



GET THE FACTS ABOUT

RESPECTING SEXUAL BOUNDARIES

IN THIS ISSUE:

- What are Sexual Boundaries
- Consent is Mandatory
- What is Abuse?
- Rape and Sexual Assault
- Making Escape Plans & Safety Plans
- Answers to Common Questions
- Resources



What are Sexual Boundaries?

Every person has a right to **SELECT** their own sexual boundaries or personal rules for themselves. Sexual boundaries can include avoiding sex, only having sex within a committed relationship, or anything that helps you keep it real.

Decide what you will do and what you won't do in your life and relationships.

It is important to **DETECT** when your sexual boundaries or personal rules might be challenged by others. Some ways your boundaries might be challenged are when alcohol or drugs are involved, when your partner is pressuring you or when you're alone together.

Watch out for signs that your personal rules are being challenged.

You can **PROTECT** your sexual boundaries and personal rules by using refusal and negotiation skills to get out of a situation or avoiding risky situations.

Communicate your boundaries to your partner and practice ways that you will get out of risky situations.

Being in a relationship or dating someone means you also have to **RESPECT** their sexual boundaries and personal rules and they have to respect yours too.

Ask your partner what their personal rules are and respect their rules by not pressuring them to do things they do not want to do.

A Note About Consent:

Consent is an agreement between partners to engage in an activity, including a sexual activity. Consent should be freely given.

Each time you want to engage in sexual activity with someone, you need to ask for consent, even if you have had sex with them before. People can change their mind about a sexual activity at any time.

When you respect your partner's personal rules and sexual boundaries, you are keeping it real and being a good friend.

Consent is Mandatory

Sexual activity without consent from every partner, every time, is sexual abuse.

Non-consent includes:

- Pressuring or intimidating someone into saying "yes"
- Waiting until someone is intoxicated or physically impaired and cannot say "no"
- Using physical force to overwhelm someone

If they can't say "no" then they can't say "yes"

Enthusiastic consent means saying "yes" freely and without feeling pressured. It is saying "yes" with your body language, words, and expressions.



What is Abuse?

Abuse is when someone does things to control, bully, or hurt someone else.

What Is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse happens when an someone has forced sexual activity on you, including a friend, adult or partner. Sexual abuse also happens if someone has talked you into sexual activity, even if they didn't use force.

Abuse can be:

PHYSICAL

Causing harm or injury to your body

VERBAL

Causing harm to you by using mean or hurtful words

EMOTIONAL/ MENTAL

Causing harm to your feelings or ability to think clearly

Examples of Sexual Abuse

When these occur against your will:

- Having sex (oral, anal or vaginal)
- Touching your genitals or making you touch their genitals
- Showing you their genitals or making you show yours
- Touching or kissing in a sexual way
- Asking to have sex
- Showing pictures or movies of other people having sex
- Asking you for naked photos of your sex parts

These are not the only forms that sexual abuse can take, but these are the most common.

A Note About Consent vs Abuse:

- Enthusiastic consent is part of having a happy and healthy relationship. Consent helps you and your partner understand and respect each other's boundaries.
- Abuse can be sexual, physical, verbal, or emotional/ mental. In a perfect world all relationships would be happy and healthy. However, sometimes things go wrong.
- Abuse can happen within a family, a friendship, or a romantic relationship—but no matter who does it, it is ALWAYS wrong.
- Sex between an adult and a minor cannot be consensual. No adult should ever engage in sexual activity with a child or teen.

Rape and Sexual Assault

Rape, or sexual assault, is when one person forces another person to have sex. IT IS A CRIME.

Rape is about POWER and CONTROL—it is NOT about love or intimacy.

The act of rape could be committed by anyone, a stranger, or someone you know. Rape could occur at any moment, whether you are spending time with someone you like, at a dance, or in a car.

.....

Rape can also happen when someone is drunk or drugged and is unable to say "yes" or "no" to sex.

No one has the right to force someone else to have sex against their will.

Being raped is traumatic and may leave the person feeling depressed, degraded, angry, and scared.

Always remember...

Rape is NOT the fault of the victim.

Victims need comfort and support from friends and family.

They also need support from professionals who help victims recover from this traumatic event.



Making Safety Plans

Carry a cell phone, phone card, and money in case you need to call for help



Call 911 if you feel threatened.

If someone was violent towards you, be prepared to tell the police

1. Exactly where you were,
2. Exactly what the person did, and
3. Exactly what effects it caused

Use code words on the phone that you and your family decide on ahead of time. If you are in trouble, say the code word on the phone so that your family member knows you can't talk openly and need help right away.



Also think of safe places to go in case of an emergency, like a police station or a public place like a restaurant or mall.



Write this information down because the police need it to order that person to stay away from you.



Making Escape Plans

If you don't want to be with someone for any reason and are worried that breaking up with them may make them abusive or violent, consider making an escape plan to stay safe

The A-B-C Escape Plan



A: AVOID

Avoid contact with the person



B: BREAK

Tell the person you do not want to see him or her. Do this over the phone so they cannot touch you. Do this when someone you trust, like a parent or guardian, is with you so that you can be safe in your space.



C: CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

FRIENDS - spend time with your other friends, and avoid walking by yourself

TRUSTED ADULTS - find an adult that you trust -- parent/guardian, counselor, teacher, doctor, or spiritual/community leader -- and go to them for advice when you need it

Answers to Common Questions

Can someone tell if I've been abused?

The physical signs of abuse will fade over time, and unless your health care provider tells you about specific problems, no one will be able to see that any physical abuse happened.

I'm a guy who was abused by another guy. Does this make me gay?

No. Sexual orientation is not determined by abuse.

Ever since the abuse, I've had a lot of problems. What can I do to feel better?

Talking to a professional will help. It's common for abuse victims to have problems. Some problems that may occur are:

- Sleeping problems
- Angry outbursts
- Physical aches and pains
- Withdrawing from friends
- Anxiety, depression, or panics
- Low self-esteem or confidence

Will other people know if I tell?

Teachers, counselors, and doctors will have to report the abuse to the child protection authorities, but your friends will never know unless you decide to tell them.

Will being abused make me an abuser?

No, it does not automatically make you an abuser. The more you emotionally heal from the abuse the less likely you are to act out in abusive ways. Seeing a counselor will help.

The abuse has stopped. Why should I tell?

Telling is still important. Below are just a few reasons to tell:

- No one has a right to do that to you
- To make sure you are physically and emotionally okay
- The abuser may do the same thing to someone else

How do I get it to stop?

Tell someone and get help. You can tell your parents, a teacher, counselor, doctor, or a child protective services worker. If the first person you tell doesn't listen, tell someone else.

RESOURCES

www.rainn.org

www.loveisrespect.org

www.iknowmine.org

www.wernative.org

www.healthynativeyouth.org

Domestic Violence Hotline:
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)

Sexual Assault Hotline:
1.800.656.HOPE (4673)

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
988
1.800.273.TALK (8255)

