieving masculinity” is by “putting down or ridiculing” all that is “female or feminine”; phrases like “throw like a girl” or calling someone a “pussy” reinforces these sentiments (Schwartz 71). Gender norms play into rape culture because of many view sexual violence as an “inevitable fact” that is “structured in the physiological differences between men and women.” (Powell & Henry 6) Gender norms are damaging to both sexes and also create a defined binary and set of attitudes, behaviors, and expectations set upon a person. It is important in responding to rape culture, that gender dynamics are understood to be at the root of the problem.

In addition to cultural stereotypes and expectations of gender, rape culture is inexorably tied to interpersonal or social scripts (Dixie 44). These scripts can be enacted between individuals or play out at in larger “cultural” discourses that are prevalent in the broader school community, or certain age groups. These are the entrenched patterns of what happens in a romantic or sexual situation and the common perception of “what you do.” High school age teens can feel immensely “pressured” to “adjust their personal behavior and beliefs” regarding sexual encounters and norms

to more closely "align" with that of their peers; this creates the strong influence of "peer norms" (Dixie 45). These scripts are influenced by "peer pressure" as well and can have "detrimental consequences" to all those involved by "influencing" how teens "think [they] should behave and interact with others socially, what [they] should expect from others, and what others may expect from [them]." (Dixie 42). In time, young teens and adults begin to "unconsciously" take to following these "sexual scripts" and it heavily changes and has a detrimental impact on the way in which communication happens with potential sexual partners (Dixie 42). Non-consensual sex is a common outcome from pressure to stick to these cultural or interpersonal scripts as a result of intense pressure, coercion or force. This can create sincere "barriers" that will "interfere" with "effective" dialogue and understanding of sexual consent (Dixie 42). In countering this key component of rape culture, it is proper consent education that will instead empower students to feel confident making their own decisions, setting their own boundaries, and intervening to disrupt these traditional peer norms and scripts. All these skills and strategies work to eradicate rape culture.

The term "rape culture" additionally recognizes that sexual assault and sexual violence exist and occur on a wide spectrum. While no instance is ever acceptable, it is only rape and physical penetration that many think of as sexual violence. By discussing the wide range of instances of disrespect and assault that are prevalent in society, the conversation is widened beyond the narrow high-stakes and heterosexual understanding of rape. Low-level instances of disrespect support and reinforce a rape culture. Rape culture does not just mean rape; it goes beyond the classic understanding of two people behind a closed door and instead focuses on the small actions, speech, practices, and outcomes that create the current attitude in American culture that sexual violence and harassment are accepted and inevitable norms. Low-levels of disrespect are moments where

everyone laughs at a joke that perpetuates violence against women, intimate partner violence, rape, or anything else inciting sexual violence against one another. It is in the everyday use of "language" that justifies rape and use of "talk and vocabularies" that "support a rape culture" (Schwartz 73). Laughing at this joke does not equate to rape but laughing does and can normalize the behavior of rape. One can find the "everyday expression" of these low-level instances of disrespect that support rape culture socially between individuals, in "mainstream media, advertising, and popular culture," as well as in "online communities and via social media." (Powell & Henry 6).

Victim blaming is another key component of rape culture. Victim-blaming language infiltrates how survivors understand their experiences, the quality of support they receive, and the criminal justice system. People are bombarded with the media's portrayal of popular cases that truly distort perceptions of how rape happens. Media is critical in that it "frames our views in advance" about sexual violence (Schwartz 171). Social media and widespread news articles isolate the facts of very nuanced instances of sexual assault leading to conversations and implications that it was the survivor's fault due to the way she was dressed, her levels of intoxication, or even a proclamation that she was laughing or enticing the response. This creates a "general atmosphere of mistrust" and "well-organized backlash" (Schwartz 171). In many cases, they "deny the abuse" of an individual and instead "enhance the pain and suffering" of "survivors" that "prevent the implementation" of policies and cultural change to address the issue (Schwartz 170). This results in an understanding of sexual violence that creates a discourse that has the possibility to further entrench these issues and underpinnings of sexual violence and victim blaming.

In the next section, different rape prevention models and their connection to consent education are explored. Defining consent education is an effort to overcome rape culture and the

negative effect the media's lens influences students' perception of sexual misconduct. Considering the many facets of rape culture, it becomes clear that traditional sex education fails to address the cultural, social, and structural problem, and that consent education is deeply necessary to change the damaging impact of rape culture.

### III. Evolution and History of Rape Prevention Models

Sexual violence Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outlines a framework for dealing with sexual violence which presents three levels of intervention. Primary prevention focuses on the “population-wide factors” that “contribute to violence” before it happens (Powell & Henry 9). This approach uses skills and “strategies” to address the “underlying causes” of sexual misconduct and violence by using a community approach to changing “individual behavior knowledge and skills” (Powell & Henry 9). Proper consent education attempts to do just this, thus differing from historical approaches in the last 30 years to sexual violence prevention which weighed heavily on secondary and tertiary prevention (Lee 15). Secondary prevention “targets” certain groups or people who show “early signs of engaging in violent behavior” or those who show they may become a “victim of violence” (Powell & Henry 9). Secondary prevention has the possibility of “doing more harm than good”, by reinforcing stereotypes and making survivors feel punished for their “risky” actions (Schwartz 144). Lastly, tertiary emphasizes focus on “intervening after violence has occurred” in order to “reduce” the possible effects and outcomes and “prevent recurrence” (Powell & Henry 9). This takes a variety of forms like therapy or criminal justice responses. Unlike consent education, these common approaches to rape prevention narrow the scope of the possible impact.

Rape prevention entered American society most prominently by “radical feminists” in the 1970’s (Gavey 25). Feminist and advocacy groups primarily focused on “tertiary” approaches through support for “battered” women and the creation of rape crisis shelters for safety. The first rape crisis center in the was founded in 1972 in Washington D.C (Gavey 28). Yet even as feminists cultivated tertiary approaches to rape prevention, they also were not unfamiliar with the idea that rape was a cultural problem. Thinking through the “cultural scaffolding of rape” began in 1977 with Susan Griffin’s article “Rape: The All-American Crime” (Gavey 30). This article pulled the discourse away from “isolated acts” and incidents and instead focused on how “Western” culture “actively tolerated” sexual violence against women (Gavey 30). Griffin started the conversation of how “normative gender roles” are strongly intertwined in the “maintenance” of rape; at the roots of these egregious acts was the “patriarchy” and thus they could not be ended without “ending patriarchy itself” (Gavey 30). These feminists worked to change legislation and gain awareness of rape as a women’s issue through “conscious -raising” groups (Gavey 28). In time, there were groups like the Chicago Women Against Rape, which reflected a nuanced and culturally competent understanding of rape culture in their 1970s purpose statement:

“Rape violently reflects the sexism in a society where power is unequally distributed between women and men, black and white, poor and rich...In rape, the woman is not a sexual being but a vulnerable piece of public property; the man does not violate society’s norms so much as take them to a logical conclusion.” (Schechter 35)

This statement demonstrates the breadth of awareness some women had of the larger cultural problem, and their efforts to implement primary prevention through consciousness raising as well as tertiary intervention through support for women.

Outside of the realm of second-wave feminist anti-rape organizing, researchers presented theories which were less concerned with changing the cultural roots of rape. Two of the most prominent social researchers during this time was Menachim Amir and Eugene Kanin, whose

research demonstrated "wider community approaches" to rape representation that were highly problematic (Gavey 9). Kanin pioneered ideas on "victim precipitation" and portrayed rape as a "dance of two parties" in ways that led to typical victim-blaming prevention tactics. Amir's research found that the "victim is not solely responsible for what becomes the unfortunate event" but "she is often a complementary partner" (Amir 463). Women were dubbed to be "sexually receptive" and "provocative" which "helped" catalyze the "aggressive episode" (Kanin 65). Influenced by these ideas, the typical rape prevention frameworks that started in the 1970's and 1980's, focused on what women can do to "prevent rape", building skills and knowledge on "how to avoid risk in public spaces" and "how to defend oneself against a potential perpetrator" (Powell & Henry 5). This early research led to rape prevention that "problematically tended to deny the diversity of women's experience of sexual violence" and did not challenge the assumption that "sexual violence was inevitable" (Powell & Henry 5). As mentioned in the earlier discussion of rape culture, there has been a significant evolution away from these victim-blaming and exclusionary frameworks to the present understanding of rape culture. This change in thinking is key to ameliorating sexual violence.

While Amir and Kanin's approach solely focused on women, other rape prevention models focus entirely on men. Susan Brownmiller, a feminist journalist's 1975 anti-rape text, *Against Our Will*, created the influential sentiments that "*all men*" keep "*all women*" in a "state of fear" of rape (Gavey 30). This led to the widely criticized notion of "all men are potential rapists" and that "all men benefit from rape." (Gavey 30). However, it is proven that "constructing young men" as "universally likely" to commit acts of sexual violence has "little hope of engaging men in primary prevention." (Powell & Henry 11). This sentiment was problematic in itself. Much of rape prevention has focused too much at times on the gender binary, thus excluding nonconforming

people and alienating men as dangerous and women as fragile, which both further entrench gender stereotypes. Amir and Kanin relied on gender stereotypes to present women as “passive” or “coy,” while the work of some feminists like Brownmiller relied on gender stereotypes of men as biologically sexually aggressive. Both approaches further intensify the problem of rape culture. Many curricula rely on these historic rape prevention models and are “identifying men as potential perpetrators” or solely sending messages of women as “victims”, this approach can promote “defensiveness” and can increase “resistance” to rape prevention training (Banyard 7).

Alongside these highly gendered and exclusionary models, a criminological based model of rape continued to advance the idea that women, if only properly trained and prepared, could protect themselves from sexual assault. In the past and even now there are criminological based models that educate women to “improve their knowledge of risky situations” and to “avoid risky” behaviors and places (Powell & Henry 8). Many models of rape prevention treat rape like a crime and use this type of policing model like target-hardening models. Rape prevention workshops often make women fear for their livelihood and make men scared of their own physical presence by using “target-hardening strategies” (Schwartz 143). These workshops rely on teachings that “curtail individual freedoms” of women and marked with horrifying statistics that disempower students and take away their agency to act. This only “renders” women “powerless” and can even make them “prisoners in their own home” which further widens the gender imbalances, as women see themselves as “helpless” (Schwartz 133).

In addition, these criminological models do not reflect the reality of sexual assault. By the early 1990’s people began to question the idea that rape was perpetrated by hardened criminals in dark alleyways to women who failed to protect themselves adequately. In reality, sexual violence is perpetrated by “known” people often in the “victim’s or perpetrator’s home” (Powell & Henry 9).

With this shift in the early 1990's, the term "date rape" emerged (Gavey 36). Proper consent education acknowledges this paradigm shift and protecting oneself from "avoiding public spaces" and other common criminological based suggestions does not protect one from sexual violence and instead are "highly problematic" (Powell & Henry 8). This rape avoidance type of approach provides an "inaccurate model" because even those who "follow the safety guidelines, may still become a victim" (Powell & Henry 8). It is not the "risky" and "unprotected" people that are most vulnerable to sexual violence, but anyone, given the understanding that rape can be perpetuated by a current sexual partner (Gavey 35).

The "knowledge" model of rape prevention education is, like the criminological approach, similarly limited. In "knowledge" models of reducing sexual misconduct especially, educators mistakenly believe that if students only understand the "extent of which sexual violence is occurring in their communities they will change their behavior" (Carmody 156). However, this actually "reflects limited understanding" of how people learn and how attitudinal and behavioral change can be maximized. Horrifying statistics are not able to stop sexual misconduct because "knowledge alone will not lead to behavioral change" (Carmody 156).

Outdated understandings of sexual violence prevention, misconceptions of how cultural change occurs, and the common attitudes and perceptions of gender and victim-blaming are all too often reflected in some workshops or curricula that seek to end sexual misconduct. Ultimately, rape prevention programs that focus only on the issue of sexual assault fail because they do not address the root problem of rape culture in an effective way. Though traditional rape prevention programs and consent education share the same goal of eradicating sexual violence, they signify dramatically different approaches. In understanding the different approaches to rape prevention and where they've championed and where they have been faulty, the proper consent education is

born. In order for a curriculum to truly help end sexual violence, it must be carefully designed and researched so as to not inadvertently reproduce aspects of rape culture and alienate the audience.

The current critiques of rape prevention shed light on the importance diversity is in understanding and teaching topics of consent. There is a present lack of space in rape prevention programming to recognize and explore the "intersectionality" of sexual violence with race, socioeconomic status, religion and more; these factors are traditionally ignored. Rape, in general, is a topic that needs to be combatted side by side with racism. The earliest historical definitions of rape as it was understood in America painted white women as the only possible victims at the hands of black men (Gavey 18). Given America's entrenched racist sentiments and history, the work of women of color and feminists to disentangle the definition of rape and its inherent racist sentiments has proven to be a battle still being fought. This permeates history to be incredibly apparent today in modern conceptions of black men being sexually aggressive and dominating, that are damaging to young black men. The strongest critiques of the "white feminist" anti-rape framework are in the way "racial politics that saturate societal responses to rape" are widely ignored (Gavey 26). A proper consent education today ties into acknowledging and giving "attention" to the "diversity" of sexual violence and how people experience it, but also the "marginalization" of identities and experiences of "race, class, sexuality, and disability" (Powell & Henry 5). This also speaks to how different cultures can structure and cultivate taboos and understandings of sexual violence that greatly inform and affect the way in which students can learn about consent. Consent education can be a place in where the conversation is wide enough to elicit space for the personal reflection and sincere intersectional nature of the pervasiveness of the issue and dismantle bias.

Rape prevention and thus consent education is similarly unsuccessful when it has "universalized" women as "victims" and men as "perpetrators" (Powell & Henry 5). One of the most successful studies of reducing instances of sexual misconduct is based on a practice of "male peer support" done by Schwartz and DeKerseredy in 1997 (Powell & Henry 6). This study demonstrates that proper rape prevention disrupts rape culture through interruptions to the typical script and language of "women's passivity and men's aggressiveness" (Powell & Henry 6). Proper consent curriculum does not perpetuate this "toxic masculinity" that has a damaging effect on men and instead engages men in "promoting alternative cultures and practices of masculinity." (Powell & Henry 6) It is key to eliminating sexual violence. Thus, proper consent education is inclusive and moves away from the common pitfall of relying too heavily on the gender binary- addressing men as the criminals and women as victims; it is counterproductive in overcoming rape culture. A proper consent curriculum avoids the common pitfalls of inclusivity by "deliberately" using "gender-neutral language" and being universal in their "framing of sexual violence" so it can be "inclusive and respectful of everybody's experiences and beliefs" (Powell & Henry 11). This type of approach helps bring in all members of the community instead of marginalizing specific populations like men, or on college campuses, "athletes or fraternity members" which instead reiterate stereotypes and discrimination or exclude other places sexual violence happens (Banyard 464). Much of school policy and attention is focused on these specific populations and thus does not promote general awareness and accountability around these issues. However, state legislature is beginning to support this paradigm shift.

In the recent years, state legislature is beginning to reflect the transition away from preventative work to actually addressing overall cultural changes that need to occur. Consent education is an incredibly crucial step in overcoming rape culture and creating a climate of respect.

However, it is not just the right consent education curriculum, like the one produced here, but also the policies and laws that help enforce and implement this curriculum during a time when 50% of states still don't mandate sex education (Guttmacher Institute 2018). In 2015, California became the first state to enact an affirmative consent law. This "Health Framework for California Public Schools" in Senate Bill 695 calls for education for grades 9-12 to have education on different forms of "sexual harassment and violence, including instances that occur among peers and in a dating relationship; a discussion of prevention strategies; how pupils report sexual harassment and violence; and potential resources victims can access" (S.695). In addition, they must discuss the affirmative consent standard "skills pupils use to establish boundaries in peer and dating relationships" (S. 695). It is also included that the school must "ensure information included in the framework is research-based and appropriate for pupils of all races, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds"(S. 695). This is the first state law of this type. It marks a step in making a critical change in the climate of our country and promotes research-based solutions that address intersectionality and inclusivity. The transition to affirmative consent marks a critical change. The rule of "no means no" as the sole marker of consent greatly limits the possibilities of understanding refusal and acknowledging the widespread nature of sexual violence. Instead of affirmative, unambiguous, "yes means yes" rule of consent presents enthusiastic mutual consent as the norm. California is a trailblazing state for creating a "standard of behavior" and subsequent education in both colleges and high-schools (Medina). De León, the Democratic Senator who created the bill, described the reasons for the bill as creating a "paradigm shift as much as a legal shift" so as to move away from victim blaming (Medina).

However, this work could not be more timely given the Trump administration's recent withdrawal of "Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Violence" (DCL) that was issued in 2011 by the

Obama administration (U.S Department of Education). This change could greatly impact how sexual misconduct is talked about, dealt with by schools, and is a huge step backward in preventing sexual violence and the progress of rape prevention models.

Great strides were made in legislation with the commitment of Vice President Joe Biden and President Barack Obama's administration to end sexual violence. The DCL established the expectations and guidelines for how any publicly funded educational institution should handle issues of sexual assault. The letter came in response to the alarmingly low rate of reporting for instances of sexual misconduct and the shockingly high rates of sexual assault (Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Violence). The letter specifically advises on "student-on-student" misconduct and the legal obligation schools have in effectively and efficiently responded to formal complaints (DCL). It also includes ways for schools to prevent instances of sexual violence and demonstrate a commitment to safety. They recommend sexual violence prevention education programs with "(1) orientation programs for new students, faculty, staff, and employees; (2) training for students who serve as advisors in residence halls; (3) training for student-athletes and coaches; and (4) school assemblies and 'back to school nights.'" (DCL) While the specific guidance in this letter and accompanying guidelines created tighter policies and protection for students, the overall impact of the DCL was demonstrating a shift in rape prevention to be reflected at the government policy level. This also included lowering the standard of evidence in school proceedings to be a "preponderance of evidence" which has now been shifted to "clear and convincing". This letter was significant in signifying that sexual harassment and assault are serious crimes that schools have a responsibility to deal with. Given the current withdrawal of such an important document by Betsy DeVos, it's critical that schools make independent efforts to strengthen consent education programs and prevention, even despite the lack of current government commitment.

Today, given the history and critique of rape prevention models it is understood that the "best" sexual violence prevention work combines both the "socio-political analysis" of feminist theory approach to rape culture with the "systematic" nature of the primary prevention approach of a public health framework, and thus a proper consent curriculum will mirror this (Lee 15). Consent education at its roots must present a "challenge to the narratives, complexes, and institutions that make rape a dominant cultural script" (Powell & Henry 6).

#### **IV. Primary Source Analysis**

Consent education is an ambitious enterprise, and in many ways offers a successful model for combating rape culture that has the potential to succeed where traditional sex education and rape prevention education has failed. However, there is no single perfect consent curricula model currently publicly available at the high school level. Existing curricula that are publically available have both strengths and weaknesses; a review of which has helped to guide the design of the consent curriculum presented here. An analysis of this curricula exposes some of the common pitfalls that can hinder the effectiveness of consent education but also demonstrates some positive things that these curricula do. This section offers an analysis of four primary source examples of consent curricula: Planned Parenthood's series on consent and boundary setting, the Unitarian Universalist Association's Our Whole Lives sex education, an international organization I <3 Consent, and the Yale's Communication and Consent Educator's workshops. The strengths and limitations of these different primary sources illuminate the need for proper consent education for high school students that neither promotes stereotypes nor instills fear. Though they do intend to eradicate rape culture, these curricula suffer from a lack of inclusivity, paucity of training for teachers, missing acknowledgment of trigger warnings, the assumption of heteronormativity,

and/or promotion of gender roles and the notion that rape only happens when a man transgresses a woman.

These lesson plans align with goals of consent education at times when they included hands-on activities or "active learning strategies" where students were actually practicing communicative skills around something unrelated to sex and then connecting how sex requires these same communicative skills we already have (Banyard 464). This is crucial in skill building but also broadening the conversation to any interaction. When the group moves into communication around sexual situations, some of these situations could be too sensitive for students who are not engaging in sexual behaviors yet and may make students uncomfortable. Planned Parenthood and Myth of Miscommunication curriculum uses skits to act out instances of agreement, refusal, or ambiguity in a way that students can tactically make the connection of how this connects to sexual situations, while not making the situation a metaphor for sex. The students learn that the same skills used in everyday situations are the ones they use in sexual scenarios. This teaches students that consent is the same in sexual situations but has them notice they use these skills in everyday life. However, this strategy is hindered in its effectiveness by the other present gaps in the curriculum.

Inclusivity is one of the most apparent pitfalls in consent curriculum. To be inclusive this means not assuming heteronormativity, not painting men as the sole perpetrators of violence, and including even those without sexual experience. Full inclusivity in all aspects of gender neutrality, sexual orientation, and experience is absent from every consent curriculum evaluated. There is typically gendered portrayal of men as perpetrators and women as victims in scenarios, assumed heteronormativity, and another isolating language that assumes everyone is sexually active. However, they triumph in individual ways. I <3 Heart Consent's lesson plan is successful in

acknowledging respect is not assuming someone's sexuality, gender identity, and choices of abstinence or asexuality. In addition, the Myth of Miscommunication does a great job in using gender neutral names in scenarios as to make these scenarios open to interpretation of what gender the victim or perpetrator is. Some of these lesson plans are successful in that they bring in videos that are inclusive of same-sex couples as well as hetero ones, demonstrating that queer people are also included in the conversation on sexual violence and disrespect exists in many different relationships.

Some consent curriculum can be upsetting given that they include extremely sexually explicit scenarios and describes traumatic instances of sexual assault. A curriculum must be designed so that facilitators are not including sexually traumatizing experiences that scare students. In Our Whole Lives curriculum one lesson called "Date Rape" contains many problematic elements and triggering stories that involve a man pushing a woman's legs apart and explaining the abuse in graphic detail. In addition, the curriculum from I <3 Consent, had students name slut-shaming and unpack rape myths which can be highly problematic and be triggering. By bringing up some common misperceptions that exist can further entrench the myths because they are being verbally acknowledged and, in some way, affirmed. There is a way to dispel myths without clearing spelling them out; by rallying students around respectful relationships and focusing on the positive of what one should do, instead of relying on what NOT to do.

Another common pitfall is traditional victim-blaming language that is apparent in some curriculum, probably relying on dated rape prevention models. In the "Date Rape" lesson from Our Whole Lives curriculum, the class is asked how to "avoid date rape," inherently placing blame on victims and indicating that it is preventable. Good curriculum avoids using victim-blaming

language and instead discusses instances of sexual violence in a way that creates support for survivors.

It is shown to be integral for a curriculum to include instructions for facilitators that equip them with tools to avoid victim blaming, create an inclusive environment, think about the accessibility of the conversation, and understand trigger warnings. I <3 Consent's lesson plan and Our Whole Lives curriculum established of ground rules for the classroom prior to beginning the lesson. As referenced above, it is absolutely critical that facilitators are trained prior to delivering these lessons. However, this was something that was largely absent from much of the lesson plans and would impact proper implementation.

Figure 2 recognizes that the five-lesson plan curriculum proposed here fills the present gaps that each of these primary sources have missed in one way or another. It is in the analysis of the existing curriculum that it is concluded a comprehensive set of lesson plans that broaden the conversation beyond just sex and are age appropriate for high-school students by avoiding sexually explicit language or situations has not been created. Yale's Bystander Intervention lesson frames strategies about recognizing signals of disrespect at the low stakes situation to not be in these terrible escalated high-stakes scenarios. This focus allows for situations to be more high-school appropriate in everyday disrespect that can be ubiquitous in school hallways and online. The proposed consent curriculum aims to fill this gap in consent education for high school students.

*\*The specific curriculum analyzed as primary sources are evaluated in their effectiveness under the key components I have identified as integral parts of consent education.*

Figure 2

	Inclusivity	Trigger - Warnings	Facilitator Prep	Intimate Partner Violence included	No victim-blaming	High-school appropriate
Yale: MoM/ Bystander Intervention	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
Our Whole Lives	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red
I <3 Consent	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red
Planned Parenthood	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green
<b>Proposed Curriculum</b>	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

## V. Curriculum

The curriculum created will include five lesson plans and an additional guide for facilitators. These five different lesson plans presented below will touch upon the important themes and practices of boundary setting, gender norms, online behavior & sexual harassment, bystander intervention, sexual pressure, alcohol and substance involvement, power dynamics, emotional abuse and others. A successful curriculum is created in a way that “reinforces” and “builds upon previous material” (Lee, 16), the order of these lesson plans is deliberate in building an understanding of definitions of consent and respect, then focusing on specific skill sets and

strategies for themselves, broadening the conversation so students understand the broader socio-cultural beliefs and behaviors that reinforce disrespect. The last lesson is specifically tailored to push students to use all this knowledge to feel accountable as members of the community to act and intervene.

In an ideal world, the school has the bandwidth to expand beyond five-lesson plans and time and resources to fully implement all facets of consent education. This ideal world encompasses supportive parents, thoughtful teachers, mature students and the bandwidth and energy of administrators to train facilitators and all community stakeholders. However, it is important to acknowledge that it is not an ideal world and there are significant challenges to implementation and creating a curriculum that does not disrupt a community's peace and time constraints. This curriculum was designed with the awareness that it is difficult for schools to find the time for new programming. Health classes in public schools have mandated topics they have to cover, and a set of five 45-minute lessons is an extensive undertaking for schools, albeit an important one. Multiple sessions are required because in order to "generate behavioral and attitudinal change" there must be meetings throughout a semester (Carmody 159). However, this comes with the cognizant understanding of the bandwidth public schools have to actually incorporate new material into their existing health curriculum, given the time constraints and sensitivities that exist. The research and the curriculum are created maintaining a realistic viewpoint on the feasibility of its actual implementation by focusing on a larger range of topics that do not just discuss the sensitive subject of sex.

In addition, much of consent education calls for a whole school community approach. This approach permeates the single classroom or lesson plan and includes all members of the school as active and responsible members of the community to dispel rape culture. "Whole school approach

to violence prevention," explains one consent education expert, "involves embedding change at the level of student cultures, staff training and support, curriculum and school policy development, school leadership and management and working with parents in the school community" (Carmody 153). An interdisciplinary approach emphasizes a role for each member of the community seeing themselves as accountable and an active player in cultivating a climate of respect. From the janitors to the principals, to the parents, to the students and most notably the teachers each member creates a "sense of ownership" over the community culture (Lee 16). Beyond the simple interpersonal model, rape culture is challenged best by mobilizing the entire community through "promoting positive change" in "community norms" (Lee 17). Again, in an ideal world this approach is feasible and supported, however, it presents a significant challenge and is a goal to strive for.

In this community-wide approach to consent education, training for teachers is a crucial component. given that it is typically "unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory" for most school educators (Carmody 153). It is important that facilitators and instructors know how to prepare for the sensitivity of a classroom discussion or conversation and addresses their own sensitivities with the topic before the lesson. The Center for Teaching and Learning at Michigan defines key pillars of handling difficult conversation as "identifying a clear purpose, establishing ground rules, providing a common base for understanding, creating a framework for the discussion that maintains focus and flow, including everyone, being an active facilitator, summarizing discussion and gathering student feedback, and handling issues that involve the instructor's identity" (University of Michigan, Center for Research, Teaching, and Learning). It is echoed by rape prevention scholars that "extensive training and support for teachers" is the key ingredient in

"delivering gender sexual violence prevention education" and building skills in "interpersonal problem solving" (Carmody 153).

The last fundamental challenge is the fact that many of these programs are too new to have been properly “empirically evaluated” and thus can’t show the impact and change over time (Banyard 464). This can create problematic relations with school boards, government, or other governing entities who look for hard data and output that demonstrates the “effectiveness.” (Banyard 464).

In practice, implementing consent curricula can be a challenge. Even schools that have access to the best curriculum are not implementing it because of warring views on sex from school boards, parents councils, religious communities, and state funding (Donovan).. Similar to more general sex education, consent education is deeply scrutinized given the sensitive nature of the topic. These issues are “related to personal relationships” and they include a wide range of “complex” and sometimes even “contested beliefs, attitudes, values and ethics concerning relationships, gender, and questions of what is personal or private, as well as rights and responsibilities” (Carmody 156). These opinions and ideas are bred from a variety of places, some religious and others from deep set trauma or previous personal experiences with sex. Attempting to change a culture is no small feat, and it is only expected that such attempts will be met with resistance and misunderstanding. The curriculum proposed below, however, attempts to avoid triggering such resistance by being respectful of a diversity of opinions and being neither critical nor encouraging of sexual activities.

The challenges of consent education are numerous given the sensitive nature of the topic. Most notable is the critique that consent education normalizes sexual behavior and encourages students to engage in sex (look to Figure 2) (“Resources Archive”, We Ascend). This, however, is a misconception. By addressing the emotional side of sex, students are neither encouraged or discouraged about sexual behavior because consent education is not just about sex. This curriculum addresses this concern by not being sexually explicit and broadening the conversation to focus on being a respectful person and understanding how to disrupt the common narratives and scripts of sexual violence.

From the research on rape prevention, analysis of current curricula, and specifically interdisciplinary approaches to preventing sexual violence through education, I’ve concluded that a successful consent curriculum should have the following principles:

- A. Age Appropriate for high school
- B. Not just a conversation about sex → broadens it to be inclusive
- C. Non- heteronormative language → gender-neutral pronouns and names
- D. Awareness of unique histories → Trigger warnings
- E. Inclusivity / Universally applicable → given distinct cultural differences and influences

Figure 2



- F. Consent is a low- bar → strive for enthusiastic mutual engagement in encounters
- G. Training and Guidelines for teachers

## VI. LESSON PLANS

With these principles in mind, I've designed a consent curriculum with 5 lesson plans targeting the following important pillars of eradicating rape culture:

### A. Communication and Consent

This lesson aims to create a general understanding around the meaning and practice of consent. The objectives of this lesson are for students to 1) learn the definition of consent 2) recognize signals of agreement, ambiguity, or refusal around requests and proposals 3) learn the resources available at school for cases of sexual misconduct.

Sources: Banyard, Beres, Carmody, Dixie, Powell & Henry

### B. Boundary Setting and Sexual Pressure

This lesson focuses on students' understanding that there are a variety of experiences that inform our boundaries and no two people have the same ones. The lesson also establishes tools and strategies to use if someone is trying to transgress their boundaries. Objectives of this lesson is for students to 1) identify some of their boundaries 2) recognize that everyone has different opinions on different acts given our unique histories and upbringings that influence how we think about sex and other personal actions 3) develop strategies to use if they feel their boundaries are being pressured or not respected.

Sources: Carmody, Dixie, Gavey

### C. Gender Norms and Power Dynamics

This lesson broadens the conversation to talk about some of the cultural underpinnings of sexual violence and challenges a rape culture by discussing the interplay of gender and power. Objectives of this lesson are for students to 1) define gender norms and power dynamics 2) define rape culture and understand how gender norms and power dynamics are problematic in how they support disrespect and rape culture 3) learn about cultural scripts 4) work to create strategies on “breaking the script” in their community around gender norms and power dynamics.

Sources: Carmody, Dixie, Fletcher, Gavey, Powell & Henry, Lee, Schwartz & DesKeredy

#### D. Respect and Relationships

This lesson focuses on more intimate relationships and common forms of disrespect that exist in relationship settings. Objectives are for students to 1) imagine what a respectful relationship looks like in their community and establish tenets of positive relationships 2) define intimate partner violence and discuss signs of IPV 3) understand ways in which to support a friend.

Sources: Avery-Leaf, Center for Disease Control, Carmody, Dixie, Fellmeth, Fletcher, Lee

#### E. Bystander Intervention

The last lesson is focused on empowering students to feel responsible for their community and feel a stake in intervening when seeing instances of disrespect. Objectives for this lesson are to 1) establish community norms to foster accountability 2) recognize signs of disrespect 3) build strategies to intervene in low-level encounters and learn ways to get help

Sources: Banyard, Carmody, Fletcher, Lee, Schwartz & DesKeresedy

#### F. Training and Guidelines for Facilitators

This training and guideline lesson aims to assist instructors who are not trained in dealing with this type of sensitive work. The objectives of this lesson are to help facilitators 1) define ground rules for the classroom and frame the lessons in a way that is positive and productive 2)

instill vocabulary and strategies for working through tough moments 3) developing skills to create an environment that is safe and inclusive.

Sources: Center for Research, Teaching and Learning at University of Michigan provides important “Guidelines for Discussing Difficult or Controversial Topic, Carmody

## VII. **Conclusion**

Despite the present lack of policy supporting consent education, the need is inconspicuous and thus must be supported through advocacy and campaigns now more than ever. The current climate in America reads that consent and sexual violence are salient issues and now is an critical window to gain traction. A proper consent education is grounded in theory of behavior change in three main dimensions: “promoting equal and respectful relations between men and women, promoting non-violent social norms and reducing the effects of prior exposure to violence, and promoting access to resources and systems of support.” (Fletcher, 138) In addressing and analyzing historical rape prevention models, past consent curriculums, and critiquing their pitfalls, it emerges that consent education is the fundamental vehicle in eradicating a rape culture in America now. Consent education can disrupt the common normalization and support of instances of sexual violence. This consent curriculum is developed given this rationale for the need, the purpose, and the hopeful ability of consent education to eradicate sexual violence.

Finally, on a personal note, I write this capstone as a woman who plans to dedicate their life to sexual violence prevention and education work. As a Communication and Consent Educator at Yale University, I function as a mandatory reporter under Obama’s DCL and an active part of Yale’s efforts to eradicate sexual violence on campus. This work is hard and it is an emotional investment into slow and gradual change. There are pockets of hope I see daily in my work; we

must hold on to these in order to continue to dismantle rape culture. I believe that by implementing curriculum earlier and more broadly, students and young people in America can help create a paradigm shift in the narrative of sexual violence and disrupt rape culture.

# Class 1: Communication and Consent

<b>Overview</b>	First, the teacher will help students understand the resources available in responding to sexual misconduct. Students then work in groups to recognize body language and emotions through acting out a daily conversation about asking someone to lunch. Students will learn the meaning of consent by thinking about how we use these skills in everyday requests, proposals, and asks they make. Finally, the teacher then provides the definition of “consent” and the group discusses how this might look in a romantic or sexual situation and discuss ambiguity: How do you clarify if you are unsure?
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Students will: 1) Receive the resources available at school for cases of sexual misconduct 2) Learn the definition of consent 3) Recognize signals of agreement, ambiguity, or refusal around requests and proposals
<b>Duration</b>	45 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	Do you want to go to lunch? handout Index cards to distribute ambiguous tasks
<b>Teacher Note</b>	Before you start class today, understand thoroughly the resources available at school for responding to sexual misconduct, and who students can talk to if they have experienced this. In addition, check the consent laws in your state: <a href="https://apps.rainn.org/policy/">https://apps.rainn.org/policy/</a>
<b>Relevant Sources</b>	Banyard - research on bystander intervention Beres- more info on the myth of miscommunication Powell & Henry- research on consent Carmody- research on preventing sexual violence and ethical sex Dixie - more info on consent as a factor in reducing sexual violence

## RESOURCES RECAP

*\*\*Teacher note: Take a moment to acknowledge the people and phone numbers that are available for students to use at their disposal in case they experience disrespect along sexual lines or are made uncomfortable.*

Say “Today we will be discussing communication and consent in our everyday lives. Nothing we will be learning today is directly about sex or sexual violence, but the conversation relates and if anyone does find any part of today’s lessons particularly upsetting or uncomfortable please feel free to take the time you need and use the resources we just discussed.”

## ACTIVITY

**Thinking about Consent through Recognizing Emotions with an Everyday Proposal, Request, or Ask (10 minutes)**

Divide the class into groups of 2-5 students. One student should play the inviter and the invitee can be played by the same student, a combination, or a new student each time. Have the students in their group think about their roles and then act out a series of 4 skits that play out an inviter and an invitee thinking about getting lunch at the cafeteria as their class is ending. The students should work to create a short 1 min each performance for each of the following scenarios to then share out after 10 minutes:

- Scenario 1: The inviter **wants to go** to lunch, the invitee **does not want to go** to lunch, but doesn't want to be rude.
- Scenario 2: The inviter **wants to go** to lunch, the invitee also **really wants to go** to lunch!
- Scenario 3: The inviter **wants to go** to lunch (because it is a surprise birthday lunch for the invitee), the invitee **does not want to go** to lunch., but doesn't want to be rude
- Scenario 4: The inviter **doesn't really care** about going to lunch, the invitee **doesn't want to go**.

In each of these skits have the students brainstorm-  
Say "How would they show these emotions?"

What are ways they naturally demonstrate these emotions with their verbal and nonverbal cues like body language?

How about with their verbal cues?"

### SKIT PERFORMANCE

#### Share out (5 minutes)

Invite groups to share out. Start with scenario 1 and move through different groups demonstrating each of the 4 scenarios. *W*

As the students share out their skits, say "Think about what you are seeing in each of these invites. How does it make you feel? How do you think the characters in the skit feel? How are they alike? How is it different? What signs and signals are we receiving?"

#### Debrief (5 minutes)

Work with the group to unpack what you saw by asking questions that unveil certain aspects of agreement, refusal, or ambiguity.

Say "What does it look like when both people want to go to lunch?

- *Scenario 2 feels normal, comfortable, simple interaction - both want to go*

How does it feel to watch that interaction?

- low key, funny, nice, enjoyable
- They want to go together!

What about with scenario 3?

- *Scenario 3 feels weird, that was awkward - no, and no*

How can we tell the invitee is uncomfortable?

How can we tell that someone doesn't want to go to lunch?

Did they ever explicitly say no?

- *Turning away indicates non- interest*
- *Crossed arms and body language demonstrate dislike*
- *The invitee never explicitly says no but we understand they aren't interested because they are making excuses*
- *we Still understand it is a no despite not hearing them say no I don't want to go to lunch*

But we still understand that it is no, why?

- We are still good at understanding signals of refusal even when we don't hear someone say no.
- Might not say no because doesn't want to be rude, but still means no

Why do scenario 3 and scenario 4 play out so differently?"

- *Scenario 3 and scenario 4 play out so differently because in scenario 4 the invitee respects the inviters wishes!*

*Highlight answers that demonstrate non-verbal expression of agreement or refusal and other uses of body language*

### TEACHING MOMENT

#### **Recognizing: Definition (1 minute)**

Say, "Recognizing emotion is defined as identifying emotion in oneself and others by interpreting facial expressions, body language, vocal tones, and how your body feels. It's about being aware of what's going on inside your own body and mind, and being aware of what others are feeling by paying attention to their verbal and nonverbal cues."

We can use our skills of recognizing emotion to see agreement, refusal, or signals that we don't actually know what another person is feeling and might need to clarify. This means being aware and attentive of what we are feeling and what others are feeling through nonverbal and verbal cues is critical to understanding consent in a variety of situations. By using the skills that we have to recognize emotions through verbal and nonverbal cues we can tell what other people or feeling or when we might not be receiving enough information to know what the other person is feeling and need to clarify.

Recognizing emotion connects to understanding consent in everyday situations as well as romantic or sexual situations. It is the basis of recognizing the signals and feelings of someone else and respecting what they are feeling or signaling- even if it isn't articulated as "yes" or "no".

#### **Consent: Definition (5 minutes)**

Say "Consent is a word you may have been hearing about a lot about in the media and news. However, consent is applicable in much more than just sexual or romantic scenarios. Consent is about agreement. Consent is about cultivating and creating a climate of respect. Consent is"

*In this next section, you will work through each word that is in the definition of consent and clarify what that means. Start by asking the student what the word means. What does voluntary mean? Then clarify after hearing the students thoughts.*

- clear - signs of agreement! this means there is no confusion or questioning. This means a clear YES! The absence of a no does not mean a yes.
- unambiguous - there is no confusion, or maybe.
- voluntary - this means it is not coerced, pressured, manipulated, persuasive, or blackmailed by someone. it is **freely** given. This means a person is capable of agreeing, this means they are conscious, awake, and not incapacitated by alcohol (drunk beyond comprehension)
- ongoing - this means that someone is agreeing to every different action and step. no yes or agreement to one action is a contract for another action. Someone could be okay with X and Y but not want to do Z. One must have consent for every new or different action or task.
- continuous - this means that just because someone says yes to something today doesn't mean that same action is okay tomorrow. Every new interaction is a new time one needs consent.
- agreement! - it is mutual between two parties.

*Use the legal definition at the end for students to hear the different verbiage in legal terms. If it is defined differently in your state, use that law.*

Legally, the term “consent” means a freely given agreement to the conduct at issue by a competent person. An expression of lack of consent through words or conduct means there is no consent. Lack of verbal or physical resistance or submission resulting from the use of force, a threat of force, or placing another person in fear does not constitute consent. A current or previous dating or social or sexual relationship by itself or the manner of dress of the person involved with the accused in the conduct at issue shall not constitute consent. (Title 10 U.S. Code § 920 - Art. 120)

## **BRAINSTORM**

### **Enthusiasm (1 minute)**

Say “Take a moment and consider a time you asked someone to do something (go to eat together, work on homework with you, workout, hang out on a Friday) and they were equally as excited as you to do that.

How did that make you feel? How did they indicate their excitement?”

### **Affirmative Consent: Definition (2 minutes)**

Affirmative consent. Affirmative consent includes clear, unambiguous, knowing, informed, and voluntary agreement between all participants. This can be tied to everyday situations like you just brainstormed but it is also looking and asking for clarification for the same answers in a romantic or sexual act.

This means yes means yes! And doesn't take any other answer as an interpretation of a yes. Hold out for romantic and sexual encounters when your partner is equally as excited and engaged to do something as you - whether it is posting a photo together on social media, spending time together at someone's house, or holding hands in public.

### STRATEGY AND SKILL BUILDING

#### **Navigating Ambiguity (10 minutes)**

Say "There may be times that you are receiving "ambiguous" or hard to interpret verbal and non-verbal cues. It is pretty easy to acknowledge when you aren't receiving enough information to know how the other person is feeling or what they are thinking"

Say "We are going to work in pairs to build strategies to navigate ambiguity. Some of these tasks requiring touching your partner's hand. If you and your partner feel comfortable with that please raise your hand or let me know as I pass out these tasks."

Pass out individual index cards with tasks from the ambiguity handout each student should get one task. The "touch" tasks should be paired together."

(\* teacher note: make sure to have some same-gender pairs as well as mixed gender pairs.)

Say "Each partner has a particular task. Partner 1 goes first and then switch to Partner 2. We will do this with each partner going twice. For the first time we do this, the challenge is that while your partner is completing the task, you must stay silent! Keep your individual task secret and do not reveal between these two rounds"

Partner 1	Partner 2
without using words: tell your partner "I respect you a great deal"	without using words communicate that you are "suspicious of your partner"
let your partner know you are "uneasy" without saying it explicitly	without using words demonstrate that you are "confused" about your friendship
using only touch demonstrate "I feel guilty"	using only touch on your partner's hand communicate that you are feeling "impatient"

Say "Okay now let's do it again and if you aren't completing a task you can now engage with your partner and respond. Think about what questions you can ask to clarify the ambiguity.

Finally, reveal to your partner what you were trying to communicate while restricting some part of your everyday communication skills (language, touch, body language etc.)"

### WRAP UP + DEBRIEF

#### **Activity Outcomes (5 minutes)**

Ask the students to answer questions and reflect on their experience.

- How were the two rounds different?
- What questions did you ask to clarify confusion or misunderstanding?
- What questions do you feel like were successful in understanding what your partner was trying to communicate?
  - Did they make the situations clearer?
  - Did it make situations feel less awkward?
- Can anyone share what this experience was like? What did you partner do to communicate without language or only using touch?

*Possible Answers (and those you want to highlight from students and/or guide them towards)*

- *It can be very uncomfortable when we someone is trying to communicate something we don't understand and we don't clarify*
- *Some good questions: What are you trying to say? Is this okay with you? What do you mean? What do you like? How can I help you? What I think you are trying to say is.... is that correct? Are you doing okay? Is everything okay?*
- *Situations felt less awkward when we clarified sentiments and identified ambiguity*

### **Closing (2 minutes)**

Say “This activity reinforces that we are capable and actually really good at recognizing emotions and can recognize when we don't have enough information to actually know what someone is saying. In these situations romantic, sexual, or every day, it is critical in building healthy relationships that we ask clarifying questions and check-in with our partners.

Finally, to conclude, let's remember how consent is a process, not just a yes or no answer. Thinking back to the skits we saw at the beginning of class it is crucial that we are recognizing emotions and signals in our partners and also checking in with ourselves to think about what we want. Consent is defined as clear, unambiguous, knowing, informed, and voluntary agreement.

Before we meet again, I want you all to reflect on all the proposals, requests and asks we make every single day and pay special attention to the way in which we ask them and how we recognize responses. Ask a clarifying question if you are confused!

Next lesson we will use our understanding of consent to reflect on our personal boundaries and build skills and strategies to set them.”

### **CHECK-IN**

#### **Optional Exit Ticket (5 minutes)**

*This can give the teacher a proper read in what was understood and interpreted by the students.* Distribute questions or write on the board. Don't ask students to write their name. Ask students to leave their answers face down on their desk as they leave.

- 1) What does consent mean?

2) What are the signals of enthusiasm? What does refusal look like?

3) How do you clarify ambiguity?

## Do you want to go to lunch? Worksheet

<u>Scenario</u>	<u>Inviter</u>	<u>Invitee</u>
1	wants to go to lunch	doesn't really care about going to lunch, is indifferent
2	wants to go to lunch	<b>REALLY</b> wants to go to lunch
3	wants to go to lunch, because it's a surprise birthday lunch	does not want to go to lunch, but doesn't want to be rude
4	doesn't really care about going to lunch, is indifferent	does not want to go to lunch, but doesn't want to be rude

## Ambiguous Task Worksheet

<b>Partner 1</b>	<b>Partner 2</b>
without using words: tell your partner "I respect you a great deal"	without using words communicate that you are "suspicious of your partner"
using only touch on your partner's hand demonstrate "I feel guilty"	using only touch on your partner's hand communicate that you are feeling "impatient"
let your partner know you are "uneasy" without saying it explicitly	without using words demonstrate that you are "confused" about your friendship

# Class 2: Boundary Setting and Pressure

<b>Overview</b>	Students will work to recap the lesson on consent and build upon their understanding of communication and agreement by acknowledging some of their own boundaries. Students will work through scenarios where boundaries are pushed in a variety of ways and scenarios and then practice a possible response and the variety of ways we can work to respect others boundaries.
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Students will: 1) identify some of their boundaries 2) learn that everyone has different opinions on different acts given our unique histories and upbringings that influence how we think about sex and other personal actions 3) develop strategies if they feel their boundaries are being pushed or feeling pressured.
<b>Duration</b>	45 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	Boundary setting worksheet Scenarios handout
<b>Relevant Sources</b>	Dixie - research that connects sexual pressure effects on communication Carmody - research on complex nature of boundary setting and all that informs how one creates boundaries Gavey – more info on importance of boundary setting and negative effect of pressure

## OPENING

**Today we are going to follow up on our last conversation (2 minutes):**

What is consent?

Today we are going to be thinking about how we set boundaries, why everyone's boundaries are different and what skills and strategies to use if our boundaries are being pushed. Lastly, we want to think about how we avoid violating or pushing others' boundaries, even if we do so at times without bad intentions.

## BRAINSTORM

**Phone Boundaries (3 minutes)**

Ask students “What rules do you have with your friends about your phone?” Have them spend a moment on the back of the boundary setting worksheet write down 5 rules- spoken or unspoken, that your friends will respect and what they won’t do with your phone.

*Possible Answers*

- They can use it if they ask; they can’t use it without asking

- they can't read my texts
- they can't send messages pretending to be me
- they can't open my snapchats
- they can snapchat from it
- they can't post on my Instagram
- they can make calls or use the internet
- they have their own phone so they use mine in emergencies

Questions for Discussion

Say "How do you set these rules?"

How would you feel if \_\_\_\_\_ rule was broken or crossed?

How do you indicate that something is okay or something isn't okay?

How do you make sure you aren't breaking others' phone rules?"

*\*\*teacher note: this exercise isn't to equate rules about someone's phone are the same about rules for sex. However, it is something personal with rules that are understood between parties and different people have different boundaries. It is important to emphasize here the language and processes that students already use for these actions.*

**HANDOUT**

**What are your Boundaries? (7 minutes)**

Using the letters that correspond to different activities put up to 10 different letters on the different spectrums below (you can use the same letters on different spectrums), based on your personal opinion.

Work alone! Do not put your name on this, and there is no right answer.

Boundary Worksheet

<b>A. holding hands</b>	<b>B. hugging a stranger</b>	<b>C. receiving oral sex</b>	<b>D. wearing a bathing suit around them</b>	<b>E. sleeping in the same bed</b>
<b>F. undressing</b>	<b>G. kissing</b>	<b>H. hugging</b>	<b>I. snuggling or spooning</b>	<b>J. having someone touch you</b>
<b>K. doing a favor for someone</b>	<b>L. going out to dinner</b>	<b>M. texting</b>	<b>N. having sex</b>	<b>O. drinking</b>
<b>P. snapchatting or Instagram dming</b>	<b>Q. having someone place their hand on your back</b>	<b>R. having someone kiss you on the cheek</b>	<b>S. sending/ receiving a naked photo</b>	<b>T. matching on tinder</b>
<b>U. being</b>	<b>V. meeting</b>	<b>W. seeing</b>	<b>X. grinding/</b>	<b>Y. going to the</b>

exclusive	someone's parents	someone naked	dancing	movies
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casual

intimate/serious

---

with a friend

with a partner

no one

---

comfortable

not comfortable

## DISCUSSION

### Understanding different boundaries (3 minutes)

Say “Does anyone think we all got the same answers? Why not?”

- *We all have different answers because we are not all girls or all boys*
- *we have different experiences and preferences*

Where do our beliefs about intimacy and relationships come from?

- *religion, family, brothers, sisters, books, movies, media, history, life, Instagram, experiences etc.*

What informs these thoughts?

- *our own experiences or feelings or beliefs*

Do they change?”

- *potentially*
- *when we get older*
- *they might never change!*
- *with experience*
- *not up for us to decide for others, it is up to us to decide for ourselves*

## TEACHING MOMENT

### Labeling: Definition (1 minute)

Say “Labeling emotions is crucial for setting boundaries and expressing those boundaries. It means having and using a nuanced vocabulary to describe the full range of emotions that you are feeling and naming them. Some examples of this could be: you are making me feel uncomfortable, or I feel safe right now, or I think I am uneasy.”

### Understanding: Definition (1 minute)

Say “learning to understand others’ emotions is critical in respecting boundaries. This means knowing or learning the causes and consequences of emotions that you have or that of others.

This also includes seeing the influence of different emotions on thinking, learning, decisions, and behavior.”

### SCENARIO PRACTICE

#### **Break into groups of 4 to 5 students to work through the scenario (5 - 7 minutes)**

**Scenario 1:** You don't drink because of personal reasons or religious reasons, or you just have no interest. You love to dance and socialize and at a social outing, your friends want you to take a sip just to see if you like it. You tell them you don't feel like it. They respond and tell you that if you don't take one sip they are going to tell your parents you drink, which would get you in a lot of trouble.

What ways are your friends trying to get you to drink?

How did you communicate your boundary was being crossed?

What could you do differently before another event like this?

**Scenario 2:** You are visiting distant relatives and one relative always loves to give really tight hugs and incredibly sloppy kisses on the cheek while grabbing your back. You do not like to interact with this relative because you don't like being kissed on the cheek by anyone and especially not this relative. You worry about being rude. You are in the car with your family on the way to see these distant relatives.

What can you do?

What makes you feel like you have to interact with this relative?

How can you communicate your boundary is being crossed?

**Scenario 3:** You have started seeing someone romantically and things have started to get a bit more serious. You have progressed through demonstrating attraction and liking the person through writing notes, snapchatting, and even telling them you really like them in person. Your partner expresses wanting to take things more physical, but you aren't sure you know what that means. You are okay with some physical actions, but don't want to remove clothing and aren't ready for that step. When you and your partner are hanging out alone, they indicate to you that removing clothing is something they want to express the next step of intimacy.

How do you navigate a conversation to explain your boundaries?

How do you ask what they are comfortable with?

If things go too far, how do you indicate your boundaries are being crossed?

### DEBRIEF + SKILL BUILDING

#### **Group Share of Scenarios and Building Concrete Strategies (10 minutes)**

Invite scenario 1 to read their scenario and then share out some of the thoughts they had. Invite the group to think about if they would answer the same way. Highlight specific tactics,

responses, strategies that seem to be appropriate and/or successful. Have the groups with scenario 2 and 3 do the same.

*Possible Answers:*

- *Find a friend*
- *Fake a phone call*
- *Name the dynamic - this makes me uncomfortable*
- *Spill something*
- *Call an adult and get them involved*
- *Walk away!*
- *Run away!*
- *Physically create space from the situation*
- *Discuss what you are feeling and why it makes you feel that way*
- *Make allies - tell your parents you are uncomfortable.*
- *Explain why this bothers you*

Say "What is the problem with pressure?"

How does being pressured make us feel?"

Say "If someone isn't respecting your boundaries, they may be willing to legitimately harm you or disrespect you and it's important at any level to take disregard seriously.

Pushing someone's boundaries and applying pressure does not cultivate the sense of community we want to create. **Together, let's say no to any type of pressure.**

It's not okay to push others to do anything they don't want to and we need to make sure we are constantly checking in with ourselves and others to make sure everyone feels comfortable.

"The impact of peer pressure can lead to detrimental consequences for all parties involved. This influences how we behave and interact with others socially, romantically, and sexually and distorts what we should expect from others, and what others may expect from us." (Dixie)

## WRAP UP

### **Positive Visualization ( 1 minute)**

Say "Before we leave, I want each of you to take a minute to close your eyes and imagine what school, home life, social life, and this place could be without pressure. How do you think you would feel? Shout out some answers."

*Possible answers:*

- *safe!*
- *happy!*
- *comfortable!*
- *relaxed!*

## CHECK-IN

### **Optional Exit Ticket (5 minutes)**

*This can give the teacher a proper read in what was understood and interpreted by the students.* Distribute questions or write on the board. Don't ask students to write their name. Ask students to leave their answers face down on their desk as they leave.

- 4) Name one boundary you have.
  
- 5) How can you vocalize when your boundaries are being pushed at?
  
- 6) What is one way you can make sure to respect others' boundaries?

## **BOUNDARY WORKSHEET**

Using the letters that correspond to different activities put up to 10 different letters on the different spectrums below (you can use the same letters on different spectrums), based on your personal opinion.

<b>holding hands</b>	<b>B. hugging a stranger</b>	<b>C. receiving oral sex</b>	<b>D. wearing a bathing suit around them</b>	<b>E. sleeping in the same bed</b>
<b>F. undressing</b>	<b>G. kissing</b>	<b>H. hugging</b>	<b>I. snuggling or spooning</b>	<b>J. having someone touch you</b>
<b>K. doing a favor for someone</b>	<b>L. going out to dinner</b>	<b>M. texting</b>	<b>N. having sex</b>	<b>O. drinking</b>
<b>P. snapchatting or instagram dming</b>	<b>Q. having someone place their hand on your back</b>	<b>R. having someone kiss you on the cheek</b>	<b>S. sending/ receiving a naked photo</b>	<b>T. matching on tinder</b>
<b>U. being exclusive</b>	<b>V. meeting someone's parents</b>	<b>W. seeing someone naked</b>	<b>X. grinding/ dancing</b>	<b>Y. going to the movies</b>

---

casual

intimate/serious

---

with a friend

with a partner

no one

---

Comfortable

not comfortable

## Boundary Setting Scenarios

**Scenario 1:** You don't drink because of personal reasons or religious reasons, or you just have no interest. You love to dance and socialize and at a social outing, your friends want you to take a sip just to see if you like it. You tell them you don't feel like it. They respond and tell you that if you don't take one sip they are going to tell your parents you drink, which would get you in a lot of trouble.

What ways are your friends trying to get you to drink?

How did you communicate your boundary was being crossed?

What could you do differently before another event like this?

**Scenario 2:** You are visiting distant relatives and one relative always loves to give really tight hugs and incredibly sloppy kisses on the cheek while grabbing your back. You do not like to interact with this relative because you don't like being kissed on the cheek by anyone and especially not this relative. You worry about being rude. You are in the car with your family on the way to see these distant relatives.

What can you do?

What makes you feel like you have to interact with this relative?

How can you communicate your boundary is being crossed?

**Scenario 3:** You have started seeing someone romantically and things have started to get a bit more serious. You have progressed through demonstrating attraction and liking the person through writing notes, snapchatting, and even telling them you really like them in person. Your partner expresses wanting to take things more physical, but you aren't sure you know what that means. You are okay with some physical actions, but don't want to remove clothing and aren't ready for that step. When you and your partner are hanging out alone, they indicate to you that removing clothing is something they want to express the next step of intimacy.

How do you navigate a conversation to explain your boundaries?

How do you ask what they are comfortable with?

If things go too far, how do you indicate your boundaries are being crossed?

## Class 3: Gender Norms and Power Dynamics

<b>Overview</b>	Students begin to unravel the socio-cultural and structural discourses that support instances of disrespect and sexual violence in our society. By defining key terms that exist and examining popular media they digest, students will make commitments to breaking the “scripts” of their community in order to foster a community of respect.
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Students will: 1) define gender norms and power dynamics 2) define rape culture and understand how gender norms and power dynamics are problematic in how they support disrespect and rape culture 3) learn about cultural scripts 4) students work to create strategies on “breaking the script” in their community around gender norms and power dynamics
<b>Duration</b>	45 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	Projector for Robin Thicke’s Blurred Lines Handout of Robin Thicke’s Blurred Lines
<b>Relevant Sources</b>	Powell & Henry - more info on rape culture Carmody - more info on gender norms and power dynamics Gavey – history on evolution of rape prevention approach to gender norms and power dynamics Schwartz & Deskeredy - research on how disrupting language can lower instances of sexual misconduct Dixie – more info on rape culture and rape prevention Lee – more info on power dynamics and gender norms

### OPENING

Say, “Today, we will be exploring gender norms and power dynamics and how they relate to the cultural practices that are accepted that support a culture of disrespect also known as a rape culture. We will learn the definitions of these and create commitments to disrupt them in our everyday lives.”

### BRAINSTORM ACTIVITY + DISCUSSION

#### Partner Activity (5 minutes)

Say “With a partner, brainstorm a word or phrase used in society that is gendered - either male or female. Discuss how this term is used, what it means, and what are the potential consequences.”

*Possible words: if students are struggling, give each of them one to dissect.*

- *Man up*
- *Right-hand man*
- *Play like a girl*

- *ladylike*
- *businessman*
- *delivery boy*
- *best man for the job*
- *no man's land*
- *every man for himself*
- *drama queen*
- *prima donna*
- *bitchy*
- *chatty Kathy*
- *MILF*
- *catcall*

### TEACHING MOMENT

#### **Gender Norms: Definition (2 minutes)**

Say “A gender norm is a social role encompassing a range of behaviors and attitudes that are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality.

We can all think about the gender norms that exist since our childhood of what toys certain genders should be playing. This permeates through phrases that indicate women as weak and men as strong, and this plays into the way in which sexual violence and disrespect are supported and even normalized in our culture. Gender norms indicate certain populations in positions of power. The way in which these hierarchical power roles play out is something we formally define as ‘power dynamics’”

**Power Dynamics: Definition (2 minutes)** Say “Power is the ability to influence or outright control the behavior of other people. Those who feel, inherit and have power in our society and the way in which they interact with other members refers to what we mean when talking about power dynamics. Race, socioeconomic status, race, job position, age, title, name, gender, and religion all can create and generate strong power dynamics that affect the way in which we interact with each other.

We are going to listen to a song that highlights gender norms and power dynamics at play.”

### SONG + DISCUSSION

#### **Listen and watch Robin Thicke’s Blurred Lines ( 5 minutes)**

<https://www.vevo.com/watch/robin-thicke/blurred-lines/USUV71300454>

Say “After finishing the song please respond to the following questions on your worksheet.”

In your responses point to specific lyrics and images.

Why is this song problematic?

Where do we see gender norms at play?

Where are power dynamics at play?

Does there seem to be an understanding of consent here? Why or why not?

## TEACHING MOMENT

### **Rape Culture: Definition (3 minutes)**

Say "This song was one of the most popular songs of the summer of 2013. It is obvious how our society suffers from an extreme case of normalization of behaviors and attitudes that inflict violence against women. As Thicke sings "you know you want it" how does he know that his potential partner wants it if they hadn't told them they want it? These attitudes permeate the music that is popular, the jokes people laugh at, the memes that support sexual violence, and use gender norms and power dynamics as tactics to make these actions culturally accepted as "okay".

Rape culture is the everyday actions, conversations, practices in which sexual misconduct and violence are "tolerated, accepted, eroticized, minimized and trivialized" (Powell & Henry, 2)."

## ACTIVITY

### **Understanding and Disrupting Cultural Scripts (7 minutes)**

Ask the students "What is a script?"

Say "In our everyday lives there are scripts that play out. There are two separate types of scripts that interact with each other frequently. The first is individual or interpersonal scripts where individuals begin to "unconsciously" adopt actions and behaviors in situations that they believe are the "way things are done" and is what everyone does. These significantly affect interactions and in romantic or sexual situations can impede proper communication or can lead to individuals engaging in acts they don't want to or are not ready for. These can be called "sexual scripts".

The second type of script is cultural scripts. These relate to rape culture in that they are scripts that are spread through communities and cultures through publicized actions and normalized behaviors of "what one does". An example of an everyday cultural script is that married people sleep in the same bed when actually many married couples sleep in different beds because of snoring, preference, cultural or religious reasons or simply enjoying having their own bed. We just assume that every married couple sleeps in the same bed because that is what is "accepted" and understood as normal in our society.

It is important that we disrupt cultural scripts by offering a spectrum of behaviors, experiences, opinions, and beliefs, so people feel comfortable in their decisions and don't feel like they need to conform because that is just what "everyone else does." In order to stop rape culture and the accepted behaviors and attitudes that support and normalize sexual violence, it is critical we disrupt these normal "scripts." Just because someone goes on a first date, doesn't mean they have to go on a second one! Just because everyone listens to Robin Thicke doesn't mean that you can't be the one to vocalize it should be turned off."

## WRAP UP

### **Reflection and Commitment (5 minutes)**

As you leave, think about one thing you will commit yourself to doing that will stop the pervasiveness of rape culture, gender norms, or power dynamics.

This is an actionable and realistic thing you can do to disrupt cultural scripts we see here at school or in our general society.

*Possible examples:*

- *I will ask for someone to change the music if it is a song that supports sexual violence*
- *you will not laugh at jokes and say “that’s not funny” at memes or jokes that support rape culture, gender norms or power dynamics (can be a specific example)*

Write down your commitment on an index card - *teachers can use these index cards on a bulletin board or for school resources to indicate the awareness students should have of these issues and problems.*

### **CHECK-IN**

#### **Optional Exit Ticket (5 minutes)**

*This can give the teacher a proper read in what was understood and interpreted by the students.* Distribute questions or write on the board. Don’t ask students to write their name. Ask students to leave their answers face down on their desk as they leave.

1. What does respect look like for you in your relationships?
2. What are signs that you’d worry about in a friend’s relationship?
3. How do you support a friend struggling in a disrespectful relationship?

## Blurred Lines Worksheet

### Lyrics and Reflection Questions (5 minutes)

Everybody get up (x2)  
Hey, hey, hey (x4)  
If you can't hear what I'm trying to say  
If you can't read from the same page  
Maybe I'm going deaf  
Maybe I'm going blind  
Maybe I'm out of my mind  
Everybody get up  
OK now he was close, tried to domesticate you  
But you're an animal, baby, it's in your nature  
Just let me liberate you  
Hey, hey, hey  
You don't need no papers  
Hey, hey, hey  
That man is not your maker  
And that's why I'm gon' take a good girl  
I know you want it (x3)  
You're a good girl  
Can't let it get past me  
You're far from plastic  
Talk about getting blasted  
I hate these blurred lines  
I know you want it (x3)  
But you're a good girl  
The way you grab me  
Must wanna get nasty  
Go ahead, get at me  
Everybody get up  
What do they make dreams for  
When you got them jeans on  
What do we need steam for  
You the hottest bitch in this place  
I feel so lucky  
Hey, hey, hey  
You wanna hug me  
Hey, hey, hey  
What rhymes with hug me?  
Hey, hey, hey  
OK now he was close, tried to domesticate you  
But you're an animal, baby it's in your nature  
Just let me liberate you  
Hey, hey, hey  
You don't need no papers  
Hey, hey, hey

That man is not your maker  
Hey, hey, hey  
And that's why I'm gon' take a good girl  
I know you want it (x3)  
You're a good girl  
Can't let it get past me  
You're far from plastic  
Talk about getting blasted  
Everybody get up  
I hate these blurred lines  
I know you want it  
I hate them lines  
I know you want it  
I hate them lines  
I know you want it  
But you're a good girl  
The way you grab me  
Must wanna get nasty  
Go ahead, get at me  
Shake around, get down, get up  
Do it like it hurt, like it hurt  
What you don't like work?  
Everybody get up  
Baby can you breathe? I got this from Jamaica  
It always works for me, Dakota to Decatur, uh  
huh  
No more pretending  
Hey, hey, hey  
'Cause now you winning  
Hey, hey, hey  
Here's our beginning  
I always wanted a good girl  
I know you want it (x3)  
You're a good girl  
Can't let it get past me  
You're far from plastic  
Talk about getting blasted  
I hate these blurred lines  
(Everybody get up)  
I know you want it (x3)  
But you're a good girl  
The way you grab me  
Must wanna get nasty



# Class 4: Respect and Relationships



<b>Overview</b>	Students will use positive visualization to define and imagine what respectful relationships look like between many different members of the community. Then they will learn about regulating emotions and their importance in supporting healthy relationships. Finally, through a conversation about intimate partner violence and practicing scenarios of disrespect (some with media), students learn how to support a friend.
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Students will: 1) Imagine what a respectful relationship looks like in their community and establish tenets of positive relationships 2) Define intimate partner violence and discuss signs of IPV 3) Understand ways in which to support a friend suffering from abuse
<b>Duration</b>	45 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	Whiteboard and dry erase markers Scenario handout to cut and distribute
<b>Relevant Sources</b>	Avery-Leaf - more info on long-term IPV interventions Center for Disease Control - more info on resources on responding to IPV, signs of IPV, and ways to support a friend Carmody - research on role play in supporting friend IPV Fellmeth – more info on relationship dating prevention Fletcher – more info on respect and relationship building in schools Lee - more info on community mapping and engagement and working to disrupt social norms Dixie - more info on cultural scripts Fellmeth

## OPENING

### Opener of Choice (3 minutes)

Say, “Before we get started, can anyone help recap our last lesson on gender norms and power dynamics? How have you disrupted a cultural script since we last met? Today we are going to think about respect and how it plays out in relationships.”

## COMMUNITY VISUALIZATION

### Respect in Our Community: Positive Visualization Exercise (10 minutes)

Say “Let’s start by brainstorming who are the different players and groups in our community and visualizing what respect looks like between these many different parts.”

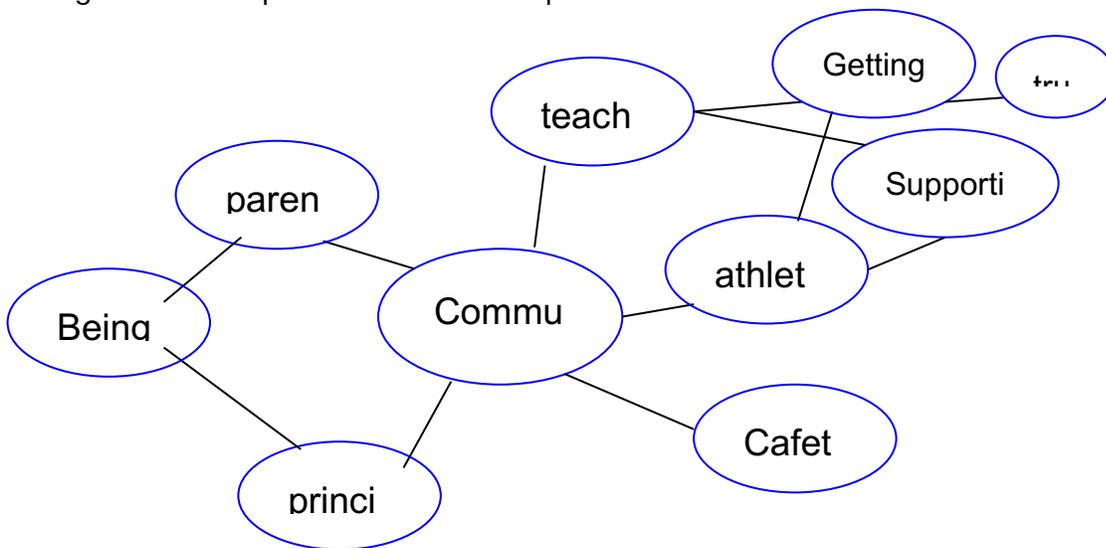
*On the whiteboard start with a circle that has the name of your school or simply the words “our community” in the center (example below).*

Say “Starting with our community let’s all come up to the board and start with connecting bubbles of who are the different members of our community: “

*Possible Answers:*

- *students, -9th graders, 10th graders, 11th graders, 12th graders*
- *parents*
- *janitor*
- *teachers*
- *principal*
- *athletes*
- *theater*
- *dance groups*
- *student council*
- *maintenance*
- *lunchroom staff*

Next, have the students draw connections between these groups and write what does a respectful relationship between these groups look like. Branch out from that actions, words, feelings that encompass these relationships.



**DEBRIEF**

**Discussion about tenets of respectful relationships (5 minutes)**

Say “What is at the core of all these relationships? How do gender norms and power dynamics affect these webs and relationships? Do they matter?”

*Possible Answers:*

- *similar tenets of respect*
- *with student/teacher the teacher have power and the relationship is more polite than student to student*
- *Power dynamics and gender norms exist everywhere so it is important in some relationships to be aware of these and work harder to cultivate these relationships.*

Say “respect should exist regardless of gender or power dynamics, but it might look different! They are always important to be aware of to make sure we are working to make others feel respected and valued.”

Push students to circle only the words and actions that should encompass a respectful relationship at this school.

*Possible circled answers:*

- *honest*
- *trustworthy*
- *thoughtful*
- *kind*
- *dedicated*
- *polite*
- *holding the door*
- *picking up after yourself*
- *talking about problems*
- *openness*
- *understanding different backgrounds*
- *embracing diversity*
- *helpful*

## SHORT LECTURE

### **Trigger Warning (1 minute)**

Say " We are now going to be talking about what disrespect in relationships look like from low-level instances of rudeness or disregard all the way to intimate partner violence or abuse. While we won't be talking about explicit instances of abuse or violence and instead focusing on the signs if you have experienced abuse or know someone who has this section could be upsetting. Please feel free to leave the classroom at any time."

### **Intimate Partner Violence and General Disrespect (5 minutes)**

Say “Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) or relationship abuse describes “physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner”. This type of violence can occur across a spectrum of genders, race, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientations (CDC). IPV refers to a spectrum of actions or activities that range from general disregard for a significant other’s boundaries given the reason that one is their significant other, stalking, to physical harm.

However, disrespect in relationships occurs at many low levels before it becomes something as serious as IPV. The goal is to stop IPV before it begins. It is important to continue to think about the way respect looks in our community in everyday relationships and encounters and how the same level of respect should exist between romantic or sexual partners.

Disrespect refers to one’s wishes being ignored, feelings being invalidated, privacy invaded, preferences disregarded, or general life and well being feeling controlled by another person.”

## TEACHING MOMENT

### Regulating (1 minute)

Say "In order to promote healthy and respectful relationships, regulating emotions is crucial in creating open communication and dialogue with those you interact with in your everyday life. Regulating means focusing on the thoughts and actions used to prevent, reduce, initiate, maintain, or enhance (PRIME) emotions in order to promote personal growth, enjoy healthy relationships, achieve greater well-being, and attain goals. These can be thoughts and actions that occur in the short/immediate term or the long term.

How do you regulate emotions in an everyday setting in order to promote healthy and respectful relationships?"

## SCENARIO PRACTICE

### Group breakout (5 minutes)

Divide students into groups of 3 or 4 to break out and work through their scenario. Ask students to talk about what worries them about this situation, ways in which they'd make a plan, and how to support the friend.

**Scenario 1:** Sam and Nat have been dating for a few months and during winter break when apart from each other they explored sending risqué photos to each other as a romantic gesture. Sam is a close friend of yours. Once school returns, Sam seems upset during the week. They aren't eating much, are falling asleep in classes, and generally seem to be avoiding interaction with most people. You finally try to talk to Sam and while they say they don't want to talk at first, finally they open up that Nat shared the risqué photos with their friends that Sam had sent Nat privately over break. Sam seems truly upset about this, while Nat has been normal all week and told Sam it was "no big deal." Sam tells you "Nat told me that sharing them shows a commitment to me and they wanted to show me off. Nat knows best and is right I just need to get over this."

What worries you?

What do you next?

**Scenario 2:** Jordan and Alex have been dating for the past three months and are very serious fast. They basically only hang out together and no longer spend time with their sports teams after practice. You run track with Jordan and one day after practice want to go get chocolate milkshakes to celebrate the tough workout, as you always do. Jordan seems hesitant to go at first, and then agrees to come "just for a little bit." When you get to the ice cream store to order, Jordan seems anxious and worried, when they initially were excited about a chocolate shake. You order two, and Jordan corrects you "actually just one, I don't need one. Alex doesn't think they are good for me." You are surprised because Jordan loves chocolate milkshakes.

What worries you?

What do you do next?

**Scenario 3:** Two of your close friends, Morgan and Ryan, have been together for over two years and progressively have withdrawn from your friend group over the years. They talk about going to the same college and constantly are posting mushy, beautiful, cute Instagram and Facebook posts. However, at any parties, they fight really aggressively and someone is always screaming or crying. They play it off the next day that it was just alcohol and typical drama, and then post more cute snapchats that everything is fine. This has gone on for the last three months and everyone is made uncomfortable at the forcefulness of their fights, but people write it off because they are so cute on social media and seem to be "fine."

What worries you?

What do you do next?

**Scenario 4:** Avery met a new love interest, Blaine, this past summer and Blaine attends a different school nearby. You have just returned to school and head over to Avery's locker at the end of the day to hear about their exciting summer of fun. As you are approaching the locker, Avery is talking on the phone looking frustrated and then quickly turns away from you. Once you get to the locker you say "hey!" and Avery lights up to see you. The two of you begin to walk home from school. Avery is checking their phone every few moments, obviously distracted and tense. The two of you stop to get a snack and Avery looks to be fully panicked now. When you ask if everything is okay, they respond "Oh it's fine, Blaine just tracks my location on my phone and I forgot to tell them we were going to stop to get food. I really don't want them to worry. It's sweet they care about me so much." You decide to forgo the snack to ease Avery's stress, and the two of you walk home in silence.

What worries you?

What do you do next?

## DEBRIEF

### Group share out (10 minutes)

Invite scenario 1 to read their scenario and then share out some of the thoughts they had. Invite the group to think about if they would answer the same way. Highlight specific tactics, responses, strategies that seem to be appropriate and/or successful. Have the groups with scenario 2, 3, and 4 do the same.

*Possible answers and things to highlight:*

- *you are worried about their mental and emotional well-being, be there for your friend before handling the situation*
- *being available and leaving the door open for conversation is important*
- *don't pry- respect privacy!*
- *If you are worried about physical safety, get an adult involved.*
- *Don't escalate a situation.*

- *Don't blame the partner, that can further alienate someone who is experiencing abuse*
- *Don't further isolate your friend! Even if they are being a bad friend during this time.*
- *Make them feel supported and loved by telling them you care about them and are worried - come from a place of love, not anger!*

## WRAP UP

### **Closing (5 minutes)**

Say "Today we visualized what positive relationships look like in our everyday lives in this community, but also what they should be in romantic or sexual situations.

Understanding the signs of negative or abusive relationships is critical in supporting a friend undergoing a tough time. It is always important to remember the people and resources available here at school if you are worried about a friend."

*Resources Review - provide resources again available for students*

Say "Looking at this board we see the interconnectedness of our community and the values we want to support and uphold in our relationships. In our final lesson, we will discuss the role each of us plays in upholding these values of healthy and respectful interactions and relationships and ways to intervene when we see disrespect."

## CHECK-IN

### **Optional Exit Ticket (5 minutes)**

*This can give the teacher a proper read in what was understood and interpreted by the students.*

Distribute questions or write on the board. Don't ask students to write their name. Ask students to leave their answers face down on their desk as they leave.

1. What are gender norms and power dynamics?
2. How do they support rape culture?
3. Name one way to disrupt a common negative cultural script.

## How to Support A Friend Scenarios

**Scenario 1:** Sam and Nat have been dating for a few months and during winter break when apart from each other they explored sending risqué photos to each other as a romantic gesture. Sam is a close friend of yours. Once school returns, Sam seems upset during the week. They aren't eating much, are falling asleep in classes, and generally seem to be avoiding interaction with most people. You finally try to talk to Sam and while they say they don't want to talk at first, finally they open up that Nat shared the risqué photos with their friends that Sam had sent Nat privately over break. Sam seems truly upset about this, while Nat has been normal all week and told Sam it was "no big deal." Sam tells you "Nat told me that sharing them shows a commitment to me and they wanted to show me off. Nat knows best and is right I just need to get over this."

What worries you?

What do you next?

**Scenario 2:** Jordan and Alex have been dating for the past three months and are very serious fast. They basically only hang out together and no longer spend time with their sports teams after practice. You run track with Jordan and one day after practice want to go get chocolate milkshakes to celebrate the tough workout, as you always do. Jordan seems hesitant to go at first, and then agrees to come "just for a little bit." When you get to the ice cream store to order, Jordan seems anxious and worried, when they initially were excited about a chocolate shake. You order two, and Jordan corrects you "actually just one, I don't need one. Alex doesn't think they are good for me." You are surprised because Jordan loves chocolate milkshakes.

What worries you?

What do you do next?

**Scenario 3:** Two of your close friends, Morgan and Ryan, have been together for over two years and progressively have withdrawn from your friend group over the years. They talk about going to the same college and constantly are posting mushy, beautiful, cute Instagram and Facebook posts. However, at any parties, they fight really aggressively and someone is always screaming or crying. They play it off the next day that it was just alcohol and typical drama, and then post more cute snapchats that everything is fine. This has gone on for the last three months and everyone is made uncomfortable at the forcefulness of their fights, but people write it off because they are so cute on social media and seem to be "fine."

What worries you?

What do you do next?

**Scenario 4:** Avery met a new love interest, Blaine, this past summer and Blaine attends a different school nearby. You have just returned to school and head over to Avery's locker at the end of the day to hear about their exciting summer of fun. As you are approaching the locker, Avery is talking on the phone looking frustrated and then quickly turns away from you. Once you get to the locker you say "hey!" and Avery lights up to see you. The two of you begin to walk home from school. Avery is checking their phone every few moments, obviously distracted and tense. The two of you stop to get a snack and Avery looks to be fully panicked now. When you ask if everything is okay, they respond "Oh it's fine, Blaine just tracks my location on my phone and I forgot to tell them we were going to stop to get food. I really don't want them to worry. It's sweet they care about me so much." You decide to forgo the snack to ease Avery's stress, and the two of you walk home in silence.

What worries you?

What do you do next?



# Class 5: Community Values and Bystander Intervention



<b>Overview</b>	In the final lesson in this series of consent education, students use their knowledge and skills to not only make good decisions for themselves but feel a stake in intervening in community situations where disrespect is present. Using community values, students will practice intervention strategies and how to act when stakes are low.
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Students will: 1) Establish community norms to foster accountability 2) Recognize signs of disrespect 3) Build strategies to intervene in low-level encounters and learn ways to get help
<b>Duration</b>	45 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	Scenarios handout Blank index cards
<b>Relevant Sources</b>	Banyard - research on a community approach to bystander intervention Carmody – more info on bystander intervention with sexual violence Fletcher - more info on Bourdieu's theory of habitus and field and a school as a defined set of power relations and theories of respect and community values Lee - more info on community values and accountability Schwartz & Dekeseredy - research on bystander intervention and male peer support models

## OPENING

### Opener of Choice (3 minutes)

Say, "Today, we will be building upon the four previous lessons we had during this section on consent and healthy relationships. Hopefully, everyone is starting to feel confident in building their skills and strategies to make smart, safe, and respectful decisions in their relationships. But let's switch the focus to see instances of disrespect with our friends or strangers."

## ACTIVITY

### What are our Community Values? (3 minutes)

Individually, On the front of the index card have the students write down three core values that they see themselves holding, both for their class and the larger community.

Say "What are values that you would want this high school to stand for in the eyes of the community, town, and even country?"

### Group Sharing (10 minutes)

Have the students share in a circle. Start with one student and go around clockwise.

Say “If you can please pick one of these values and how you have seen it manifest itself in this class and school.”

Push the students to think of concrete or specific examples.

*Example:*

- *I see honesty as a core value of our community. I’ve seen this demonstrated when the students are honest and don’t cheat during exams or on homework.*
- *I see friendship as a core value of our community. I saw this when Raven decorated Joey’s locker for their birthday.*

*\*\* teacher note: Point out common threads between the values and discuss that there are so many good things already happening at school.*

## **PARTNER DISCUSSION**

### **What is bystander intervention? (5 minutes)**

Say “Now that we have talked about the values we uphold and strive to uphold as a community. Let’s talk about what we should do when we see someone breaking these values or moving away from the ideal group dynamic.

What does it mean to be a bystander? Turn to a partner and discuss.”

Students discuss with partners. Ask the partners to share out after.

*Possible Answers:*

- *someone who watches but doesn’t get involved*
- *someone who isn’t involved in a situation but present*
- *someone who doesn’t act*
- *someone who doesn’t take part*
- *an innocent person who is guilty but not doing anything*
- *a stranger*

## **LESSON SKILL BUILDING**

### **Bystander Intervention: Low Stakes (5 minutes)**

In thinking about bystander intervention in our everyday setting, its crucial to make sure we intervene when the stakes are low and at the first instance we see discomfort or disrespect.

Can we recap what refusal or disinterest looked like from our first lesson?

*Possible Answers*

- *turning away*
- *not making eye contact*
- *hesitation*
- *looking around the room*
- *expressing disinterest*

- *closed arms*
- *looking at phone*
- *crying*
- *trying to remove themselves*

Say "When we see our friends or even strangers exhibiting these signs, it is important we check-in in these situations to ensure the safety of the situation and when stakes are low. There could be a possibility of disrespect happening along the lines of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or romantically or sexually. However, any form of disrespect is unacceptable in our community as we defined by our community values."

Say "If you intervene in a low-key way, by asking a friend to go to the bathroom or checking in separately, if the person is okay and doesn't need help they can just let you know! It won't ruin their situation or make things weird for them. This is why low stakes interventions are key and simple. If you act rashly and escalate the situation by yelling, screaming, kicking, fighting, this can create tension or an uncomfortable environment."

Say "Some ways to intervene in a low key way can be simple, quick, and even a fun distraction!

- ask the friend to complete a task with you or join you to grab water, go to the bathroom, or something that physically removes them from the situation. If they want to be with that other person they can return after! if not, you gave them a quick escape.
- Bring the group together for an activity - dance-off, a board game, some other activity that doesn't isolate the person.
- Sometimes simply naming the dynamic can be useful and can even come off as sarcastic or funny - hey you guys look uncomfortable! This looks awkward! Can I third wheel?"

Ask the students for examples of ways to intervene or if they have ever intervened before.

Say "A lot of these strategies work in low level, casual settings and aren't when the things seem dangerous, intentional, or possibly out of your realm to handle. in these situations it's crucial you call the police, and adult or someone immediately to get help. Safety is the priority.

Most of the time, you won't be in these large-scale situations, however, it is important to take even low-level examples of disrespect seriously. Act early and act when the stakes are low!"

### SCENARIO ACTIVITY

#### **Full Group Work ( 10 minutes)**

Say "You're hanging out at a social school hangout and you notice one of your friends is away from the rest of the room in a corner with another person. Your friend looks a bit nervous and you can't tell if it's because they're just acting a bit awkward or they're actually really uncomfortable.



# Prep: Teacher Guidelines and Training



## OPENING

This guide serves as a resource for teachers in preparing to teach this consent curriculum with 5 lesson plans covering the topics of communication, consent, boundary setting, pressure, gender norms, power dynamics, rape culture, respect, relationships, community values and bystander intervention.

Relevant Sources: The Center for Research, Teaching and Learning at University of Michigan provides important “Guidelines for Discussing Difficult or Controversial Topic”.

Rationale of Teacher Training: Moira Carmody

## SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

**Things to think about in navigating classroom climate and preparing for these lessons.**

**1. Be thoughtful**

Just because the material is written in a certain way, it is important that you are not just repeating information verbatim always. While some paragraphs have specific parts quoted for delicate phrasing and word choice, notice how your students are reacting. Even when talking about personal topics you need to use your natural teaching abilities to notice how students are engaging with the material and each other.

**2. Understand your identity and presence**

These lessons may feel uncomfortable because they deal with issues of sex, gender, and identity. Thinking about and being aware of your own voice in the conversation is critical in facilitating productive discussions. Being aware of your body language, tone, and other factors that could impact the effectiveness of the conversation and lesson.

**3. Know your community**

Before teaching the lesson to think about the unique aspects of your community. These lessons will look different in every community and should be taught with an active understanding of who is in the room.

Do you teach at a religious school? Is it a boarding school? Is it a single-gender school or community? Do all the students fall into a similar socioeconomic status? What is the demographics of the school community?

Tailor your lesson to meet the needs and sensitivities of the students.

**4. Set ground rules (below)**

At the first lesson set ground rules and repeat them every lesson or hang them in the classroom. It is important there are parameters and expectations created in engaging in these personal and sometimes difficult conversations. Students need to understand they will be held accountable for their conduct in these lessons.

**5. Meet your students where they are at**

Some concepts may take longer than others for students to understand. Take note of the areas or places students have most difficulty and make sure to re-incorporate these ideas later on. If the students are really understanding something, move on! If they don't grasp the full idea on the difficult topics, it is important to understand the extent in which you can push for outcomes.

#### **6. Challenge perceptions**

There are certain phrases and ways to reframe a discussion when typical “rape myths” or widespread gender stereotypes come into play. There are many widespread problematic understandings of consent and rape culture. Let the students know the lessons are backed by multiple research. Have them read it too if they are curious!

- Say again?
- What do others think about this?
- Or simply inform the student by acknowledging “I can understand why you might think that... however”

#### **7. Assess in multiple ways**

Some students will not be comfortable voicing their thoughts in group settings. Use smaller breakout groups and partner conversations to check in on their engagement with the material. Use writing activities and other ways of assessment to gather a sense of their understanding. This is not a space to push for those who are quiet to speak if they are not comfortable. Use check-ins at the end of lessons to gauge their understanding.

#### **8. You are not an expert, but you should know who is**

Given the personal and sometimes traumatic nature of the topic, you may become the gateway and the sole person a student feels comfortable talking to. It is crucial that you make yourself available to students who need support and connect them to the right school resources and other people if needed. You are teaching these lessons and thus the students will think of you as the only person who may understand.

### **SETTING GROUND RULES<sup>1</sup>**

- 1. Anyone has the ability to step out and leave the classroom if they are feeling uncomfortable about the material. However, you are expected to stay if you are comfortable.**
- 2. Engage with the material and actively participate thoughtfully. Be respectful of your classmates, instructor, and the course material.**
- 3. Listen respectfully, without interrupting other students while they share.**

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<sup>1</sup> University of Michigan, Center for Research, Teaching and Learning “Guidelines for Discussing Difficult or Controversial Topic” <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/generalguidelines>

4. **Listen actively and openly to allow yourself to understand others' views. (Don't just spend the whole time thinking about what you are going to say while someone else is talking.)**
5. **Criticize ideas, not individuals. You can think differently than someone but be aware of that everyone learns differently and grows up with different opinions, ideas, background, and experiences.**
6. **Commit to learning, not debating. Comment in order to share information that you think is useful and pertinent to the material, not to persuade others of your own thoughts or opinions.**
7. **Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory or derogatory language.**
8. **Allow everyone the chance to speak. Everyone has a voice in this classroom and deserves the opportunity to share. Let's make sure to hear from a variety of voices.**
9. **Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups, background, preferences, thoughts, or opinions.**
10. **Understand that this material is about more than just sexual or romantic situations and applies to every facet of being and maintaining respectful relationships.**

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