

DRAWING THE LINE

ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE

A Guide for Ontario Educators
Grades 1-8



Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence: A Guide for Ontario Educators

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To order or download copies of the *Draw the Line* cards, posters, or educators' guide, go to www.dtl.whiteribbon.ca

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PREFACE

Sexual violence is pervasive in Canada and around the world. Putting an end to sexual violence requires changes in both attitudes and behaviours, and educators have a key role to play in laying the foundation for those changes. *Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence* was written by Ontario educators in collaboration with White Ribbon to support teachers in raising awareness among their students about topics relating to sexual violence prevention. This guide presents engaging lessons that draw on expectations from various subjects in the Ontario curriculum to address topics such as consent, healthy relationships, and the role of bystanders in sexual violence prevention in ways that are appropriate to the ages and stages of development of both elementary and secondary students.

To be effective, education about sexual violence has to take a dual approach. Students need to develop their awareness of the importance of responding to instances of sexual violence, and each lesson plan in this guide addresses the questions of why, when, and how student bystanders should respond to sexual violence. In addition, educators must take a proactive approach, teaching students about healthy, respectful relationships. Research has shown that respectful, considerate, and prosocial behaviours must be nurtured and taught at a young age; and, according to the Ontario Ministry of Education, “the most effective way to enable all students to learn about healthy and respectful relationships is through the school curriculum.”¹ *Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence* supports teachers in helping younger students develop basic skills for healthy relationships, including skills related to safety, communication, and demonstrating respect for themselves and others, as well as in helping older students build their understanding of healthy relationships, consent, and conflict management. In the lessons in this guide, students learn about self and others, relationships, personal safety, and decision making – all of which play a crucial role in healthy relationships and sexual violence prevention.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Education, *Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships. Safe Schools Action Team Report on Gender-based Violence, Homophobia, Sexual Harassment, and Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour in Schools* (Toronto: Author, 2008), p. 11.

The Ontario curriculum provides multiple opportunities for teachers to integrate education on sexual violence prevention and healthy relationships in their lessons. Many of the lesson plans in this guide uses a cross-curricular approach, providing opportunities for students to apply critical-thinking and problem-solving strategies in a variety of contexts. The real-life scenarios that provide the foundation for the lesson plans will engage students and promote discussion of a range of topics related to sexual violence prevention. Although the lesson plans have been designed to be age appropriate and sensitive to issues of intersectionality, the topics and themes they explore should be addressed with sensitivity and respect for individual differences.

PREFACE

> **SUBSCRIBE** to the *Draw the Line* Educators' Newsletter to learn more about new resources, professional development workshops in your regions, and the Draw the Line Sexual Violence Prevention Awards
<http://eepurl.com/cWEBW9>



1

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN ONTARIO: AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why We Need to Draw the Line

Gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment, is pervasive in our society. Although men and boys experience sexual violence, most of its victims are women and girls. Violence against women and girls occurs in frightening numbers throughout the world, regardless of ethnicity, religion, and class.

Sexual violence occurs in every city and community across Ontario and across our country. One in three Canadian women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime.

To eradicate violence against girls and women, we must understand its root causes. Gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment, arises from toxic attitudes and behaviours rooted in sexism, misogyny, and hypermasculinity. It is supported by rape culture – the implicit or explicit normalization and trivialization of male sexual violence and victim blaming in social practices, institutions, and media images.¹

Because of the pervasiveness of such attitudes, all girls and women are at risk of sexual violence, but some are at greater risk than others. As we discuss below, an individual's unique circumstances of power, privilege, and identity can contribute to the risk of their being the target of sexual violence.

Sexual violence can and must be eradicated. We must work together to make our communities safer. To end sexual violence, we must not simply react to it but prevent it. To do so, we need to change attitudes and behaviours

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE includes any form of behaviour – including psychological, physical, and sexual behaviour – that is based on an individual's gender and is intended to control, humiliate, or harm the individual.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE is a subset of gender-based violence. It refers to the coercion of someone into unwanted sexual activity without their consent. Coercion can include physical force, intimidation, threats, or blackmail.

GENDER refers to socially constructed ideas of what it means to be male or female. Gender may or may not reflect the social expectations associated with a person's sex assigned at birth. Gender can be conceptualized not as a binary (man/woman) but rather as a spectrum that encompasses a rich blend of biology, *gender identity* (one's sense of being female, male, both, or neither), and *gender expression* (the way in which individuals express their gender identity to others).

¹ Ontario, *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment* (Toronto: Author, 2015), p. 9, <https://www.ontario.ca/document/action-plan-stop-sexual-violence-and-harassment>

and create a consent culture. The role of education is critical in bringing about such change, as attitudes and behaviours that contribute to sexual violence take root at an early age. Although we need to educate all students about the risk of sexual violence, and about ways to prevent it, we also need to focus on the attitudes and behaviour of boys and men.

Most violence against women is committed by men. Although the majority of men do not condone violence against women, all men have a role and responsibility in ending it.² Moreover, social change on the issue of sexual violence and harassment cannot be realized in isolation from other issues of gender inequality,³ and gender equality cannot be achieved without the involvement of men and boys. *Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence* is one of several initiatives that recognize the importance of both the role of education and the role of men and boys in ending sexual violence. In the following section, we briefly describe some of the initiatives and campaigns of particularly relevance to this guide.

1.2 Sexual Violence Prevention Initiatives

White Ribbon

White Ribbon is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls and to promote gender equality, healthy relationships, and a new vision of masculinity. The movement began in 1991, with the request that men wear white ribbons as a pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women and girls. Since then, the initiative has spread to over 65 countries.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN ONTARIO: AN INTRODUCTION

WHITE RIBBON primarily, but not exclusively, works with individuals who identify as men and boys to prevent violence against individuals who identify as women and girls. Throughout this document, the terms **men** and **boys** are used to refer to any individuals who identify as such regardless of social expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth, and the terms **women and girls** are used to refer to any individuals who identify as such. Nevertheless, White Ribbon recognizes that gender is a spectrum and that the gender binary (man/woman) does not reflect everyone's experience and gender identity. Furthermore, White Ribbon acknowledges that transgender individuals and those who do not identify within the gender binary face additional discrimination and have a greater than average risk of experiencing gender-based violence. We encourage teachers, when using this guide, to consider the ways in which gender-based violence affects genderqueer* people, as well as cis-gender** women and girls. To facilitate such approaches, a number of the *Draw the Line* scenario cards featured in this guide use gender-neutral pronouns (they/their/ them) when referring to the individual being, or at risk of being, victimized.

² Todd Minerson et al., *Issue Brief: Engaging Men and Boys to Reduce and Prevent Gender-Based Violence* (Status of Women Canada, 2011), pp. 2, 4, 12, <http://www.whiteribbon.ca/engaging-men-and-boys-to-reduce-and-prevent-gbv/>

³ Ontario, *It's Never Okay*, p. 34.

White Ribbon works to examine the root causes of gender-based and sexual violence and create a cultural shift that will lead to a future without violence. It envisions a masculinity that embodies the best qualities of being human. Through education, awareness raising, outreach, technical assistance, capacity building, partnerships, and creative campaigns, White Ribbon is helping create tools, strategies, and models that challenge negative concepts of manhood and inspire men to understand and embrace the incredible potential they have to be a part of positive change. White Ribbon believes that men and boys are part of the solution to sexual violence and part of a future that is safe and equitable for all people.

Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence is a reflection of White Ribbon's commitment to education and awareness raising. This guide is a result of a partnership between White Ribbon and Ontario educators to support teachers across the province in addressing in the classroom the prevention of gender-based and sexual violence.

Draw the Line

Draw the Line is an interactive campaign whose purpose is to engage Ontarians in a dialogue about sexual violence and to empower them to make a difference in their communities. It is a bystander-focused campaign that encourages those who witness sexual violence to consider the ways in which their presence and actions can interrupt and/or prevent these incidents. To that end, it has developed tools and strategies that can be used to equip bystanders with the awareness and skills they need to challenge sexism and acts of sexual violence and to intervene safely and effectively.

One such tool is the *Draw the Line* cards/posters that serve as the basis for the lesson plans in this guide. Each card focuses on a particular act of sexual violence or harassment, providing information that bystanders need to intervene when they witness such situations. (Section 4.1 provides a more complete description of these cards and how they can be used in the classroom to address issues related to sexual violence and harassment, including how student bystanders can respond.)

Educators may wish to consult Egale Canada Human Rights Trust's Draw the Line - Against Transphobic Violence for additional classroom resources at egale.ca/portfolio/draw-the-line/.

* **GENDERQUEER** refers to gender identity and/or expression that may not correspond with social and cultural expectations. Genderqueer individuals may reject the gender binary, move between genders, or identify with multiple genders.

** **CISGENDER** refers to gender identity that corresponds with the sex assigned to an individual at birth.

It Starts with You – It Stays with Him

White Ribbon's *It Starts with You – It Stays with Him* initiative encourages men to be positive role models for the boys in their lives. The *It Starts with You* website provides a variety of tools and resources to help fathers, teachers, coaches, and other male leaders teach boys about consent, healthy relationships, respectful communication, and setting and respecting boundaries. By working together and by supporting the efforts of women and girls, men and boys can help create a future where all genders are valued and all individuals can live free from violence and inequality.

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Male educators can share with their students the value of equal, healthy relationships and can model ways to help prevent sexual violence. They can talk about specific things men can do to end violence, such as practising consent; challenging exploitative, sexist, and homophobic language; and speaking out against sexual violence. They have an opportunity to be inspiring role models for the boys they educate. We encourage male educators to embrace this role and support the women who are working towards a more equitable society.

It's Never Okay

It's Never Okay is an action plan created by the Ontario government to end sexual violence and harassment. It recognizes that we all share a responsibility for stopping sexual violence. The action plan emphasizes the importance of education and awareness raising in order to change the attitudes and behaviours that contribute to such violence. Among the many initiatives of this action plan is a commitment to helping students at both the elementary and secondary levels gain a deeper understanding of issues related to sexual violence and its prevention. In addition, the action plan commits to developing resources for teachers so they can better support their students in developing the knowledge and skills they need to build healthy relationships and prevent sexual violence.

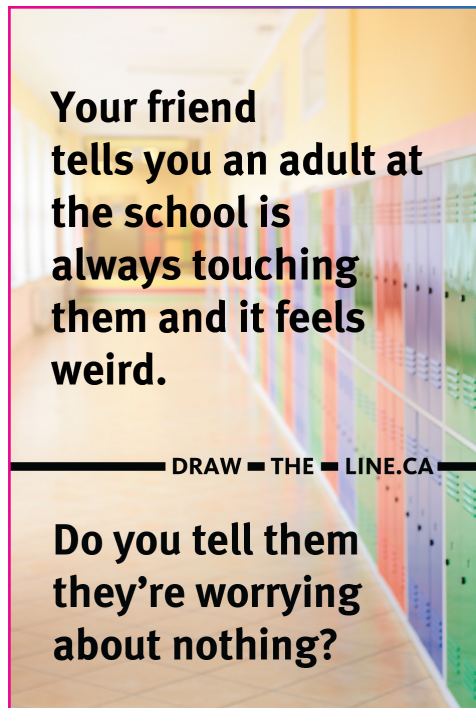
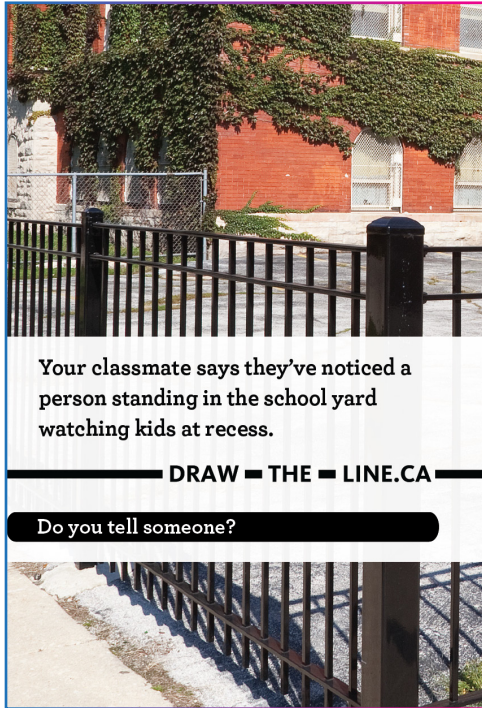
Draw the Line – It Starts with You:

Sexual Violence Prevention in Ontario's Education Sector

Schools are in a privileged position to educate youth about healthy relationships, consent, healthy and equitable gender norms, and sexual violence prevention. *Draw the Line – It Starts with You* is an initiative funded under the *It's Never Okay* action plan to provide educators with the tools and resources they need in order to support students in learning about issues relating to the prevention of sexual violence and harassment.

The *Draw the Line – It Starts with You* initiative includes the following tools and resources:

- **Scenario cards/posters** to be used in the classroom to prompt conversations around issues of sexual violence prevention (four cards were developed for the elementary classroom);

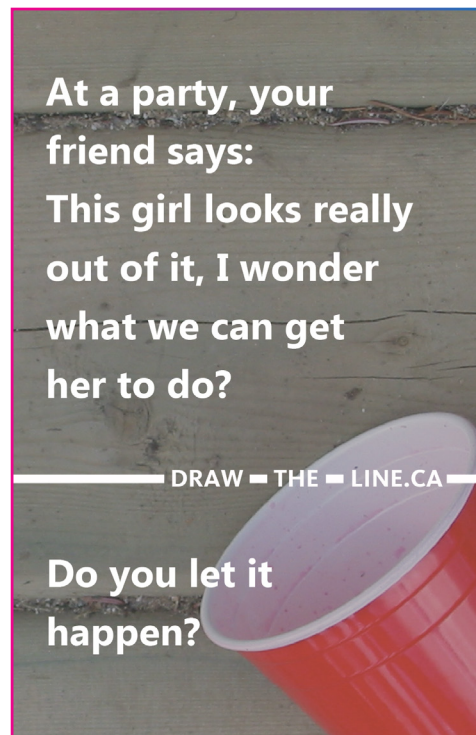


SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN ONTARIO: AN INTRODUCTION

ELEMENTARY SCENARIOS

TOP LEFT:
Stalking/criminal harassment

TOP RIGHT:
Inappropriate touching



BOTTOM LEFT:
Cybersexual violence

BOTTOM RIGHT:
Alcohol-facilitated sexual assault

AT A PARTY YOUR FRIEND SAYS: THOSE GIRLS LOOK REALLY DRUNK, LET'S TAKE THEM UPSTAIRS.

DRAW THE LINE.CA

DO YOU LET IT HAPPEN?



223

Your peer mentor sends you nudes of a girl you know.

DRAW THE LINE.CA

Do you share them?



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SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN ONTARIO: AN INTRODUCTION

SECONDARY SCENARIOS


TOP LEFT:
Alcohol-facilitated sexual assault

TOP RIGHT:
Cybersexual violence

YOUR TEAMMATE TELLS YOU THE COACH IS ALWAYS TOUCHING THEM TO CORRECT THEIR STANCE AND IT FEELS WEIRD.

DRAW THE LINE.CA

DO YOU TELL THEM THEY'RE WORRYING ABOUT NOTHING?




225

You overhear an educator telling a student how their grades would be better if they returned his texts.

DRAW THE LINE.CA

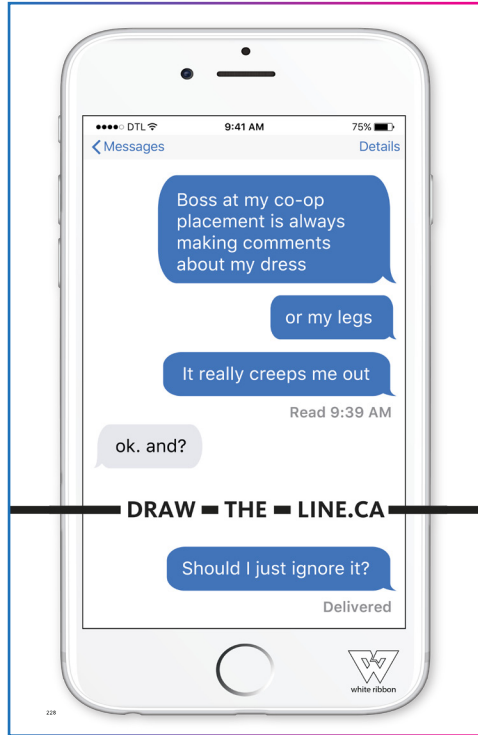
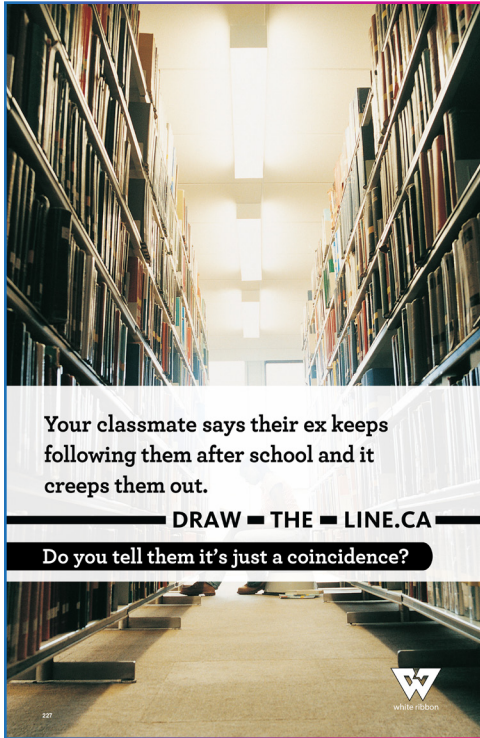
Do you tell someone?



226

BOTTOM LEFT:
Sexual assault by a person of authority

BOTTOM RIGHT:
Sexual violence by a person of authority



**SEXUAL VIOLENCE
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**SECONDARY
SCENARIOS (cont'd)**

TOP LEFT:
*Stalking/criminal
harassment*

TOP RIGHT:
*Workplace
sexual harassment*



BOTTOM LEFT:
Sexual exploitation

To download or order free *Draw the Line* cards or posters, go to www.dtl.whiteribbon.ca

- The *It Starts with You - It Stays with Him* website, which contains testimonies and stories, tips, activities, and e-learning modules (available at www.itstartswithyou.ca);
- **Professional development workshops** (conducted between fall 2017 and fall 2018) to help educators make the best use of the initiative's tools and resources in the classroom and to raise awareness about the role men and boys can play in promoting awareness about consent and ending sexual violence;
- **Draw the Line Sexual Violence Prevention Awards** for educators, students, and members of the school community in recognition of exceptional efforts in the education sector;
- **Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence.** This guide is issued in two volumes, one for educators at the elementary level, which includes lesson plans for students in Grades 1–8, and the other for educators at the secondary level, with lesson plans for students in Grades 9–12. The volumes provide guidance for teachers on how to develop age-appropriate lessons on preventing sexual violence that are tied explicitly to the Ontario curriculum. As will be discussed in more detail in section 4, the lesson plans are designed to foster discussion of the pervasiveness of sexual violence and to provide strategies for bystanders to intervene safely and effectively to prevent sexual violence and harassment.

Both guides also include the following materials:

- background information on gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment;
- information about the important issue of consent;
- strategies to engage student bystanders;
- a glossary of key terms;
- resources to support sexual violence survivors and for those who wish to learn more about sexual violence prevention;
- information about the importance of, and a guide to developing, classroom agreements;
- information about educators' obligation to report child abuse.

Make sure to celebrate change makers in your community! Nominate a colleague, a student, a parent, or yourself for a **Draw the Line Sexual Violence Prevention Award**. Recipients will be announced in November 2017, May 2018, and November 2018. Visit www.dtl.whiteribbon.ca for more info.

Using an Intersectional Approach for Sexual Violence Prevention

Intersectionality is an important factor to consider in any discussions of gender-based and sexual violence prevention. In order to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence, it is necessary to consider how complex identities and experiences of oppression affect every survivor and perpetrator. *The Draw the Line* campaign and *Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence* use an intersectional approach, recognizing that the overlapping of various forces can create additional risk factors for particular individuals. Individuals who experience multiple forms of oppression have a higher than average risk of being the victim of sexual violence.

To use an intersectional approach to understand an individual's unique circumstances, it is necessary to examine how that individual's experience is shaped by 1) their various social identities, 2) the systems of oppression that operate in their society, and 3) the intersection of those social identities and systems of oppression.

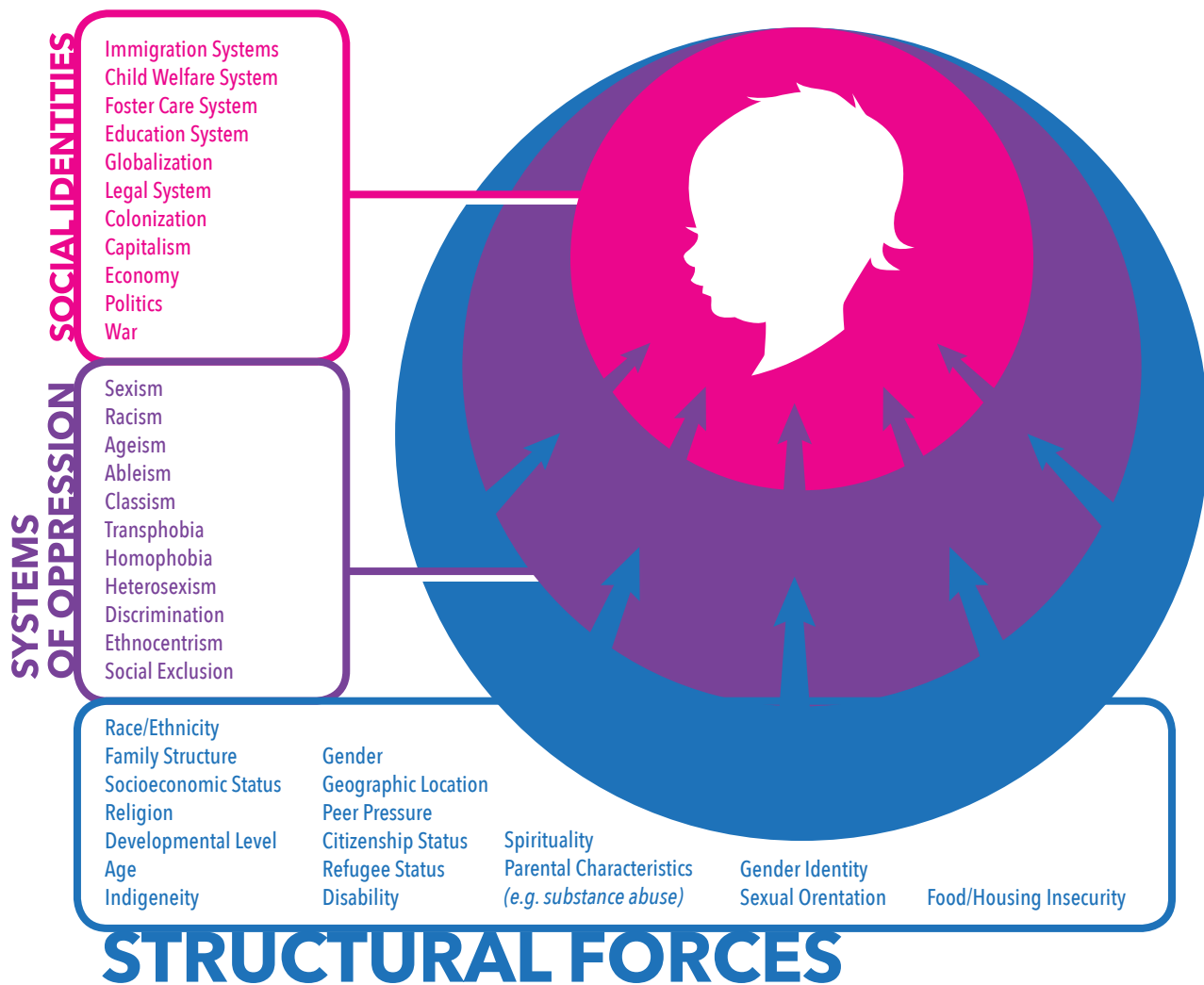
- ***Social identities*** are defined by the groups and communities to which an individual belongs. Social identities are multidimensional and are determined by many factors, including a person's race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, sexuality, age, ability, education, and religion.
- ***Systems of oppression*** arise from structural forces, such as the economic, political, and education system, that create and reinforce discrimination and inequalities in any given society. Systems of oppression include racism, gender inequality, heterosexism, class stratification, ableism.
- The ***intersection*** – or interaction – of an individual's various identities and a society's multiple forms of oppression shapes that individual's experiences on a daily basis.⁴

INTERSECTIONALITY can be defined as the "overlapping, in the context of an individual or group, of two or more prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code, or other factors, which may result in additional biases or barriers to equity for that individual or group." (Ontario Ministry of Education, Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (Toronto, 2014), p. 88)

In the present context, it is important to be aware of how these intersections can contribute to a group's or individual's risk of sexual violence (see section 2.2). An intersectional approach also highlights the fact that men's

⁴ Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children, "Intersectionality," *Learning Network Newsletter* 15; Olena Hankivsky, *Intersectionality 101*, Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy, 2014, pp. 2-3, http://vawforum-cwr.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/intersectionality_101.pdf

Children’s Unique Circumstances of Power, Privilege, and Identity⁵



attitudes towards sexual violence and violent behaviours are shaped by their gender, race/ethnicity, class, as well as other factors. It is important to be aware of how a bystander’s social identities and experiences of privilege or discrimination can affect their ability to respond to or prevent sexual violence.

More generally, educators can apply an intersectional approach in their teaching and recognize that children are shaped by unique circumstances that affect their privilege, oppression, and social identities. An understanding of intersectionality contributes to awareness of the diversity and varied experiences of children and will lead to the development of more effective responses that can address the needs of all children.

⁵ Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children, “Intersectionality,” p. 5.

2

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A PROFILE

2.1 The Numbers

In 2014, for the first time, women in Canada experienced higher rates of violent victimization than men (85 violent incidents per thousand for women compared to 67 per thousand for men).⁶ Although rates for some violent crimes against women, such as attempted murder and physical assault, have decreased in recent years, the rate of sexual assault has not.

The statistics related to sexual violence against women are staggering:

- Each year, in Canada, approximately 460,000 women are sexually assaulted, although only a fraction of them report the assault to the police.⁷



⁶ Canada, House of Commons, *Taking Action to End Violence against Young Women and Girls in Canada*, Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (Ottawa: Author, 2017), p. 3, http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/421/FEWO/Reports/RP8823562/421_FEWO_Rpt07_PDF/421_FEWO_Rpt07-e.pdf

⁷ Holly Johnson, "Limits of a Criminal Justice Response" (University of Ottawa, 2012), https://www.stjor-narradid.is/media/innanrikisraduneyti-media/media/frettir-2012/holly_20.01.12.pdf

- One in three Canadian women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime.⁸

Gender-based violence disproportionately affects women and girls:

- Women are 11 times more likely than men to be the victim of sexual offences.⁹
- More than a quarter (27%) of Canadian women stated they had been victimized as a child. Women were significantly more likely than men (44% compared to 16%) to have experienced physical abuse during their childhood at the hands of a family member.¹⁰
- Rates of violent victimization that were reported to the police were over 20% higher for girls than for boys.¹¹

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Women also experience alarming levels of domestic violence. Approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her current or former intimate partner.¹² Women are far more prone than men to be victims of domestic violence, and the level of violence directed at them is greater.

- Men are more likely to initiate violence, while women are more likely to use violence in self-defence.
- Female victims of violence at the hands of their intimate partners are twice as likely to be physically injured, three times as likely to experience disruptions to their daily lives, and nearly seven times as likely to fear for their lives as male victims of such violence.
- 45% of the violent crimes against women are perpetrated by an intimate partner.¹³

Most men do not perpetrate or condone violence against women. However, men are responsible for 99% of the sexual assaults and 83% of the violent crimes against women that have been reported to the police.¹⁴ Men and male youths are responsible for 79% of the violent crimes against girls under the age of 12; one-third of these perpetrators are under the age of 18.¹⁵

⁸ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, *Measuring Violence against Women: Statistical Trends* (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2006), pp. 8, 24, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.pdf>

⁹ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, *Measuring Violence against Women: Statistical Trends* (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2013), p. 8, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf>

¹⁰ Canada, *Taking Action to End Violence against Young Women and Girls*, p. 4.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Canadian Women's Foundation, "Fact Sheet: Moving Women Out of Violence" (April 2014), pp. 2, 5–6; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, *Measuring Violence against Women* (2013), p. 9, http://www.canadianwomen.org/sites/canadianwomen.org/files/FactSheet-VAWandDV_19_08_2016_formatted_0.pdf

¹³ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, *Measuring Violence against Women* (2013), p. 14.

¹⁴ Ontario, *It's Never Okay*, p. 8; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics *Measuring Violence against Women* (2013), p. 8.

¹⁵ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics *Measuring Violence against Women* (2013), p. 15.

2.2 Risk Factors and Intersectionality

Being young is a consistent risk factor for gender-based violence. Female youth (that is, girls 12–17 years old) are twice as likely as adult women to be victims of sexual violence. Among youth, girls are more susceptible to abuse, assault, and sexual coercion than boys.

- Female youth are eight times more likely than male youth to be the victim of sexual assault or other sexual offences.¹⁶
- Young women between the ages of 15 and 19 experience ten times more violence in intimate relationships than young men.¹⁷
- 43% of all incidents of dating violence occur among the 15–24 age group.
- 27% of Grade 11 female students report having been pressured to engage in some sort of sexual behaviour against their will.
- 15% of Grade 11 female students report having had oral sex in order to avoid having intercourse.¹⁸
- 36% of boys and 46% of girls in Grade 9 report having been the target of unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks. By Grade 11, the rate had declined significantly for boys but remained consistent for girls.¹⁹

The vast majority of youth who have been abused or assaulted know the perpetrator.²⁰ Given this fact, educators and others working with youth on issues relating to violence, including gender-based violence, need to approach the subject with sensitivity and understanding.

Individuals who face more than one form of discrimination – including individuals who are transgender or Indigenous or who have a disability – are at a greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

- 20% of trans Ontarians reported having been the target of physical or sexual assaults.
- 70% of Canadian trans youth (14–25 years old) have experienced sexual harassment.²¹
- The rate of self-reported violent victimization of Indigenous women in Canada is 2.5 times higher than the rate for non-Indigenous women.

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¹⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁷ Tina Hotton Mahony, "Police-reported Dating Violence in Canada," *Juristat* (Summer 2010), <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2010002/article/11242-eng.htm>

¹⁸ Ontario Ministry of Education, *Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools*, p. 6.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Maire Sinha, "Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile," *Juristat* (June 2013): 61. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11805-eng.pdf>

²¹ Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, *Draw the Line - Against Transphobic Violence: A Guide for Educators Working with Youth to Support Bystander Intervention in Transphobic and Sexual Violence* (Toronto: Author, 2015), pp. 2–3, <https://egale.ca/portfolio/draw-the-line/>

- In cases of domestic violence, injury is more prevalent among Indigenous victims: 59% of Indigenous women reported injury arising from domestic violence, while 41% of non-Indigenous women reported such injury.²²
- According to the RCMP, 1,181 Indigenous women went missing or were murdered in Canada between 1980 and 2012. However, according to grassroots organizations, this number is much higher, with estimates closer to 4,000.²³
- Women with physical and cognitive impairments are three times more likely to be coerced into sexual activity than women without such disabilities.²⁴

2.3 Effects of Sexual Violence

Not all survivors of sexual violence react in the same way. Nevertheless, all sexual violence has negative effects. Sexual assault often has important emotional consequences: almost nine out of ten survivors report having been affected emotionally. One quarter of sexual assault survivors have difficulty carrying out everyday activities. Common effects include nightmares, feeling constantly on guard, feeling numb or detached from others, trying hard not to think about the assault, and trying to avoid situations that could trigger memories of the incident – all signs that can point to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is associated with impaired physical health, decreased quality of life, and increased mortality.²⁵

For female youth, the effects of sexual violence include risk-taking behaviours and mental health issues, such as younger age of first voluntary intercourse, higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation, and other self-harming behaviours such as self-mutilation and eating disorders.²⁶

²² Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. *Measuring Violence against Women* (2013), p. 19.

²³ Canadian Women's Foundation, "Fact Sheet: Moving Women Out of Violence" (April 2014), p. 2.

²⁴ Ontario, *It's Never Okay*, p. 15.

²⁵ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, *Self-reported Sexual Assault in Canada, 2014* (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2017), pp. 14-16, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14842-eng.pdf>

²⁶ M. Kaufman, "Care of the Adolescent Sexual Assault Victim," *Pediatrics* 122, no. 2 (2008): 464.

2.4 Why Survivors Do Not Disclose or Report

Many victims of sexual violence choose not to disclose or report the violence to the authorities. There are several, often overlapping, reasons for this:

- **Lack of knowledge:** Young victims may have difficulty identifying incidents as sexual violence. In cases where the victim knows the perpetrator, assumptions that relationships should be based on mutual care and trust can make it difficult for the victims to label behaviour as assault, even when it violates their sexual integrity. Also, victims may not recognize an incident as sexual assault because of common misconceptions surrounding such violence – for example, “sexual assault is most often committed by strangers or most likely to occur in dark, dangerous places” and “if the victim doesn’t scream or fight back, it can’t be assault.” (See **Appendix E** for some common myths around sexual assault.)
- **Self-blame:** Survivors may blame themselves for the assault. The victim-blaming reflexes embedded in our culture, such as commenting on a victim’s clothing or consumption of alcohol, may lead survivors to think that the assault was, in part, their fault.
- **Shame:** Survivors may feel ashamed as a result of sexual violence. They may also fear judgment from their friends and family, health care practitioners, and/or the justice system.
- **Trauma:** Survivors often suffer from psychological and emotional challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, shame, fear, and self-blame, all of which make reporting difficult.
- **Fear:** Close to 80% of survivors of sexual assaults know the perpetrator, who can be an intimate partner, a family member, a friend, or an acquaintance. In such situations, survivors may fear that they will not be believed or that they will face reprisals if they report the assault. Survivors who have been assaulted by someone they know may fear being ostracized or losing financial support, or they may fear for the safety of their families and friends.
- **Difficult legal process:** Survivors may not be familiar with their rights, especially if they are young or belong to linguistic minorities. For members of communities that have strained relationships with the police – including sex

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workers and members of Indigenous, racialized, and LGBTQ communities – a lack of trust may deter them from reporting the assault. In addition, the court process is difficult for survivors, who are often subjected to victim blaming by the defence in an attempt to undermine their credibility. Survivors can be re-traumatized, as they are required to retell their experience in explicit detail. Furthermore, the rate of conviction for sexual assault is very low: 3 out of 1,000 (see the infographic in section 2.1). Survivors’ physical and emotional recovery process is often separate from the legal process.²⁷

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It is important to believe and support survivors, regardless of their reaction to the assault and their decision about whether to report. False reports – that is, malicious or mistaken reports – of sexual assault are uncommon, between 2 and 8%, according to research from the United States and Great Britain.²⁸ Individuals do not lie about being sexually assaulted in greater numbers than people lie about other crimes. Moreover, given that sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes, with only one in ten assaults being reported to the authorities, false reports are, in fact, statistically negligible. Survivors may recant their statements as a result of the drawn-out legal process, inadequate support, pressure from the perpetrator and his supporters, and/or fear of retaliation. Yet, a recantation does not mean that the violent act did not take place: more often than not, it may mean that the victim did not have the resources or support necessary to move forward with legal proceedings.²⁹

²⁷ Femifesto, *Use the Right Words: Media Reporting on Sexual Violence in Canada* (Author, 2015), pp. 42–44; *Draw the Line, User Guide* (Author, 2012), pp. 17–18, <http://www.femifesto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/UseTheRightWords-Single-Dec3.pdf>

²⁸ L. Baker, M. Campbell, and A.-L. Straatman, *Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Supportive Responses: The Research on Sexual Violence against Women* (London, ON: Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children, Western University, 2012), pp. 16–17. Robyn Doolittle, “Unfounded: Why Police Dismiss 1 in 5 Sexual Assault Claims as Baseless,” *Globe and Mail*, February 3, 2017.

²⁹ Femifesto, *Use the Right Words*, pp. 40–41.

3

RESPONDING TO GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

There are many things that we, as individuals and as a society, can do to improve the way we respond to gender-based and sexual violence. Effective responses can help reduce the incidence of such violence. *Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence* focuses on two interrelated strategies for improving responses to sexual violence: raising awareness among young people through education, and helping bystanders, including male bystanders, develop the skills they need to intervene safely and effectively to prevent sexual violence and support survivors.

3.1 Engaging Male Bystanders

The engagement and response of bystanders, including male bystanders, is a key to preventing sexual violence. Engaging men and boys in the prevention of such violence requires strength-based and positive messaging. Exploring the benefits of gender equality – including improved relationships, a healthier and non-violent sense of self, and healthier, more flexible masculine norms – can help men and boys see that gender equality has positive results for all. Rigid gender norms limit everyone. Using a strength-based approach increases the interest of men and boys in the issue, inspires them to take emotional ownership of gender equality, and encourages them to promote healthy masculinities in all facets of their lives.³⁰

As we have seen, the *Draw the Line* initiative highlights how bystanders – including male bystanders – can have a positive impact in responding to and preventing sexual violence. This initiative, including the *Draw the Line* cards/posters that are featured in lesson plans presented in this guide, explores concrete ways in which male bystanders can prevent violence and support survivors.

STRENGTH-BASED MESSAGING focuses on the positive roles men and boys can play to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence. A strength-based approach is a more effective way of fostering men's involvement and ownership of the issue than messaging that relies on shame, guilt, or fear. Aspirational and positive messaging encourages men to see themselves as part of the solution and to become allies to end gender inequality and violence against women. This approach enables more meaningful and long-term changes in attitudes and behaviours.

³⁰ National Community of Practice, *Toolkit* (2016), <http://www.canpreventgbv.ca/>

We encourage men, and particularly male educators, to take a stand against sexual violence. Actions might include the following:

- **Believe:** This issue is real. Believe survivors' experiences. Your support will make a difference.
- **Trust your gut:** Don't walk on by if you witness harassment or an assault on the street or anywhere else: assess the risk, then, as appropriate, intervene to defuse the situation. If you need to, ask for help, including by calling 911.
- **Offer support:** Ask if you can help people who have experienced violence and then connect them to support services. Help the organizations that support survivors of violence. (See **Appendix A** for information on resources and supports.)
- **It starts with you:** Lead by example. Question your own attitudes and behaviours and how they may disrespect or harm women. Sexist language and street harassment all contribute to a culture of violence.
Visit www.itstartswithyou.ca
- **It stays with him:** Be a role model. Talk to your family, friends, co-workers, and students about the roles they can play in ending violence against women. Challenge the men and boys in your life to make a difference.
- **Learn more and get involved:** White Ribbon has all the resources you need to get involved, raise awareness, and make a difference. Visit www.whiteribbon.ca.

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Hypermasculinization and Gender-based Violence

Hypermasculinity, which is sometimes called toxic or hegemonic masculinity, is a construction of manhood that resides in notions of dominance and superiority. It promotes narrow ideas of what it means to be a man: tough, strong, self-reliant, and emotionless. Hypermasculinity teaches and encourages boys and young men to devalue anyone or anything that exhibits so-called feminine traits: it thus nourishes the roots of sexism and misogyny and also of homophobia and transphobia. A hypermasculine perspective devalues women and LGBTQ people, making them vulnerable to abuse, violence, and harassment. Hypermasculinity is linked to violence against women, men, and those who do not conform to gender norms. In addition, among male youth, hypermasculinity is connected to poor academic performance, risk-taking

behaviours, reduced ability to identify and express emotions, lower coping skills, and mental health issues.³¹

We encourage all men and boys to challenge hypermasculinity. Healthy masculinities are based on peaceful actions, equal power relations, and self-respect. Adopting healthy masculinities is part of a change in social norms that challenges male dominance and gender-based and sexual violence.

3.2 The Role of Education

Along with the engagement of men, awareness raising and education are important strategies in preventing sexual violence. Teachers have a key role to play in raising awareness among their students about issues related to sexual violence.

Sexual Violence Prevention Education: A Key to Mental Health and Well-being

Too often, sexual violence remains a taboo subject in Ontario. This culture of silence does not help young people: it leads survivors to believe that they are alone – when they are not – and impedes their ability to seek the help they need. Educating young people about sexual violence contributes to prevention in several ways:

- it helps youth understand their rights and the laws governing consent and sexual violence;
- it equips youth with the skills to challenge myths about sexual violence;
- it educates bystanders to spot sexual violence, intervene appropriately, and support those affected;
- it helps educators respond to disclosures and direct survivors to appropriate supports.

Young people who have experienced sexual violence are most likely to disclose to a peer, a family member, or another person with whom they have a pre-existing trusting relationship. It is crucial that schools foster an atmosphere of trust, providing a safe space in which students can have conversations about sexual violence and learn about how to prevent it.³²

³¹ YWCA Culture Shift Project, *Research Report: Addressing the Sexualization of Women and Girls* (Vancouver: YWCA Metro Vancouver, 2017), p. 6, <https://ywcavan.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/Culture-Shift-Research-Report-Final-WEB.pdf>

³² OCRCC, White Ribbon, Ophea, and Egale Canada, Mental Health, *Youth and Sexual Violence: A FAQ* (2017).

It is important that educators do more than focus on responding to incidents of sexual violence. Taking a proactive and preventative approach – increasing awareness and teaching students about healthy relationships and unsafe situations – ultimately will help stop sexual violence before it starts. Such approaches also promote a positive school environment in which students can learn.³³ Creating a supportive environment and providing adequate responses to students’ concerns fosters students’ emotional growth and helps to secure their future health and well-being.

The following are some ways in which schools can demonstrate that they are committed to supporting students who may need to talk about sexual violence:

- posting the contact information for local sexual assault services and other anonymous support services such as Kids Help Phone and BroTalk in heavily frequented areas;
- posting visual materials, such as the *Draw the Line* posters, that promote prevention and that encourage students to speak to someone they trust;
- organizing prevention and awareness-raising initiatives about consent, healthy relationships, and sexual violence that engage all students.

Consent and Healthy Relationships

Children should start to learn healthy relationship skills, including those related to the development of respect, empathy, and effective communication, at a young age. Another key skill related to healthy relationship is the ability to understand consent. In simple terms, consent is a mutual verbal, physical, and emotional agreement that happens without manipulation, threats, or coercion. In the context of sexual behaviour:

CONSENT IS

- MUTUAL:** both parties have clearly agreed
- ENTHUSIASTIC:** there is desire and excitement
- ONGOING:** it can be retracted at any time; it is a process and it must be confirmed every step of the way
- SPECIFIC:** it is clear what activity a person is consenting to
- VOLUNTARY:** it is given freely, not under pressure, and the person involved is the one consenting
- SOBER:** the parties involved are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs

AUTOMATIC: it has to be negotiated each time, even in the context of a relationship

A GREY AREA: only a voluntary, sober, enthusiastic, mutual, and honest yes means yes. If there is no yes, there is no consent.

CONSENT IS NOT

³³ Ontario Ministry of Education “Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour,” Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145, December 5, 2012, p. 4, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.pdf>

The ability to understand and practise consent is critical for young people if they are to navigate intimate relationships in a healthy and respectful way. Practising consent requires good communication skills and respect for others' boundaries. (See **Appendix D** for a guide to navigating consent.)

How to Talk about Consent without Directly Talking about Sexual Activity

Classroom discussions that directly address sexual activity may not be appropriate with students under a certain age. In these cases, it is still possible for educators to help students develop the communication and boundary-setting skills they will need to create healthy intimate relationships at a later stage. One approach is that teachers can facilitate activities or discussions that explore boundaries and consent in non-sexual contexts. For example, a teacher could guide classroom discussions about how people need to ask permission to use other people's belongings and how to set boundaries around sharing possessions, holding hands, or hugging.³⁴ Helping students develop the habit of asking for permission and respecting the answer to the request is crucial; such habits will help them develop healthy relationships and will prevent sexual violence.

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³⁴ White Ribbon *It Starts with You - It Stays with Him*, <http://www.itstartswithyou.ca>

4

DRAWING THE LINE IN THE CLASSROOM

This section of *Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence* provides concrete examples of how teachers can support the development of healthy relationships and contribute to preventing sexual violence. It highlights the importance of:

- challenging and changing attitudes, behaviours, and commonly held myths that perpetuate sexual violence;
- increasing students' and educators' individual and collective capacity to understand the positive role they can play in preventing sexual violence and promoting gender equality;
- increasing the capacity of boys and male educators to become agents of change in their schools by being positive role models and active bystanders;
- strengthening the capacity of Ontario's education system, across both the elementary and secondary sectors, to prevent sexual violence.

We hope that the tools and strategies in this section will help equip educators to discuss topics such as the root causes of gender inequality, healthy relationships, sexual health and consent, and sexual violence and harassment with their students.

This section provides specific activities that educators can use in the classroom to integrate learning about issues related to gender-based and sexual violence. After some general background in section 4.1, including how to use the *Draw the Line* scenario cards, section 4.2 discusses some key considerations for educators addressing these issues in the classroom, including how to respond if their students disclose abuse. Finally, section 4.3 comprises a series of specific lesson plans that integrate the *Draw the Line* scenario cards with expectations from selected courses in the elementary curriculum.




4.1 Background Information for Teachers

As we have seen, age is a risk factor for sexual violence. Young Ontarians – especially girls and young women – have a much higher than average risk of experiencing sexual violence (see the discussion in section 2.2). Being proactive and helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions related to healthy relationships can help prevent sexual

violence, promote well-being, and create a positive school environment.

All of the lesson plans use the *Draw the Line* scenario cards as tools for classroom discussions of gender-based and sexual violence. The cards are meant to spark conversations on the role bystanders can play in responding to and helping to prevent sexual violence. The front of the card presents students with a situation inspired by real-life events that they may encounter and asks them to consider how, as bystanders, they would react to it. The back of the card (*see box below*) highlights why the scenario is problematic and why it is important for bystanders to intervene, and it offers tips about realistic actions bystanders can take to prevent or stop sexual violence.



<p>Why this scenario is problematic</p>	<p>Over half of all sexual assaults involve alcohol and it is the number one drug used by perpetrators.</p>  <p>ALCOHOL-FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULT</p>	<p>Category of sexual violence</p>
<p>When a situation requires bystander intervention</p>	<p>WHY DRAW THE LINE When we look away from sexual violence we make it easier for the perpetrator to continue. Every choice we make and every action we take – no matter how small – has the power to make a difference.</p> <p>WHEN TO DRAW THE LINE Lack of consent turns sexual contact into an act of sexual violence. Someone under the influence of alcohol cannot consent because they are no longer aware of their actions. Consent matters. Only a sober 'yes' means yes.</p> <p>HOW TO DRAW THE LINE As a bystander you have more than one option to safely take a stand. You can: Call in your friend: Let him know it's not okay. Alert the others: Let them know what your friend is planning. Report it: Flag it and tell someone you trust - a teacher, a principal, a parent/caregiver or elder.</p>	<p>Why bystander intervention matters</p>
<p>Draw The Line campaign information & links to additional resources</p>	<p>IT HAPPENED TO ME If you have experienced sexual violence, reach out for help. Visit draw-the-line.ca. Be an ally and speak out against violence. Visit whiteribbon.ca.</p> <p>Sexual violence is everyone's problem. It's never okay. Speak out against it. Spread the word. Find out more at draw-the-line.ca.</p> <p>217</p>  <p>white ribbon</p> <p>DRAW-THE-LINE.CA</p> <p>Funded by:</p>  <p>Ontario</p>	<p>Strategies for bystanders to intervene safely & effectively</p>

When using the cards, educators should adopt an open-ended approach, encouraging student dialogue and reflection, and providing opportunities for students to make connections to their personal lives. Teachers may use the lesson plans included in this guide or create their own activities. In both cases, classroom activities should guide students through the exploration of the feelings and reactions that these scenarios inspire, and should help them understand how these feelings can contribute to their decision to take action – or not to take action – in that given situation. Ultimately, classroom activities should not focus on instilling fear but rather on cultivating empathy for those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, sexual violence. When it comes to sexual violence prevention, empathy is more effective than fear.

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Educators should be aware that feelings, as well as boundaries, will vary from person to person. Consequently, they should avoid identifying a specific bystander response as the “correct” response to the situations in the *Draw the Line* cards. In many cases, there is no “right” answer. It is appropriate – insofar as the law allows – that bystander responses will vary, depending on factors such as age, ability, and safety considerations, as well as the victim’s wishes and needs. Nevertheless, teachers should highlight for their students that doing nothing and ignoring signs of sexual violence is not a neutral response; it is harmful. Actions, even small ones such as checking in with the person involved, can have great benefits. This is why bystander intervention matters.

Although the *Draw the Line* cards are designed to build on the prior knowledge, personal experience, and skills that students bring to the classroom, not all students will share the same knowledge, experience, and skills with respect to these topics. Therefore, we encourage teachers to adapt the content of and activities identified on the cards, as well as the lesson plans provided below, to meet their students’ diverse needs, interests, and abilities. It is also important that teachers differentiate instruction and assessment to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, educators should not insist that students participate in discussions if they appear reluctant to do so. Also, teachers should be aware that discussions of sexual violence may lead students who have experienced such violence to disclose to a friend or to an adult they trust, including an educator. Teachers should refamiliarize themselves with their school policy on student safety and disclosure. Section 4.2 provides information for teachers on how to respond to a student who discloses abuse to them.

The following are some tips for teachers on integrating the subject of sexual violence prevention in the classroom.

- Use a combination of single-gender and mixed-gender discussions. Single-gender discussions can sometimes allow for more honest exchanges. For example, boys may talk more openly without girls present, and girls, who are often less assertive than boys in the classroom, may be encouraged to express themselves. On the other hand, mixed discussions are valuable because they increase empathy for female victims of sexual violence.
- Make sexual violence prevention part of regular classroom lessons and activities.
- Connect activities to students' living skills, as outlined in the Health and Physical Education curriculum, helping students to acquire "the living skills needed to develop resilience and a secure identity and sense of self, through opportunities to learn adaptive, management, and coping skills, to practise communication skills, to learn how to build relationships and interact positively with others, and to learn how to use critical and creative thinking processes."³⁵
- Include critical discussions of gender norms and masculinity, and highlight similarities between men and women (see, e.g., the Man in a Box activity from the *It Starts with You* e-learning modules, at www.itstartswithyou.ca/educators/).
- Help students develop their relationship skills, particularly skills related to consent, communication, and emotional intelligence.
- To convey the importance of men's roles in sexual violence prevention, use a strength-based approach and provide concrete examples of how men and boys can be allies to women and girls and can respond as active bystanders.
- Draw on communication campaigns that provoke conversations, such as the *Draw the Line* campaign.³⁶

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

4.2 Discussing Sexual Violence Prevention in the Classroom

Every student has the right to learn in a safe, caring environment, free from violence and harassment. It is important that educators keep this in mind when discussing sexual violence with their students. The following suggestions are ways in which teachers can prepare themselves and their classroom for these discussions.

³⁵ Ontario Ministry of Education *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education* (Revised) (Toronto: Author, 2015), p. 6, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/health1to8.pdf>

³⁶ Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood, and James Lang, "From Work with Men and Boys to Changes of Social Norms and Reduction of Inequities in Gender Relations: A Conceptual Shift in Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls," *Lancet* 315 (2015): 1586-87.

Creating a Safe and Accepting Learning Environment

A safe and accepting learning environment is a prerequisite for having honest discussions about sexual violence prevention. If there is no existing classroom agreement that includes guidelines for respectful and safe discussions, teachers should consider creating one. (See **Appendix B** for tips about creating a classroom agreement.) Where a classroom agreement already exists, teachers may wish to review it with their students prior to sensitive discussions. In all discussions, whether related to sexual violence or other issues, teachers should be ready to challenge stereotypes and inappropriate language.

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Teachers must prepare students before introducing content that could be distressing to them. Students should be aware of what they can do if they need to avoid the challenging content, and they should be encouraged to seek support when necessary. Teaching about sexual violence prevention can be approached from the perspective of empowering students to make decisions regarding their well-being, which can increase their sense of safety. This approach also reduces potential stigma around mental health issues and leads to increased trust and better communications between educators and students.

Focusing on the Bystander

It is important to focus the conversation on what bystanders can do to prevent or interrupt sexual violence. This approach promotes discussions that shed light on how sexual violence does not concern only survivors or perpetrators – it is an issue that concerns everyone. Activities that engage students as potential allies – and not as potential victims or perpetrators – reduce defensiveness and victim-blaming attitudes, and they show that all members of the community have a role to play in preventing violence.

Disclosure and Reporting

It is likely that there will be students in the classroom who are survivors of sexual violence. Teachers, administrators, and other schools staff may wish to prepare a plan that addresses how to respond to abuse disclosures from students, including information on supports available in the school. It is important that teachers do not feel that they are alone in taking on the responsibility that comes with disclosures: they need to be supported by the school and the board and to be aware of how they can refer students who need help to professionals. (See the information on referrals in **Appendix A**.) Ontario sexual assault centres provide free counselling services and can attend classroom discussions to support teachers and students.³⁷

Educators have a legal obligation to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect to a children's aid society if a child is or appears to be under the age of 16 (see **Appendix C**). Before speaking to an individual student about a potential disclosure, teachers need to make the student aware of this obligation and explain the related limitations to confidentiality. This should be done in a way that will not discourage a student from disclosing or seeking help. In addition, teachers should consider the following suggestions when speaking with a student who may wish to disclose:

- Normalize the experience of sexual violence by pointing out that one in three women and one in six men will experience sexual violence at some point in their lives. Highlight that survivors are not alone and that there are a variety of resources to help them when they are ready to talk.
- Explain to the student what would happen if they talked to you. It is important that students understand that you have an obligation to make sure that they are safe and that they can and should talk to you if they want help. Students should understand the obligation to report, as discussed above, but also that you will not share the information they choose to confide in you with more adults than absolutely necessary. This means that the information will be kept as confidential as possible, but that it will need to be shared with a few key professionals. Ensure that students understand that, if they confide that they are being harmed or at risk of being harmed or harming others, you would have to report the situation to child protection services. Do not make any promises with respect to confidentiality that you cannot keep.
- Give students the option to talk to someone anonymously. Sometimes survivors wish to disclose their experience but do not wish to take further action at that particular time. Resources such as Kids Help Phone and BroTalk give youth the option of talking to a counsellor anonymously (for a list of these and other resources, see **Appendix A**).
- Be aware that, as your reporting of the disclosure may occur without the survivor's consent, the disclosure and reporting experience can be traumatic. In such cases, be as supportive as you can, but let professionals handle the situation.

If a student chooses to disclose their experience of sexual violence to a teacher, the teacher needs to be prepared to listen and help. The following are some suggestions for teachers in this situation:

³⁷ For information about your local sexual assault centre, visit the website of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, at <http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/support>

- Listen with empathy and respect. Be aware of and respect linguistic, cultural, and religious beliefs and any other aspect of diversity that may be connected to the student's concerns.
- Believe the student and validate their feelings. You might restate and rephrase what the student is telling you to show that you are actively listening.
- Support the student by telling them that they are courageous for speaking up, and reassure them that you are there to help them.
- Respect the student's wishes and choices – insofar as the law and your board allow you to. Do not tell the student what to do; do tell them that you will support them regardless of their choices.
- Respect the student's privacy unless they specifically authorize you to talk about the situation with others.
- Respect the student's reactions and show empathy. There is no "right" way for victims to react to sexual violence.
- Remember to take care of yourself. For support, you may wish to reach out to your teacher federation and/or to local community organizations.

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Preparing Follow-up Resources

Teachers can explore the resources listed in **Appendix A** in order to better understand how to direct students towards the supports they need. We suggest that teachers share with all students a list of appropriate resources that can support students and survivors of sexual violence, so students can consult it at any time.