



A YOUTH GUIDE TO SUPPORTING SURVIVORS IN YOUR SCHOOL

A GameChangers Youth-Led Workshop

Introductions



Daria Rudykh

SHE/HER/HERS

Middleton High School
Senior



Jasmine Sotelo

SHE/HER/HERS

East High school
Senior



Makeda

SHE/HER/HERS

West High School
Sophomore



Ana Shriver

SHE/HER/HERS

East High School
Senior



Amelia Dyer

SHE/HER/HERS

Oregon High School
Junior

Introductions



Dmitri Natachu

ANY PRONOUNS

Middleton High School
Junior



Mihika Shivakumar

SHE/HER/HERS

Memorial High School
Junior



Lucy Nonemacher

SHE/HER/HERS

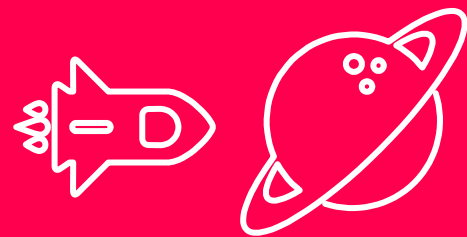
Oregon High School
Senior



Emma Schell

SHE/HER/HERS

Oregon High School
Sophomore



GOALS

1. Learn to prevent rape culture in the classroom, school, & community
2. Help develop school policy that supports survivors long-term
3. Learn to handle situations with more care and respect for survivors
4. Ensure students & staff are connected with support resources



Definitions

Sexual Assault

Sexual contact or behavior that happens without the explicit consent of the survivor

Gender-Based Violence

Violence that is rooted in exploiting unequal power dynamics & relationships between various genders.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

*[Sexual Assault](#) and [Sexual Harassment](#) Terminology from RAINN and [Gender-Based Violence](#) Terminology from NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence



CON•SENT

(VERB)

To make a mutual, voluntary, informed decision between clear-minded, of age participants before ANY and EVERY sexual act.

#DEFININGCONSENT

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF INDIANA AND KENTUCKY
PPINK.ORG/CONSENT

*Consent Terminology from Planned Parenthood



Definitions

Oppression

Pervasive, systemic and institutional cruelty & mistreatment of individuals based on their membership in different marginalized groups that are violently oppressed by those in power.

Intersectionality

Created by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the intersection of identities, especially of Black women, that affects their perspective of the world

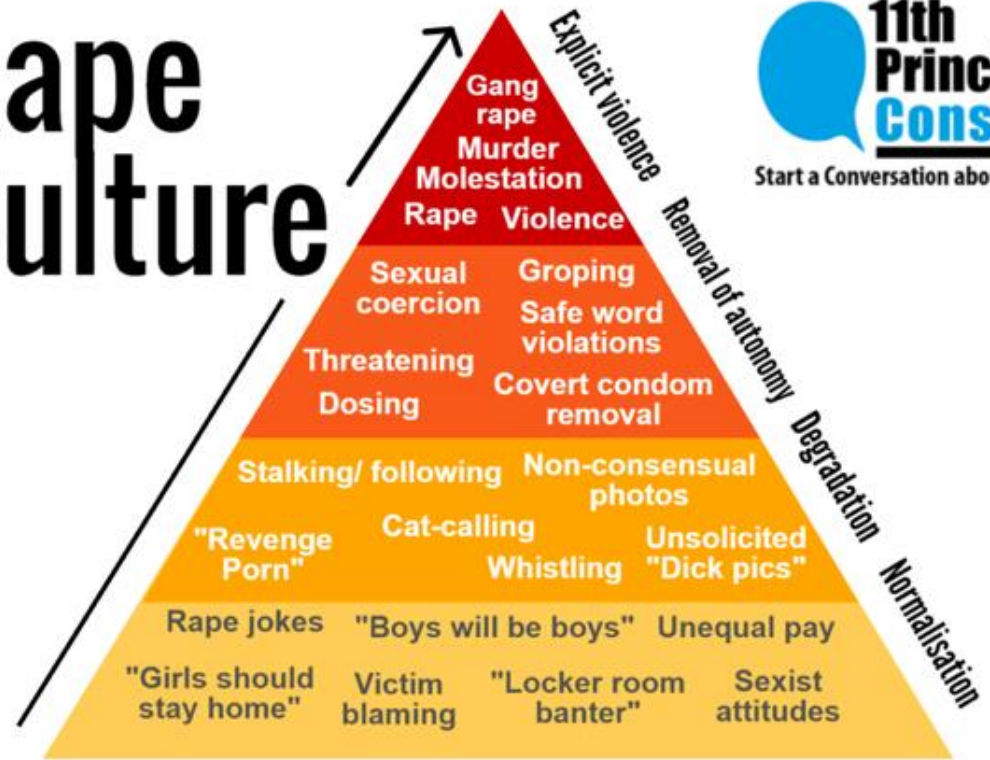
*[Oppression](#) Terminology from National Museum of African American History & Culture and [Intersectionality](#) Terminology from YW Boston

Definitions

Rape Culture

An environment or society that normalizes, expects, & perpetuates sexual violence through social attitudes, media and pop culture

Rape Culture



*Rape Culture Terminology from Marshall University

**What examples of
rape culture do you
see in your
classroom, school, or
workplace?**



VICTIM VS. SURVIVOR

Being intentional with language

Title IX Overview

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Disclaimer: We are not trained Title IX professionals and do not claim to be. All content is based off of thorough research and a part of our mission to create a better environment for survivors, and all students, in schools.



Individual Level

Best Practices for One On One Support

1.

Tools for before the disclosure

Mandated Reporting

Mandated Reporter: A person who is legally required to ensure that a police report is made when abuse is suspected or observed

Who are mandated reporters?

- Every staff member in a school
- Law enforcement
- Medical staff

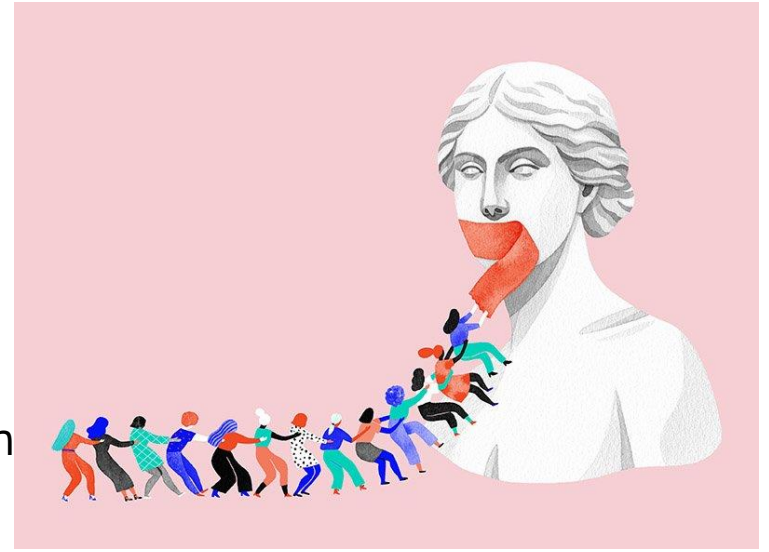
Who are not mandated reporters?

- Members of RCC
- Legal guardian of the students

What to do if you believe a student **will** disclose

Practice Protective Interrupting

1. Thank student for coming to you
2. Assure them you are there to support them
3. Explain your role as a mandated reporter
4. Explain *why* you want to give them this info before any sensitive disclosure
5. Be specific but brief in what the different options involve



Language for Protective Interrupting

“Thank you so much for coming to talk to me, I am here to support you the best way I can, and that’s to let you make decisions. I want to make sure you know I’m a mandated reporter.

That means if I hear specifics about someone under 18 being hurt or violated I legally have to report it to school administration and the police or CPS, sometimes both. That means the situation will be documented and investigated. We can talk more about that if you want to.

Otherwise, if this is something you would rather talk anonymously about - where no one needs to know your name and no reports need to be made - we could connect with RCC now or whenever you feel ready. I want you to feel empowered to make the best decisions for you, because you know your needs. That’s a lot of information, do you have any questions right away or would you like to take a little break to think about our next steps?”

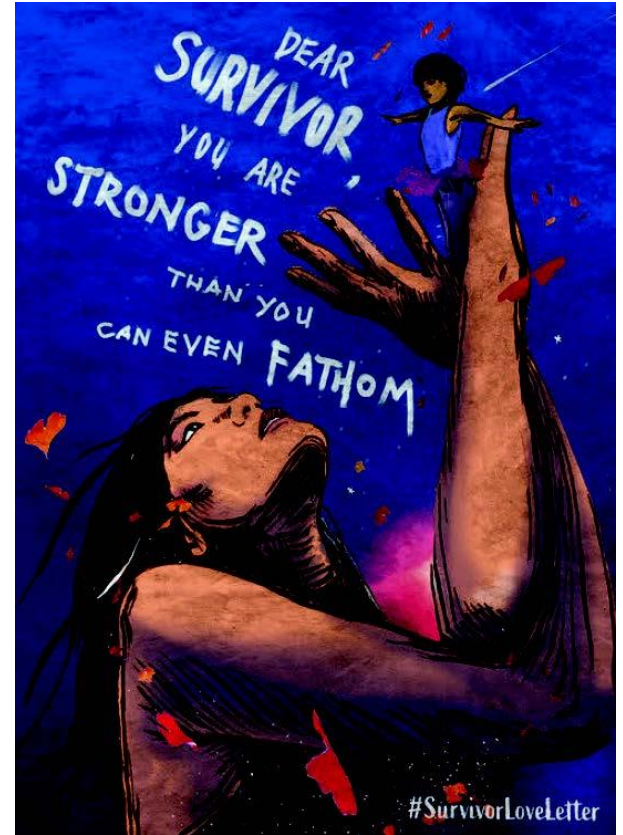
Key Components for Protective Interrupting

- Calm, compassionate tone
- Open, non-dismissive attitude
- Providing choices
- No jargon or inaccessible language
- Keeping the conversation open to student lead
- Offer time to process



Why is it so important to give survivors control of their journeys?

- Return of autonomy
- Losing control can be triggering/hurtful
- Provide a sense of control that can be healing and empowering
- Processing is a lifetime journey



2.

During the disclosure

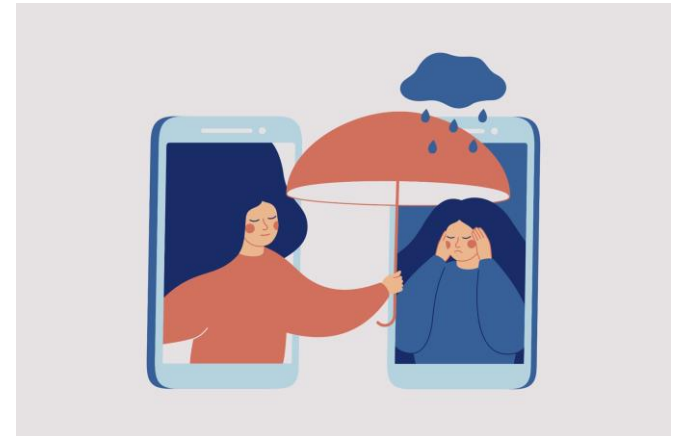
DO's

- Environment - find a private, quiet place to talk
- Remain calm, but mirror energy
- Demonstrate active listening



DO's

- Validate feelings and critiques
 - Encourage students to validate their own experiences
- Trust & empower them to make their own decisions
- Be the most transparent and specific that you can be
 - Even if that means saying "*I don't know*"
 - Don't sugarcoat reality
- Give them as much information as you can about options



Use Supportive Statements

When Responding to Sexual Violence Disclosures

I'M HERE FOR YOU

I'm so glad that you're safe now

I believe you

Whatever you did was right because you're still here

Your reaction is completely normal and valid

Whatever you want to do next, I'll support you

YOU ARE SO STRONG

This was not your fault

Fear 2 Freedom, Inc.
www.fear2freedom.org

DON'Ts

- DO NOT single out a survivor
- DO NOT act shocked/surprised
- DO NOT interrupt
- DO NOT investigate or ask critical questions
- DO NOT blame the survivor
- DO NOT touch the survivor, even if you may want to comfort them
- NO defensive or closed-off body language
- DO NOT tell them what to do
 - Instead, offer resources and options



Responses to Common Survivor Feelings

1. Self doubt or blame

"What happened is not your fault. I believe you and your feelings are completely valid."

1. Uncertainty around the 'right' decisions

"Whatever your decision is you have my full support. Would you like me to connect you with an advocate from the Rape Crisis Center? ."

1. Anger/ Frustration with systems

"I am so sorry our systems don't treat survivors better, you have every right to be frustrated. I will continue to be vocal and push for policies that address these issues. "

3.

After the disclosure

How to support a student after they disclose

- Keep student updated & informed, always
- Continue to empower student in their own choices
- Display empathy
- Talk to them about their safety
- Connect the survivor with local mental health/sexual assault resources, but do not force
- Discuss possible school accommodations
- Provide Title IX or school accommodations



Creating A Plan With a Survivor

(Don't call it this)

For some survivors it can feel helpful to create a plan for moving forward, including details like support systems available, school accommodations, and survivor needs.

This can assist both the survivor & their support people.

MY PERSONAL CRISIS PLAN

I know I'm triggered when I notice:

Some good ways to distract myself are:
□ □ □

Things that help me when I feel this way are:
□
□
□

Some safe people I can reach out to are:
1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

Ways to keep myself and my space safe:
• _____
• _____
• _____
• _____

Other resources I can use to get myself care:
1
2
3

CRISIS TEXT LINE:
text HOME to 741741

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Things to consider when helping a student survivor craft a plan...

- ❑ Is their perpetrator in the building?
- ❑ What are common traffic patterns within the school and are there alternative routes?
- ❑ Are there areas in the school that trigger the student and can be avoided?
- ❑ Can the survivor read an alternative book in English to avoid one that is triggering to them?
- ❑ Can we ask the student survivor's teachers for extra test time and/or extensions if the survivor is struggling with distraction and anxiety stemming from the assault?
- ❑ Can we make note in the school system to no longer put certain students together in classes moving forward?

Title IX Reporting

Schools are **required** under Title IX to notify students the following rights:

- Have an adviser of choice present during the process (including an attorney)
- Have witnesses speak on their behalf
- Have timely access to information that will be used at the hearing
- Have the right to appeal a final decision
- Students have the right to request confidentiality and available confidential advocacy, counseling, or other support services

Students **are not required to use informal methods** (eg. mediation) of grievance resolution and should not be pressured into such a process.

Utilizing the School/ District Code of Conduct & Policy

- After the changes to Title IX in 2020, survivors are left with much less accomodation and a harder time even qualifying to receive those new protections.
- So how can we help if a incident does not technically qualify to be covered by Title IX?
 - Use your school's policy to help individual students, and to provide accountability
 - Encourage district to have strong, clear policy

**How can you help
prevent rape culture
in the spaces you
frequent?**



School/ District Level

Best Practices for Responding to a Large Scale Event

1.

**Creating a safe environment
for survivors**

Provide resources & tools to **students & staff**



- Student & staff mandatory training/ PD
- Making sure they are easily accessible on school and district websites
- Have brochures available along with job posting pamphlets/course selection booklets so they can be pick up discreetly
- Advertise resources on school announcements
- Contact school clubs



Make students+staff feel heard

- Ask students for input BEFORE/AFTER making major decisions
 - Anonymous surveys
 - Talkback sessions
 - Respond & adapt based on feedback
- Active & reflective listening
 - *"I'm hearing you feel..."*
 - *"You mentioned... can you clarify..."*
 - *"I hear that you're feeling..."*
 - *"Thank you for sharing that. "*

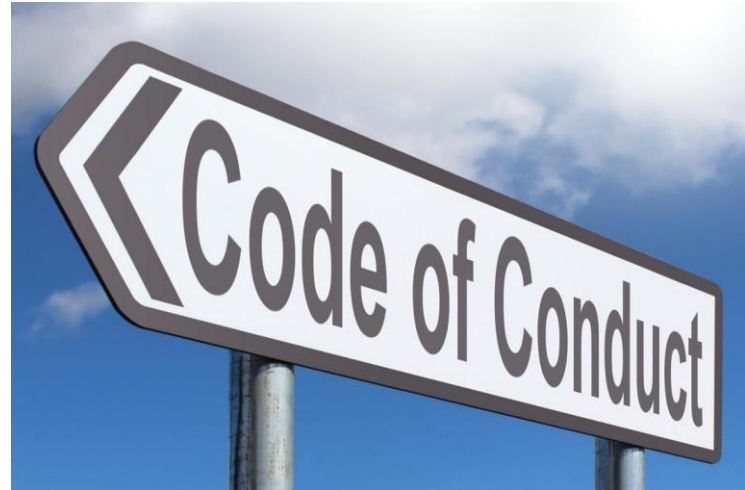


2.

How to create policies to support survivors

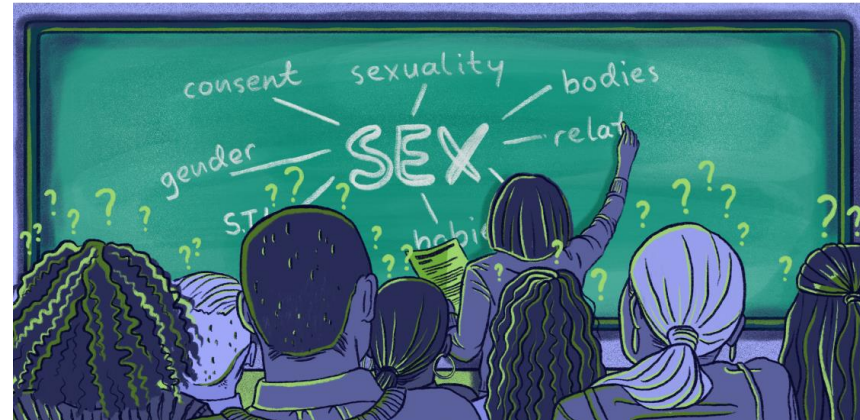
Why a strong code of conduct is key

- Survivors feel more supported and safe
- Helps victims feel more comfortable when disclosing
- Creates natural paths of accountability
- Teachers have a resource to look to



How to help long-term (policy)

- Prioritize in-depth relationship & sex education
 - Ensure that students & staff are using inclusive language
- Reevaluate dress codes that could be promoting rape culture
- Dedicate specific members of staff to instances of sexual assault, harrassment, abuse
 - This includes a Title IX coordinator
 - Student Advocate



How to help long-term (policy)

- Involve students, staff, and local organizations in the development process
 - Ensure that all genders, races, people with disabilities, etc. are included in these discussions
- Interwine sexual assault prevention into PD days



Making Title IX Accessible to Students

NOT PUBLISHING A SPECIFIC GRIEVANCE POLICY IS IN VIOLATION OF TITLE IX AND CAN REVOKE FEDERAL FUNDING

- Must be easily accessible at school websites/handbooks/counselors
- Clear grievance procedures must include:
 - A simultaneous police investigation does **not** remove a school's responsibility to resolve a complaint under Title IX (this is in violation of Title IX)
 - The option for written/electronic notes of any meeting

How to Create Policies that Support Students

- Analyze current policies
- Recognizing gaps in resources and policies
 - LISTEN to students and staff
- Ask yourself “Are the current resources and policies supporting and meeting the needs of **all** students?”

All together, creating intersectional justice



How to Be Mindful of Rape Culture in Policies

- Policies should be supporting survivors, *not* the perpetrator
 - Are survivors feeling heard and understood through these policies?
- An **easy and well publicized** way for students to report sexual violence
- Recognizing and following through on consequences for harmful language & behavior



3.

How to respond to a large scale event

What do we mean by a 'large scale event'?

- An event that many students and parents are actively engaged in
- Media is reporting on it
- Can be very sensitive for students other than the survivor themselves
- Can be retraumatizing for survivors



Responding To An Event

- Address in a timely manner to students, staff, and parents
- Model how to talk about it
- Be as transparent as possible
- Show vulnerability & be honest



Responding to An Event

- Don't act like everything is normal
- Provide students and staff with multiple times and spaces to talk about the event with trained professionals
- Bring in local orgs like RCC

*Remember, how you respond sets precedence for expectations in the future



Things to avoid...

DON'T....

- Blame survivors
- Ignore student & staff needs
- Brush actions under the rug
- Make excuses for perpetrators
- Use other problematic language



GameChangers' stories

1. Middleton Nude Dropbox incident
2. East High School Walkout
3. Trigger warning experience



4.

**Creating a welcoming classroom or
space, *especially* for survivors**



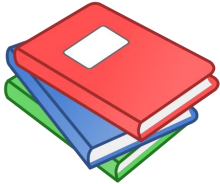
A welcoming setting



Set boundaries/rules



Speak up/out



Resources



Warnings



Feedback

The Setting

Make it visually obvious what to expect, and how things will be in the space



Setting Boundaries & Expectations

- Make a classroom contract that explicitly mentions embracing consent culture
- Name expectations about sexual assault & harrassment, and what accountability will look like
- Have students fill out a short preferences form
- Anonymous survey for larger class preferences



Speak Up & Out



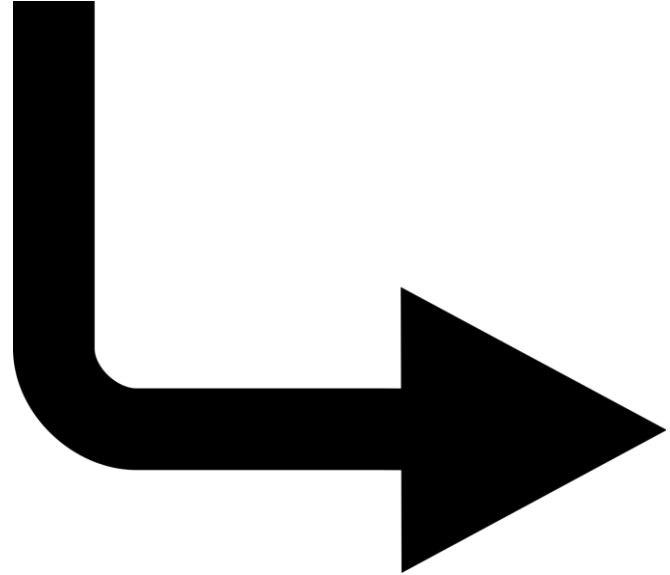
- Practice bystander intervention techniques & language (Need help? Contact RCC!)
- Call out and name unhealthy behavior
- Explain why a specific behavior isn't respectful and crosses boundaries
- Link it to boundaries and rules that are set in the beginning

Remember as you practice it will get easier!

An important note:



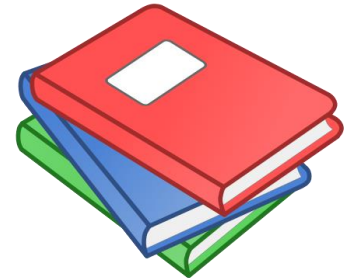
Do NOT single out a survivor



Redirect/ respond in general sense, then follow up privately

Providing Resources to Students & Staff

- Posters with explanations of reporting options and contacts to RCC & other support organizations
- Take time to explain vital policies
- Show & explain reporting forms
- Mention policies often
- Pamphlets/ business cards by regular class worksheets
- Resources on google classroom updated continuously



Accept and Use Student Feedback

- Accountability
- Listen to understand, not to respond in conversations and meetings
- Respond to situations with knowledge from conversations and take actionable steps to improve the situation



Making change is not a fast process, but we need to make progress.

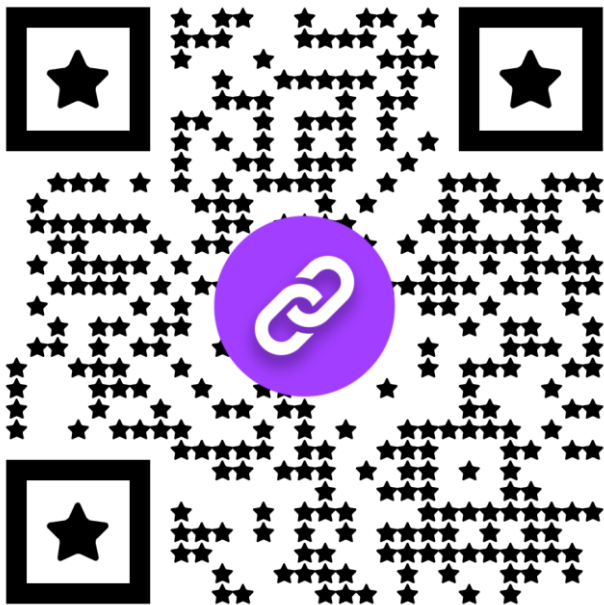
Interactive Role Play Activity

Practicing with new tools and knowledge

In breakout rooms...

1. A pair of GameChanger facilitators will lead the group in practicing addressing and responding to common school scenarios, using tools from the presentation
2. GC facilitators will model how they would respond to one of the examples and ask for participant feedback
3. GC facilitators will invite each attendee to respond to one of the scenes using the knowledge and language they got today
4. GC facilitators will provide informed feedback to validate and help participants grow!

CANVA Resources & RCC Posters



RESOURCES

This is an inclusive resource guide for survivors of sexual assault, people who would like to learn more about how to support someone, steps to take, and more.

Content Warning: talk about sexual violence/harrasment/assault/rape/abuse



Thanks!

Please fill out our feedback form, we value your responses.

Any questions?

Heather Chun - heather.chun@thercc.org

Calista Storck - storckcalista@gmail.com

Summer Herrmann - sherrmann656@gmail.com

Follow us on Instagram @rcc.gamechanger and @rapecrisisdane

