

A Guide for Educators PRESENTED BY



Your Truth. Our Purpose.

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Intended use and Audience for This Guide

This Guide created by the Regina Sexual Assault Centre was developed for the purpose of sharing the content and delivery approach of RSAC's school presentations with teachers, so they have the opportunity to review what to expect from our presentation ahead of time. It can also be used to inform any parties who may be interested in what content will be discussed, such as parents, Administrators, and students themselves.

This Guide also provides helpful information and tips for educators to continue the conversation after RSAC leaves the classroom, including how to appropriately speak about violence with children and youth.

Please note: Although this guide uses language that is directed towards educators, and refers to the content covered within our presentations, it is still very much applicable and useful for any person to access - such as parents and other service providers.

This Guide will provide information on how to approach these conversations, what children and youth need to know about this topic, and how to respond to children and/or youth with understanding, validation, and compassion.



Part 1: Consent & Boundaries



Consent: Permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something.

Affirmative consent: Putting the onus of receiving consent on identifying the presence of a yes, rather than identifying the absence of a no. Affirmative consent recognizes that there are clear indicators to know if someone is consenting (saying yes), and there are clear indicators to know if someone is not consenting (saying no), both through verbal and non-verbal communication. If the response is ambiguous, it should not be taken to mean consent has been received, even if someone did not technically say the word "no".

Note for teachers: Although here we discuss affirmative consent as a general rule, it is important to note that this is the law of sexual consent in the Canadian Criminal Code.

Example: If Claire puts her hand out to shake hands with Stephen, and Stephen does not reach their hand back out to Claire, this is a clear indication Stephen is saying they are uncomfortable shaking Claire's hand. If Claire were to reach down and grab Stephen's hand anyway and forcibly shake it, this would be an example of going against affirmative consent.



Discussion

During the discussion period, students and the facilitator will brainstorm all of the different ways we say yes and no:

Saying no:

- "I'm not sure"
- "Let me think about it"
- "I don't know if I'm comfortable with this"
- "Maybe"
- "We'll see, maybe later"
- Remaining silent or still
- Pulling away from someone or backing up
- Looking at the ground or avoiding a question
- "No."
- "Stop."



Saying yes:

- Initiating an activity
- Actively and enthusiastically participating in an activity
- "I want to do this."
- "Yeah, that's fine with me."
- Setting parameters: "I want to do ____, but I am not okay with doing ____."
- Smiling and nodding
- "Yes."



Boundaries



Boundary: A personal guideline or rule that honours someone's individual needs and respects their level of comfortability with something. These are unique to each person, and it is just as important to respect the boundaries other people set as it is to have your boundaries respected.

Consent is the foundation for all boundaries. When someone asserts a boundary, they are communicating if they are comfortable with something (giving permission), or if they are not comfortable with something (not giving permission).

Example: If Claire is uncomfortable with someone touching her hair, she has asserted that no one has her consent to touch her hair. If Stephen touches Claire's hair anyway, this is an example of someone not respecting a boundary put in place and going against the consent of the other person.

Since boundaries are unique to each person, someone may have difficulty considering the perspective of the person setting the boundary.

If someone does not consider the boundary to be something that would personally affect them, they may not even think to ask for consent prior to doing something, not considering the other person may not have the same values as they have.





Example: If Claire values a 'make yourself at home' environment at their house, and she is used to hanging out with other people who share this mentality, at some point she may interact with another person who does not share this value, but rather thinks it is disrespectful for someone to treat their home as if it was their own. If Claire were to take food from her friend Stephen's fridge, who unknowingly does not share this value, Claire may not think to ask if this is okay first, because she is used to automatically having permission to do this that she assumes it will be the same at Stephen's house as well.

Sometimes, a person will not respect a boundary established with them, or push someone to cross their boundaries because they do not hold the same values, resulting in them looking past the person's boundaries and considering their own needs instead. The example below shows how this could happen:

Example: Claire did not complete her homework the night before, so she tells Stephen she will need to borrow his so she can copy it quickly. Stephen expresses that lying makes him very uncomfortable, and he would rather not be roped into this situation.

Claire does not see why it is such a big deal because she does not share that value, and knows that she would do it for Stephen if he asked, so she copies his homework anyway.









After learning about affirmative consent and discussing the different ways we can say yes and no, the students and facilitator will brainstorm why it can be difficult to say "No" and be assertive with boundaries, and why it can be difficult to be told "No" and accept someone's boundaries.

A few possible responses to these questions are:

Why can it be hard to say NO?

- Everyone else is doing it; having FOMO if you say no (Fear Of Missing Out)
- Not wanting to make the other person feel judged or rejected
- Being assertive may cause undesired confrontation or conflict
- Not wanting people to think differently of you

Why can it be hard to be told NO?

- The disappointment of not getting what you want
- May feel judged, offended, rejected, or embarrassed; seeing it as a reflection of you rather than a reflection of their values
- May feel confused and frustrated if you assumed they would say 'yes' because you would say 'yes'



Boundary Assertion

The conversation shifts to addressing the validity of why it can be difficult to say no and assert your boundaries.



Intuition

Intuition: The feeling you get when you know something feels wrong/right for you, even if outside factors are indicating otherwise, or indicating nothing at all. This is commonly described as a 'gut feeling' or that 'little voice in your head' trying to tell you something important. We use the term 'red flag' when referring to how our intuition tells us when something is not right or makes us uncomfortable.

Each person has boundaries that are unique to them, and when those red flags go up, they go up for a reason. We need to trust our intuition to be able to respect our own needs.









• It can make some people feel better knowing they have explained their reasoning for why they are saying no, but know that you do not have to explain your reasons to anyone



 Stand your ground – being assertive is not being aggressive, bossy, or rude



 There are more ways to say no than a full-stop NO; you get to decide what is right for you, and it can be a good exercise to practice different ways to assert your needs



Boundary Acceptance

The conversation shifts to addressing the validity of why it can be difficult to be told no and respect someone's boundaries.



Empathy

Empathy: Connecting with something in yourself that can connect with what someone else may be feeling. Empathy requires switching perspectives and treating people how you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes.

We need to use the skill of empathy when respecting someone's boundaries if they tell us no. This skill can be helpful to see things from another lens, where even if you do not share the same value, opinion, boundary, or response as someone else, you are still able to recognize what they may be feeling when asserting their needs and how you would appreciate being treated if if the roles were reversed.



ips for Accepting & Respecting Boundaries • Pause and decide how you want to make

- Pause and decide how you want to make people feel (take a moment to empathize)
- Accept that being told 'no' is a reflection of the current situation, and not a reflection of your character as a person
- Let them know you respect their decision and appreciate their honesty
- Remember: There are more ways to say no than a full-stop NO; be mindful of unintentional coercion



Part 2: Consent & Boundaries Specific to Sex

Note for teachers: We recognize that in cases of sexual assault or abuse, the perpetrator may be much bigger and have more power than the victim, combined with the trust that the child may have for the perpetrator. A child being sexually abused at home by a caregiver may be very skilled at asserting their boundaries, understanding consent, and using their skills of intuition, but experience violence regardless. This concept is addressed by reminding students that sometimes people will not listen to their boundaries, or they may not assert their boundaries due to fear or perceived trust, and this is not their fault. No one has the right to touch anyone unwantedly, and telling a safe adult what happened can help them receive the support they need.

Understanding Consent Law

There are 5 elements of consent according to the Canadian Criminal Code [s. 273.1(1)] that apply to all folks engaging in sexual activity, which can be remembered by using the FRIES acronym:

Consent must always be:

Freely given (voluntary & sober)

Reversible (revocable)

Informed (know what you're consenting to)

Enthusiastic (ongoing & clear)

Specific (people, places, acts, times)





Ages of Consent in Canada

The age of consent is the legal age in any given country that a person can consent to sexual activity. In Canada, the legal age of consent is 16 years of age, meaning that once a Canadian person turns 16, they are legally allowed to engage in sexual activity with anyone older than them. The Canadian law also includes two close-in-age exceptions:



These close-in-age exceptions allow for age-appropriate sexual exploration within the peer group, and decriminalize these activities for young people within the same age range.

Although the age of consent in Canada is 16, the age of consent for filming and distribution of intimate images (such as pornography) is 18. Acts that are considered to be sexually inappropriate, such as the non-consensual sharing of nude pictures and voyeurism, are classified under section 162.1 of the Canadian Criminal Code.

It is important to remember that any sexual relationship – particularly relationships where one party is under 18 and the other party is older than 18 – can be exploitative and should be assessed for any abuse of power, control, or trust. Youth dating within the close-in-age exceptions does not automatically mean the relationship is not abusive or exploitive.



Consent is as Simple as Having Tea

This video will be shown to students to switch perspectives on consent with a simple, mundane task, like making a cup of tea: Click **HERE** to watch or scan the QR Code







The last line of the video shown is:

"... if you are able to understand when someone does not want tea, ... Then how hard is it to understand it when it comes to sex?"

The facilitator will briefly (2-3 minutes) address some of the attitudes and beliefs to answer this question:

- Institutional violence has normalized abuse.
- Many systems and worldviews do not support discussions around sexual violence and consent.
- Social messaging around gender roles may impact safety in assertion for women and girls, and safety in vulnerability for men and boys. Attitudes around rigid gender roles influence how people view sex and consent, as well as safety in disclosing abuse.
- Exposure to content about sex and gender in the media often sets a precedent around sex and relationships that is confusing, misinformative, and at times normalizes violence.



Part 3: Violence & Relationships



Sexual Violence

Throughout this section, students will be introduced to the different definitions of sexual violence with examples provided.

After each definition, we will discuss a few common myths and debunk some of the attitudes and beliefs that help perpetuate the stigma of violence. These myths (aka "rape myths") are so common, it can be easy to assume them to be truth.

Sexualized violence is an all-encompassing term that includes sexual assault, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment. The word violence does not only refer to physical violence but includes emotional and psychological harm as well.



Sexual Violence

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act or behaviour that is threatening, violent, forced, or coercive, and where consent was not obtained or maintained, as highlighted by the Canadian Criminal Code affirmative consent laws. Sexual assault is another umbrella term that encompasses many sexually inappropriate acts, including but not limited to coerced sexual activity, non-consensual kissing or touch, and rape.

Example: Initiating sex with someone who is beyond the capacity to consent to sex due to being unconscious or intoxicated (slurring words, heavy eyes, vomiting, stumbling).

Example: Becoming consensually intimate with someone and not listening if they change their mind and say stop, slow down, wait, I'm not sure anymore, they stop participating, etc...

Sexual abuse refers to ongoing or patterned sexualized behaviour against anyone by someone in a position of power/authority (or perceived power/authority); OR any sexual misconduct that is committed against a child, adolescent, or vulnerable adult by someone in a position of power or perceived authority.

Example: Someone in a position of trust or authority striking up a sexual relationship with anyone UNDER 18 and/or if it is unwanted.

Example: Deciding when your romantic partner is going to have sex with you, even when they say no, it is unwanted, or they are asleep.



Sexual Violence

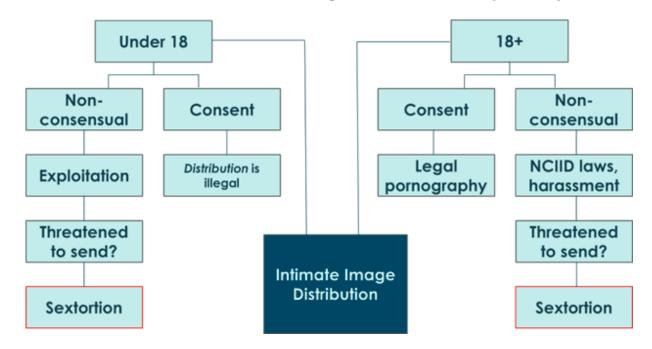
Sexual harassment is unsolicited and unwelcomed sexual behaviour, which can take place in many forms and can lead to more severe acts over time. It can be verbal, physical, or visual; it can occur as a single incident or a series of incidents.



Example: Being rejected after asking someone on a date and continuing to pressure them and making derogatory comments about them in person or through the internet.

Example: Receiving a consensual naked photo of someone and proceeding to non-consensually distribute it to your friends/on social media.

Non-Consensual Intimate Image Distribution (NCIID)



This graphic explains that it is illegal to distribute intimate images of anyone under 18 even with their consent. It is also illegal and harmful to post and/or distribute an intimate image of anyone without their consent.



Important Facts About NCIID Laws

- If someone distributes intimate images of a person under 18 years old, and they are also under 18, they will not be charged with distribution of child pornography. This is usually met with less serious charges and/or a more restorative and educational approach.
- If someone threatens that they will share the youth's naked pictures
 unless they send more pictures, do other sexual things, or send them
 money, this is called *sextortion* (*sexual extortion*), and it is illegal.
 Sextortion can cause immense overwhelm and fear, causing people to
 act impulsively and give into demands. This is not likely to stop the
 situation, but rather create a cycle of blackmail.
- If someone sends a mutually consensual naked photo of themselves and they are under 18, they will NOT be in trouble. Sometimes youth will be told they will be charged with distribution of child pornography if they send images of themselves as a fear-tactic to prevent them from sending these images, creating barriers for seeking support.



Note for teachers: Regardless of the circumstance, it is important for youth to know if they have sent an intimate image and someone has shared it without their consent, they are the victim and not the one to blame. Image distribution and sextortion can make a young person feel like there is no way out of the situation, and no one they can talk to about it.

Shaming or scaring youth into thinking they have done something immoral and illegal by sending a naked photo of themselves may prevent youth from seeking help if they have been victimized. This may cause youth to make impulsive decisions, such as sending more images in the case of sextortion, and can cause severe psychological impacts, including suicide.



Sexual Harassment: Myths and Facts

Myth

"They shouldn't have sent the photo if they didn't want it seen by everyone."

Fact

When a person sends a photo of themselves, it is never okay to send that photo to anyone else without consent. When someone consents to having sex with one person, it does not mean they consent to having sex with every person. The same is true with image distribution.



🔯 Think of it like this:

If Claire gave her credit card to her server at a restaurant for payment, and the server used the card for personal purchases, we would surely understand that this was not the intended use of the card that Claire provided consent for. Blaming the victim in NCIID should be as ludicrous as blaming Claire in this scenario.

Myth

"They should be flattered by comments about their body."

Fact

Mutual flirting is noticeable and fun, one-sided lewd comments are a form of power-play. They objectify people and reduce someone's worth to their physical appearance, and it is normal for these comments to make people feel uncomfortable.

Myth

"I'm afraid to say no to a date because the person might hate me."

Fact

This is not so much a myth as it is a common feeling when rejecting another person's advances, particularly among young women and girls. It is normal to feel empathetic for someone after rejection, but if someone is going to hate you, call you names, or berate you after being told 'no', consider if this is someone healthy to have in your life. Everyone deserves respect and understanding, and you do not owe anything to anyone.



Sexual Assault: Myths and Facts

Myth

""NO" might mean they are playing hard to get."

Fact

Unless someone gives an affirmative 'Yes' with their words or body language, it is never ok to assume what another person wants and continue pressuring them into something they did not agreed to. Saying no does not mean "convince me".

Myth

"They said they would, so now they have to; They've started so now they can't stop."

Fact

Everyone has the right to withdraw their consent at any point during an intimate interaction. They also have the right to change their mind, even if there was agreement at the beginning. Consent is ongoing, in the present moment.

でいる。 Think of it like this:

Stephen asks Claire to play cards and she agrees, but when Stephen explains the rules of the game, Claire decides she does not want to play anymore. It would seem very off-putting for Stephen to force Claire to play cards with him at this point, so the same sentiment should be applied to anyone pressuring someone into sex after they have changed their mind.

Myth

"They didn't have bruises or broken bones after, so it must not have been an assault."

Fact

Sexual assaults may not involve physical force, but rather verbal coercion or use of a power imbalance, such as if the victim is impaired/unconscious, or fear that resistance may cause more harm. Responses to assault also vary depending on our fear circuit reactions: while one person's reflex may be to fight/flight, another may freeze. Additionally, about 80% of sexual assault victims know the person who assaulted them, complicating reactions through the influence of shock, confusion, denial, and betrayal.



Myth

"They probably just regret the hookup."

Fact

False allegations of sexual assault do happen, but they are dramatically overestimated, and are comparable to the rate of false allegations for any other crime. Disclosing sexual assault is very difficult and does not come without potential risks. It is much more likely that they are telling the truth than being vindictive or vengeful. If someone discloses sexual assault, believe them.

Myth

"If this really happened, they would have told someone right away."

Fact

Sexual assault is a traumatic experience that can cause an array of responses. While some people might talk about it

right away, others might not. There are also many barriers for people when disclosing that may take time to overcome, such as social stigma, fear of not being believed, and severing the relationship with the perpetrator (usually a family member, friend, romantic partner, or acquaintance). Someone may disclose the assault to a loved one, but not report right away - or ever. This is also not uncommon due to fear and mistrust of the justice system.







Sexual Abuse: Myths and Facts

Myth

"Boys can't be sexually abused, only girls can."

Fact

Although sexual abuse is more commonly experienced by girls, 1 in 6 boys experience sexual assault or abuse before the age of 18. Because of gender stereotypes, it can be difficult for boys to speak up about sexual abuse, believing they cannot be vulnerable, or that it is a sign of weakness. Perpetrators manipulate trusting relationships to assert power and control, and victimization can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, sex, or sexual orientation.



"Women are too kind to sexually abuse anyone."

Fact

Myth

Though most people who perpetrate sexual abuse are male, females can perpetrate sexualized violence too, victimizing both boys and girls. Because of the gender stereotype that all girls are passive and soft, it can make the experience of being abused by a woman a lot more confusing and difficult to disclose for both male and female victims.

Myth

"Being sexually abused by someone of the same sex says something about your sexual preferences."

Fact

Abuse is a crime of control and violence, and does not imply anything about the sexual orientation of the victims. In some cases, even the perpetrator's sexual orientation or preferences are irrelevant to who they victimize.

Myth

"You can't be sexually abused by someone you are in a relationship with because couples have consensual sex."

Fact

You can be sexually abused by anyone who forces you to do sexual acts you do not want to do, including your intimate partner. Even those who have a history of mutual consensual sexual activity can experience abuse. Consent is always specific to the present moment.

Dating Violence

A short, animated video will be shown to describe a few types of abuse and how to recognize when a relationship is unhealthy. Click or scan the QR Code to the right to view the video.







Violence Definitions

Intimate partner violence: A pattern of behaviours used by one partner to maintain power and control over the other partner in an intimate relationship.

Physical abuse: physical contact like hitting, kicking, punching, or other physical intimidations, such as throwing an object at or near someone.

Emotional abuse: intimidation, humiliation, name calling, and control over someone's decisions, like what they wear or where they go.

Financial abuse: limiting and controlling someone's access to or taking advantage of their finances.

Stalking: spying, following, refusing to leave when asked, and bombarding someone with messages after they have told you to stop. Stalking is a form of sexual harassment.

Sexual abuse: forcing someone to participate in sexual acts, ignoring their sexual boundaries and consent.



Ending



Take-aways

Students will be provided with final comments and a few reminders/take aways.

Remember to...

- Practice empathy
- · Hold your friends accountable for any harm they may cause
- Trust your intuition you know what's right for you
- It is truly okay to assert your boundaries and say no
- If you have experienced violence, you are not alone and you are not to blame, and there are safe adults who will believe you and help you find support

Ouestion & Answer Period

If no preference is given, the facilitator will provide the opportunity for an open dialogue to ask questions or discuss any of the content. Some teachers may want to plan in advance, and provide the students with the chance to write anonymous questions for the facilitator to review and answer.

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT US:

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This guide was researched and created by Regina and Area Sexual Assault Centre. Should you share this information externally, or use it in a teaching settling, please credit RSAC. If you require more information about applications of use, please contact us.



