

Sexual Assault Prevention Education Curriculum

Proper sexual education has been proven to reduce the rate of sexual assault. Unfortunately, many states do not incorporate these concepts. The three most important sexual education concepts proven to reduce the rate of assault are consent, coercion, and refusal skills. Consent is an informed, knowledgeable, and freely-given agreement between parties. Coercion is pressuring someone into acquiescence through threat, force or intimidation. Refusal skills are skills which help empower individuals to say know and which allow others to recognize a “no” when it is given.

In addition to these concepts, it is important for students to learn the ramifications of sexual assault so they may fully understand the consequences of committing an assault as well as how to recognize when they or a friend may be feeling the effects of having an assault committed upon them. Finally, students need to know what qualifies as assault and what to do following an assault so they may mitigate the harmful effects of an assault as soon as possible after it happens. Sexual assault prevention education is most effective when it sufficiently deters individuals from committing assaults and when survivors of assault are made to feel comfortable coming forward to speak about their assault and seek help.

The following curriculum includes all of these concepts and is meant to be a ‘shell’ curriculum and allow the school district, teacher, or parent to customize the curriculum to be framed in a way in which the leader is most comfortable. This curriculum can be framed from an abstinence-first perspective, or be expanded upon to include any and all information the leader wishes to include. However, the concepts included here are understood to be the bare minimum concepts which sufficiently reduce the rate of sexual assault.

We would like to stress that this sexual education curriculum is by no means all the sexuality/health education an individual needs. Rather, this curriculum is focused on sexual assault prevention and mitigation. In other words, the aim of this curriculum is to provide information proven to reduce the rate of assault and to support survivors. Following the curriculum is guidance for parents and teachers to help them understand sexual assault and support survivors of sexual assault.

Uniform Sexual Assault Prevention Education Curriculum

Ages 0-4/Pre-school:

Key concepts:

Consent

Students should understand:

They have the right to decide what happens to them and others have the right to choose what happens to them.

Some parts of their bodies are private and others also have private parts.

They must ask permission from others to, play with them, borrow and share, tell secrets, hug, etc. and that others should ask them for permission to do those things.

Sometimes, you may ask someone for consent and they might say no. If they say no, you should listen to them.

Students should demonstrate:

The ability to ask consent.

Note for teachers/parents: Consent is not just sexual. You must obtain consent when you want to hug someone, borrow something, share, tell secrets, etc.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- asking the child if you can hug them, if they can share with you, if you can play with them, etc. and asking for consent for these things from those you love in front of the child.

Definition for children:

Consent- agreeing to do something with something because both of you want to do it.

Consent for kids examples:

“Mom, I want to give you a hug. Can I hug you?”

“Yes, you can hug me.”

“Do you want to play with me?”

Coercion

Students should understand:

No one can threaten, force, or intimidate them to do anything and they can't threaten, force, or intimidate others to do anything.

When others say no, they mean no.

Students should demonstrate:

Respect for others' “no's” and not try to convince, hurt, or say they'll hurt others when they say no.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- avoid use of threats of harm when a child chooses to practice body autonomy.

Definitions:

Threat- someone scaring or trying to scare you.

Force- make you do something you don't want to.

Intimidation- making you feel like you have to do something.

Coercion for kids examples:

“If you don't play with me we aren't friends anymore.”

“If you don't let me play with that car I am going to hit you.”

“If you don't give your aunt a hug you are going to get in trouble.”

Refusal skills

Students should understand:

It's okay to say no to friends, family, and other adults when someone is making you uncomfortable.

You have the right to tell other not to touch your body when you do not want to be touched.

Students should demonstrate:

The ability to say no.

An understanding of when someone else says no.
The ability to express when they are uncomfortable.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- give firm “no’s” to the child, listen to the child when they say no and validate their feelings, even if the child’s “no” will need to be overridden, say no to others.

Definitions:

Refusal skills- the ability to say no.

Refusal skills for kids examples:

“No, I don’t want to play with you.”

“No, I don’t want to kiss you.”

‘I’m not comfortable hugging you.’”

Deterrence

Students should understand:

Doing things to others that they don’t like hurts their feelings.
When you hurt someone, you can get in trouble.

Students should demonstrate:

Respect for others’ feelings and a level of empathy for others.
An understanding that there are consequences for actions, including those which harm others.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- ask the child how they feel after someone hurts them, tell the child how you feel after they hurt you, help them understand that if they hurt people they will get in trouble.

Deterrence definitions for kids:

Empathy- feeling bad for another person

Consequences- when you do something, things naturally follow

Deterrence examples for kids:

“It made me sad when you hit me.”

“How did it make you feel when I said I didn’t want to share?”

Mitigation

Students should understand:

Some parts of your body are private.

Note for parents: you may choose to name these body parts.

If you are not comfortable as a parent with your child knowing the anatomically correct name for the body part, come up with names which will allow your child to express to you clearly when someone violates one of the child’s private parts.

Note for parents: You may explain that some nudity is appropriate such as with parents or with doctors when parents are present.

Talk to a trusted adult when something bad happens to you even if you were told to keep it a secret.

Sometimes, adults we know and those we don't know can hurt us and strangers can be dangerous.

If someone hurts you, it is not your fault.

It is good to express your feelings

Students should demonstrate:

The ability to talk to an adult when someone hurts their feelings or disrespects their no's.

An understanding that they are not at fault when someone attempts to hurt them.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example-

Definitions for kids:

Mitigation examples for kids:

“Thank you for telling me that person hurt you.”

Suggested teaching tools:

“Do You Want a Cookie?” by Brittney Herman. PDF available for free at WeWillOrg.com

Boss of My Body Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAALZxa6NCw&feature=youtu.be>)

ABC of Body Safety and Consent by Jayneen Sanders and Courtney Dawson

Sesame Street and Mark Ruffalo: Empathy

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xbM)

Ages 5-10/Grades K-5:

Key concepts:

Consent

Students should understand:

They have the right to decide what happens to them and others have the right to choose what happens to them.

Some parts of their bodies are private and others also have private parts.

They must ask permission from others to touch them, play with them, borrow and share, tell secrets, etc. and that others should ask them for permission to do those things.

Students should demonstrate:

The ability to ask consent.

Note for teachers: Consent is not just sexual. You must obtain consent when you want to hug someone, borrow something, share, tell secrets, etc.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- asking the child if you can hug them, if they can share with you, if you can play with them, etc. and asking for consent for these things from those you love in front of the child.

Definition for children:

Consent- agreeing to do something with something because both of you want to do it.

Consent for kids examples:

“Mom, I want to give you a hug. Can I hug you?”

“Yes, you can hug me.”

“Do you want to play with me?”

Coercion

Students should understand:

No one can threaten them or force them to do anything and they can't threaten or force others to do anything.

When others say no, they mean no.

Students should demonstrate

Respect for others' “no's” and not try to convince, hurt, or say they'll hurt others when they say no.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- avoid use of threats of harm when a child chooses to practice body autonomy.

Definitions:

Threat- someone scaring or trying to scare you.

Force- make you do something you don't want to.

Intimidation- making you feel like you have to do something.

Coercion for kids examples:

“If you don't play with me we aren't friends anymore.”

“If you don’t let me play with that car I am going to hit you.”

“If you don’t give your aunt a hug you are going to get in trouble.”

Refusal skills

Students should understand:

It’s okay to say no to friends, family, and other adults when someone is making you uncomfortable.

Students should demonstrate:

The ability to say no.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- give firm “no’s” to the child, listen to the child when they say no and validate their feelings, even if the child’s “no” will need to be overridden, say no to others.

Definitions:

Refusal skills- the ability to say no.

Refusal skills for kids examples:

“No, I don’t want to play with you.”

“No, I don’t want to kiss you.”

“I am not comfortable hugging you.”

Deterrence

Students should understand:

Doing things to others that they don’t like hurts their feelings. When you hurt someone, you can get in trouble.

Students should demonstrate:

Respect for others’ feelings and a level of empathy for others.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- ask the child how they feel after someone hurts them, tell the child how you feel after they hurt you, help them understand that if they hurt people they will get in trouble.

Deterrence definitions for kids:

Empathy- feeling bad for another person

Consequences- when you do something, things naturally follow

Deterrence examples for kids:

“It made me sad when you hit me.”

“How did it make you feel when I said I didn’t want to share?”

Mitigation

Students should understand:

Some parts of your body are private.

Talk to a trusted adult when something bad happens to you or if someone touches you in your private parts.

Trusted adults may include parents, teachers, family members, or other school leaders.

It is okay to ask questions if you are not sure if what happened to you was okay.

It is not your fault if something happens to you that you did not want.

Students should demonstrate:

The ability to talk to an adult when someone hurts their feelings or disrespects their no's.

An understanding of what sexual assault may look like and a knowledge of who to talk to if it is unclear.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- discuss feelings, make it clear that you are willing to discuss their feelings or concerns with them. For parents, stress that telling you is more important than what other adults say. Asking the student frequently if anyone is disrespecting their boundaries or making them feel uncomfortable.

Mitigation examples for kids:

“Thank you for telling me that person hurt you.”

“You are not going to get in trouble for letting me know that an adult hurt you, even if the adult told you not to tell me.”

“Has anyone disrespected your boundaries today?”

Share stories about times when you were a kid and told your parents about someone hurting you/equating this to talking about bullies.

Suggested Teaching Tools:

“Do You Want a Cookie?” by Brittney Herman. PDF available for free at WeWillOrg.com

Boss of My Body Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAALZxa6NCw&feature=youtu.be>)

ABC of Body Safety and Consent by Jayneen Sanders and Courtney Dawson

Sesame Street and Mark Ruffalo: Empathy

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xbM)

Empathy activities (<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Free-Sample-Empathy-Activities-Distance-Learning-Independent-Work-Packet-2968459>).

Ages 11-13/Grades 6-8:

Key concepts:

Consent:

Students should understand:

Consent also applies to sexual situations.

You cannot touch anyone else unless they say you can and when someone says “yes” they have given consent.

Just because someone has given consent in the past does not mean that you have consent now.

If you do not obtain consent, you have sexually assaulted someone.

Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault.

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their activities.

Students should demonstrate:

Respect for others’ desire to be touched, both sexually and non-sexually.

Understanding that consent is a normal and necessary part of everyday interaction.

Knowledge that it is the responsibility of all parties to ensure consent of the partner is present.

Teaching suggestions:

Consent definition:

Consent- an informed, knowledgeable, and freely-given agreement between parties.

Informed- all parties understand that the activity taking place is of a sexual nature.

Knowledgeable- all parties know who is participating in the activity.

Freely-given- without fear, threat, or intimidation and made with the capacity to give consent.

Consent examples:

“Yes!” (Enthusiastic agreements to participate in an activity is consent).

“May I kiss you?” or other respectful initiation of the activity (Consent can be provided through action, such as initiating the activity. Initiation of activity is best taken through asking someone if they would like to engage in an activity. If someone asks for or initiates a hug, they are consenting for you to hug them. However, initiation of one activity is not consent for further activity. For example, initiation of a hug or kiss is not consent for further activity. Additionally, it is not necessarily consent for individual reciprocal action. For example, consenting to kissing you on the cheek is not consent for you to kiss them on the cheek.).

Consent is a normal and necessary part of everyday life and sexual activity. Consent is not a burden.

Consent in everyday life may look like asking someone for a hug, asking if they would like to hang out together, asking if they may post a picture of you, etc.

Coercion:

Students should understand:

No means no. If someone has said no, any convincing through threat, force, intimidation, or repeatedly asking is inappropriate and is called “coercion.”

Coercion takes many forms such as threatening to hurt you, sharing stories or pictures of things you have done in the past, not allowing you to leave the situation, repeatedly asking you to engage in an activity you don’t want. You are not allowed to do these things to others.

If you have coerced someone, you have sexually assault someone. Receiving a “yes” or silent agreement through coercion is not consent. This is acquiescence.

Students should demonstrate:

Respect for others when they have asked another to stop.

Understanding of coercive behavior.

Recognition of coercion in multiple forms.

Teaching suggestions:

Coercion definitions:

Coercion: pressuring someone into acquiescence through threat, force or intimidation.

Acquiescence: agreement under duress or accept something reluctantly. Acquiescence is not consent.

Coercion examples:

Repeatedly asking someone to engage in activity after they have said no.

Telling someone you will terminate the relationship if they do not engage in the activity.

Threatening to release information regarding previous consensual activities if they do not engage in the present activity.

Not allowing an individual to go home or withholding personal items until they have participated in the activity.

Threatening harm to the victim or another individual if they do not engage, even if the threat is not specific.

Teaching students about coercion in everyday situations.

Coercion does not produce consent, only acquiescence.

Refusal Skills:

Students should understand:

It's okay to say no to friends, family, and other adults when someone is making you uncomfortable. There are strategies to say no. You can say no, suggest another activity, ask to leave, or other. It is up to you to recognize when someone is using these refusal skills to avoid sexually assaulting someone.

Students should demonstrate:

The ability to say no and the ability to recognize when someone else is saying no.

That they have a plan on how to say no in an uncomfortable situation.

It should be stressed to students that even if they are unable to follow this plan in the situation, it is not their fault.

Teaching suggestions:

The most important aspect of refusal skills is teaching would-be perpetrators to recognize when their partner is saying no or attempting to say no to an activity. Refusal skills teach parties engaging in sexual activity that they have the responsibility to recognize and respect another's "no."

Much like you encourage your children to plan to say no to drugs, refusal skills also involve making a plan to get out of an uncomfortable situation. While these plans can be helpful, it is critical to note that *if the survivor does not follow through on their plan it is still not their fault*. It is not the responsibility of survivors to make these plans, but it could be helpful. We suggest making a plan for the following situations:

Dates/One-on-one interactions

Sleepovers

Walking alone at night

Parties

Social gatherings

Interactions with people in positions of power

*Note for Parents: An important part of such plans is to let your child know that no matter the situation you would help them. That even if your child was doing something wrong you would still come for them and make sure they are safe.

Refusal skills definitions:

Refusal skills- skills which help empower individuals to say know and which allow others to recognize a "no" when it is given.

Refusal skill examples:

Hearing or saying: "No" or "Stop"

Hearing or saying: "I am not comfortable with that"

Hearing or saying: "I am going to go home."

Hearing or saying: "That violates my boundaries"

My plan is that whenever I am put in an uncomfortable situation on a date, I will try to safely make it to a restroom

or other private spot and call a trusted friend, but I know that if I do not follow through on this plan for any reason it is still not my fault.

Deterrence:

Students should understand:

Sexual assault is illegal and hurt others. Survivors feel the very real effects of sexual assault.

There are significant consequences for committing sexual assault, including criminal consequences.

What perpetrators of assault look like.

Asking for consent from all parties throughout the experience will ensure that all are safe and comfortable.

Students should demonstrate:

Empathy for others and respect for them.

The knowledge of what consequences come to themselves and others if they choose to commit an assault.

The ability and desire to obtain consent from others.

Teaching suggestions:

Discuss those who have been convicted of sexual assault and the time they have served as well as continuing ramifications.

Refer directly to state and local law regarding sexual offenses.

Tell students about non-criminal consequences of committing sexual assault (being kicked out of school, registration as a sexual offender, etc.).

Share cases of sexual assault convictions and how the offender- no matter how successful- was held accountable.

Use survivor stories so students understand consequences to survivors- if possible, have a survivor come in directly to speak with students.

Tell students of the psychological, mental, emotional, and physical harm experienced by survivors of sexual assault.

Discuss with students that perpetrators are often someone the survivor knows- including significant others.

Mitigation:

Students should understand:

Talk to a trusted adult if you have been sexually assaulted. These adults might include teachers, parents, police, and other school leaders.

Sexual assault does not only occur with random people. Most sexual assaults are committed by someone you know.

If a friend comes to you and tells you that they have been sexually assaulted, encourage them to reach out to an adult.

If an assault has been committed against you, it is normal to feel depression, PTSD, eating disorders, desire for self-harm, substance

abuse, panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, sleep disorders, and more. If you seek help, an adult can help you with this.

Students should demonstrate:

An openness with their feelings and ability to talk to adults about uncomfortable situations.

An understanding of what sexual assault may look like and a knowledge of who to talk to if it is unclear.

Trust in themselves in understanding that their feelings and view of the situation is valid.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- discuss feelings, make it clear that you are willing to speak with the student about their concerns and experiences.

Asking the student frequently if anyone is disrespecting their boundaries or making them feel uncomfortable.

Make it clear that the student will not get in trouble for participation in any activity leading up to the assault.

Mitigation examples:

“Does anyone ever touch you in a way that makes you uncomfortable?”

“Is everyone in your life respecting your boundaries?”

“You can always tell me if someone hurt you, even if you engaged in sexual activity I told you not to engage in.”

Share the stories of a sexual assault survivor and what happened after they told someone and sought help vs. before they told someone. If possible, bring a survivor in to speak directly with the student.

Clarifying it is never the survivor’s fault.

Suggested Teaching Tools:

“Do You Want a Cookie?” by Brittney Herman. PDF available for free at WeWillOrg.com. Explain situations to students directly.

Consent is as Easy as Tea Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8>).

What is sexual assault? Video. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_yJZ9G-tt4).

How to Talk About Your Sexual Assault

(<https://www.wewillorg.com/how-to-talk-about-your-assault>).

Crisis Centers by State

(<https://www.wewillorg.com/crisis-centers>)

Currently In Crisis Numbers

(<https://www.wewillorg.com/currently-in-crisis>)

Sexual Violence explained by the CDC

(<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/index.html>)

Effects of Sexual Violence

(<https://www.rainn.org/effects-sexual-violence>)

Telling Loved Ones About Sexual Assault
(<https://www.rainn.org/articles/telling-loved-ones-about-sexual-assault>).

Ages 14-18/Grades 9-12:

Key Concepts:

Consent:

Students should understand:

You have the right to decide what happens to you.

Others have the right to choose what happens to them.

No one can touch you unless you say they can.

You cannot touch anyone else unless they say you can.

Someone cannot give consent if they are intoxicated, unconscious, under influence of drugs, or otherwise incapacitated. Even if a person in this condition says yes, this “yes” cannot count because of their condition.

Just because someone has given consent in the past does not mean that you have consent now.

If you do not obtain consent, you have sexually assault someone.

Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault.

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their activities.

Students should demonstrate:

An understanding of the meaning of consent.

A habit of asking others for consent.

Recognition of situations where and how consent can or cannot be obtained.

Understanding that if consent is not obtained then any sexual activity taking place is considered sexual assault.

Teaching suggestions:

Consent definition:

Consent- an informed, knowledgeable, and freely-given agreement between parties.

Informed- all parties understand that the activity taking place is of a sexual nature.

Knowledgeable- all parties know who is participating in the activity.

Freely-given- without fear, threat, or intimidation and made with the capacity to give consent.

Consent examples:

“Yes!” (Enthusiastic agreements to participate in an activity is consent).

“May I kiss you?” or other respectful initiation of the activity (Consent can be provided through action, such as initiating the activity. Initiation of activity is best taken through asking someone if they would like to engage in an activity. If someone asks for or initiates a hug, they are consenting for you to hug them. However, initiation of one activity is not consent for further activity. For example, initiation of a hug or kiss is not consent for further activity. Additionally, it is not necessarily consent for individual

reciprocal action. For example, consenting to kissing you on the cheek is not consent for you to kiss them on the cheek.).

Consent is a normal and necessary part of everyday life and sexual activity. Consent is not a burden.

Consent in everyday life may look like asking someone for a hug, asking if they would like to hang out together, asking if they may post a picture of you, etc.

Coercion:

Students should understand:

No one can threaten you, force you, or intimidate you to do anything sexual. This is called coercion.

You can't threaten or force others to do anything. This is called coercion.

Coercion takes many forms such as threatening to hurt you, sharing stories or pictures of things you have done in the past, not allowing you to leave the situation, repeatedly asking you to engage in an activity you don't want. You are not allowed to do these things to others.

Force can be physical or psychological.

If you have coerced someone, you have sexually assaulted someone.

If you said yes to someone after coercion, you have been sexually assaulted.

Students should demonstrate:

Understanding of the meaning of coercion and what qualifies as coercion.

Recognition of coercion in both sexual and everyday situations.

Respect for others when they have asked another to stop.

Teaching suggestions:

Coercion definition:

Coercion-pressuring someone into acquiescence through threat, force or intimidation

Acquiescence: agreement under duress or accept something reluctantly. Acquiescence is not consent.

Coercion examples:

Repeatedly asking someone to engage in activity after they have said no.

Telling someone you will terminate the relationship if they do not engage in the activity.

Threatening to release information regarding previous consensual activities if they do not engage in the present activity.

Not allowing an individual to go home or withholding personal items until they have participated in the activity.

Threatening harm to the victim or another individual if they do not engage, even if the threat is not specific.
Teaching students about coercion in everyday situations.
Coercion cannot produce consent, merely acquiescence.
Acquiescence is not consent.

Refusal Skills:

Students should understand:

It's okay to say no when someone is making you uncomfortable.
There are strategies to say no. You can say no, suggest another activity, ask to leave, or other.

It is up to you to recognize when someone is using these refusal skills to avoid sexually assaulting someone.

Students should demonstrate:

Ability to say no to others.

Teaching suggestions:

The most important aspect of refusal skills is teaching would-be perpetrators to recognize when their partner is saying no or attempting to say no to an activity. Refusal skills teach parties engaging in sexual activity that they have the responsibility to recognize and respect another's "no."

Much like you encourage your children to plan to say no to drugs, refusal skills also involve making a plan to get out of an uncomfortable situation. While these plans can be helpful, it is critical to note that *if the survivor does not follow through on their plan it is still not their fault*. It is not the responsibility of survivors to make these plans, but it could be helpful. We suggest making a plan for the following situations:

Dates/One-on-one interactions

Sleepovers

Walking alone at night

Parties

Social gathering

Interactions with people in positions of power

*Note for Parents: An important part of such plans is to let your child know that no matter the situation you would help them. That even if your child was doing something wrong you would still come for them and make sure they are safe.

Refusal skills definitions:

Refusal skills- skills which help empower individuals to say know and which allow others to recognize a "no" when it is given.

Refusal skill examples:

Hearing or saying: "No" or "Stop"

Hearing or saying: "I am not comfortable with that"

Hearing or saying: "I am going to go home."

Hearing or saying: "That violates my boundaries"
My plan is that whenever I am put in an uncomfortable situation on a date, I will try to make it to a restroom or other private spot and call a trusted friend, but I know that if I do not follow through on this plan for any reason it is still not my fault.

Deterrence:

Students should understand:

There are significant consequences for committing sexual assault, including criminal consequences.

What perpetrators of assault look like.

Sexual assault is illegal and is extremely harmful to victims.

Asking for consent from all parties throughout the experience will ensure that all are safe and comfortable.

Students should demonstrate:

Knowledge of the consequences of sexual assault both to the survivor as well as the perpetrator.

An understanding that intent behind actions is irrelevant as to whether the action was rape or sexual assault.

Empathy toward others.

The desire and ability to obtain consent.

Teaching suggestions:

Discuss those who have been convicted of sexual assault and the time they have served as well as continuing ramifications.

Refer directly to state and local law regarding sexual offenses.

Tell students about non-criminal consequences of committing sexual assault (being kicked out of school, registration as a sexual offender, etc.).

Share cases of sexual assault convictions and how the offender- no matter how successful- was held accountable.

Use survivor stories so students understand consequences to survivors- if possible, have a survivor come in directly to speak with students.

Tell students of the psychological, mental, emotional, and physical harm experienced by survivors of sexual assault.

Discuss with students that perpetrators are often someone the survivor knows- including significant others.

Mitigation:

Students should understand:

Talk to a trusted adult if you have been sexually assaulted. These adults might include teachers, parents, police, and other school leaders.

If a friend comes to you and tells you that they have been sexually assaulted, encourage them to reach out to an adult.

If someone has been sexually assaulted it is not their fault and they deserve respect and understanding.

Those who have been sexually assaulted may benefit from support, counseling, and medical care.

Choosing whether or not to report sexual abuse, assault, violence, or harassment is a personal decision.

Students should demonstrate:

Recognition of the signs of sexual assault.

An understanding of who to contact if a sexual assault has taken place.

Support for others if they have experienced an assault.

Acceptance of survivors of sexual assault.

Teaching suggestions:

Leading by example- discuss feelings, make it clear that you are willing to speak with the student about their concerns and experiences.

Asking the student frequently if anyone is disrespecting their boundaries or making them feel uncomfortable.

Make it clear that the student will not get in trouble for participation in any activity leading up to the assault.

Mitigation examples:

“Does anyone ever touch you in a way that makes you uncomfortable?”

“Is everyone in your life respecting your boundaries?”

“You can always tell me if someone hurt you, even if you engaged in sexual activity I told you not to engage in.”

Share the stories of a sexual assault survivor and what happened after they told someone and sought help vs. before they told someone. If possible, bring a survivor in to speak directly with the student.

Mitigation should discuss rape and sexual assault myths including, but not limited to, the following:

Nothing a survivor does is a contributing factor toward their rape or assault.

Survivors often do not initially recognize that their experience is rape or sexual assault

Showing survivor stories to bring awareness to sexual assault and help survivors to recognize they are not alone.

Discussing various channels of reporting (school authorities, Title IX offices, police, hospitals, counselors, etc.)

Share the numbers of hotlines with students so they can speak with someone anonymous regarding their assault if they need to.

Suggested Teaching Tools:

Consent is as Easy as Tea Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGtT8>).

We Will's Survivor Gallery (<https://www.wewillorg.com/survivors-gallery>)

Rainn's Survivor Stories (<https://www.rainn.org/stories>).

Sexual Violence explained by the CDC

(<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/index.html>)

What is sexual assault? Video. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_yJZ9G-tt4).

How to Talk About Your Sexual Assault

(<https://www.wewillorg.com/how-to-talk-about-your-assault>).

Crisis Centers by State

(<https://www.wewillorg.com/crisis-centers>)

Currently In Crisis Numbers

(<https://www.wewillorg.com/currently-in-crisis>)

CDC Violence Prevention video.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nisvs/index.html>)

CDC Intimate Partner Violence Video

(<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>)

An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault

(<https://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/SOO.PDF>).

Telling Loved Ones About Sexual Assault

(<https://www.rainn.org/articles/telling-loved-ones-about-sexual-assault>).

Sexual Assault Education for Parents and Teachers

According to RAINN, 93% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows personally. This could be a family member, friend, significant other, or another acquaintance of the victim.

Understand that it is incredibly difficult for a sexual assault survivor to come forward. Oftentimes, the account given by the survivor may not make sense or may seem unlikely, but that does not mean that it did not happen. The most important thing for you to do is to support and encourage the survivor. Together, you can determine which steps would be most helpful in the survivor's recovery process. Survivors of sexual assault often benefit from counseling, medical care, seeking justice, and other support.

Tips for speaking with a survivor:

- Acknowledge their courage and strength
- Thank the survivor for telling you
- Affirm it is not the survivor's fault
- Remind them they are not alone and that you are there to help them
- Check in with them following the assault to offer additional support
- Avoid phrasing which suggests guilt, push them toward action they are not ready for, suggest they get over what happened, or guilt them for not saying anything sooner.

Recommendations to put in place which encourage or help a survivor to come forward:

Harvard recommends developing a shared vocabulary regarding body parts, consent, coercion, sexual assault and abuse, and other assault-related issues. This is especially critical for children who may not yet be exposed in school to anatomical names for body parts or children who have had no access to sexual education. Creating this shared vocabulary, especially between parent and child, helps survivors to understand that what happened to them was wrong and to come forward. When the survivor comes forward, it will also help the adult with the shared vocabulary understand the assault as the survivor describes it with words in the shared vocabulary.

Laying an emotional groundwork of trust is critical. For teachers, this may simply be making it clear to students that you are there for the students and will listen to them should they choose to come forward about anything. For parents, it is more complicated, but critical to create a trusting relationship where children want to talk about these things with their parents and feel comfortable doing so. That way, if a child experiences a sexual assault, the child is interesting in confiding in a parent. Trust is especially important here because the survivor may be self-blaming and may fear repercussions from the portion of responsibility they have wrongly placed on themselves.

Along the same vein of laying emotional groundwork is to encourage discussions regarding emotion and pain. It can be helpful to encourage discussions regarding how someone, including you as the parent or teacher, have made the child feel. Such discussions involve a large degree of patience with children and can be frustrating with teenagers. However, it is important for a survivor to be able to express their emotions, to express how others have hurt them, and to process emotions in such a way which allows them to tell how they feel. Additionally, it is important that if ever put in a sexually-

uncomfortable situation, the survivor feels comfortable saying no and expressing themselves in that moment. While this may still not deter the perpetrator, it is nonetheless helpful to empower individuals with a sense of how to speak up for themselves. Learning to express themselves will not only help a survivor feel comfortable coming forward, but allows the survivor to recover more quickly as they are better able to express themselves to family, friends, teachers, counselors, and others seeking to help them.

Finally, it is critical that parents discuss sexual assault to at least a minimal degree. Children and youth who have been assaulted may not recognize that what is happening to them is wrong or considered sexual assault. Discussing these topics, such as the curriculum above with children helps them understand not only what is wrong so they do not harm others, but also what is wrong so that if the child or youth experiences sexual assault, they recognize it is not their fault and that they should tell a trusted family member or friend.

Of course, there are many other helpful tips in creating an environment which prevents children from becoming sexual violence perpetrators and which help survivors feel comfortable coming forward if they suffer sexual violence. If you are a parent or guardian, please take time to consider your values regarding all aspects of sexuality education and to determine to what degree you are comfortable discussing these with your children. If you are a teacher or other trusted adult, consider your role in encouraging respect toward others and in seeking help if harmed. Parents, schools, communities, and other influential organizations should seek to work cohesively in order to provide sexual education sufficient to reduce the rate of sexual assault and to support survivors.