

# Warning Signs: Understanding Sexual Abuse and Assault

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum  
*Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.*

## ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Make sure you have internet access in your classroom and that you have had these links unblocked for your use:
- - What is Sexual Assault?:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8gslq85Xsc>
- - The Signs:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=He1pu4VwKdM>
- Right before class, open the videos and make sure they are working; keep the links open and minimized so they are ready when you need them.
- Be sure to tell the school counselor that you will be addressing this topic in class and invite them to sit in in case a student discloses any current or past abuse or is triggered by what is discussed. If the cou

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**Note to the Teacher:** Another option for addressing this topic that can be very powerful is to have survivors of relationship abuse or sexual assault come to speak with your class. Regardless of whether you choose to do that or conduct the lesson as written, be sure to coordinate with your school counselor, as discussing the topics in this lesson can be overwhelming or triggering for some students who may have experienced assault. If you do choose to present a panel, be sure to vet your panelists thoroughly. Try to invite survivors of different genders to break stereotypes that only men abuse and only women are abused.

In addition, regardless of whether you have a panel or use this lesson, it is a good idea to let students know during the previous class that you will be addressing this topic the next time you meet with them. This gives those who may be survivors of abuse or trauma who may wish to miss this class session to avoid being triggered and re-traumatized the opportunity to take care of themselves.

### A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

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

### PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Explain to the students that you are going to be talking about a particularly intense topic today – sexual abuse and assault. If you have already created groundrules for your classroom, be sure to highlight them before starting the lesson. If you don't have any already created, explain to the students that you are going to ask them to be particularly sensitive and respectful during this class session. (2 minutes)

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

Play the Amaze video, "What is Sexual Assault" from <https://amaze.org/video/personal-safety-sexual-assault/>.

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

- Why does Barb, the main character, try to quiet Sarah when she says "He might be sexually assaulting you." out loud?
- What is the definition of sexual assault you remember being stated in the video? (Answer: When someone does something sexual to another person without getting their permission first.)







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Show the video clip, “The Signs.”

Process by asking the following questions:

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

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

Someone who is being abused or assaulted should speak up if they can so that others can help make the abuse stop and so that it won’t happen to someone else.”

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

(3 minutes)

**RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT** OT63 0904110JTJ 11 Tf1 01 229/MCID 18DC 0pW'n 9Tf1 01 18 24088

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### **HOMEWORK:**

Students will be given a sheet listing several websites that are age-appropriate for them that lists additional facts, as well as information about how to report abuse or an assault, and asked to visit at least one site and respond to several questions about it.

***Note to the Teacher:** Be sure to return these homework sheets to the students after you've reviewed them so they will have the website information to keep moving forward.*

*Note: Consent chart adapted from an activity in the curriculum "Sexual Violence in Teenage Lives: A Prevention Curriculum." Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, 1994.*

## Taking Action: Make Sexual Assault and Abuse STOP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- Break the Cycle: <http://www.breakthecycle.org/>
- Love is Respect: <http://www.loveisrespect.org/>
- Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN): <https://rainn.org/>

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Which site did you visit? \_\_\_\_\_

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

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Washington Laws Related to Sexual Consent

## Age of Consent:

The age of consent to sexual activity in Washington is 16 years old.

The “Age of Consent” is how old someone must be to legally consent to sex with an adult – a person who is 18 years old or older.

Even if a person is 16, they still can’t consent to sex with a person who is their teacher, boss, or has authority over them due to the imbalance of power in the relationship.

Sex is not legal if:

- The younger person is under 12, and the older person is more than 24 months older (2 years)
- The younger person is 12 or 13 and the older person is more than 36 months older (3 years)
- The younger person is 14 or 15 and the older person is more than 48 months (4 years) older.

## Consent to Sexual Healthcare :

- Youth may have access to the following reproductive health care services without the permission of a parent or guardian:
- Youth who are 14 years old and older are able to get testing and treatment HIV and other STIs
- Youth of any age may get access to birth control
- Youth who are of any age may receive an abortion and access to abortion related services, or prenatal care during pregnancy.<sup>3</sup>

## Sexual Assault:

In Washington state, rape is defined as any time a person has oral, anal, or vaginal sexual intercourse without consent. This could be by force, with or without a weapon, or when a person has not given their consent to sexual behavior.<sup>4</sup>

- It is illegal for people to force someone to engage in sexual touch.
- The age of consenting to sex is 16, and sex is not legal if there is a pre