



Sexual Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Introduction

Welcome

Video Script:

Welcome to Sexual Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Introduction

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Introduction

This course provides information about critical topics affecting people everywhere — sexual harassment, including relationship abuse, sexual assault, and stalking. Even if you have not been directly impacted by these issues, chances are you know — or will know — someone who is.

As you work through this course, consider the following questions:

- How does gender have an influence on our awareness of relationship abuse and violence?
- What is the best way to help friends who may be experiencing an unhealthy or abusive relationship?
- What are the options for reporting sexual assault in our organization?

You Can Make a Difference

Video script:

You Can Make a Difference

This course will cover how to recognize and take action in potentially harmful situations, including options for how to respond if someone comes to you for help. Your identity and life experience puts you in a unique position to make a positive difference in the lives of other students, as well as others you care about.

The topics addressed in this course can be very sensitive for some individuals. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, we encourage you to access the resources provided in the menu and to seek out services provided by your school or local community.

Your Experience, Your Insight, Your Contribution

Video script:

Your Experience, Your Insight, Your Contribution

Whether you're in school full time after serving in the military or are an active military service member, a full-time parent or spouse who's enrolled in classes part-time, are returning to school after having taken time off to commit to a career or your family, or attending college for the first

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

time, we know that enrolling at our school was an important decision and represents a significant commitment in your life.

In this course, we'll explore how your life experiences provide you with valuable insight and the ability to recognize situations of potential harm and help someone who may appear to be in an unhealthy or dangerous situation.

You'll also learn about how to respond to relationship and sexual violence (including harassment and stalking) if you are experiencing this kind of behavior or if someone you know discloses these types of experiences. This course is intended to empower you to leverage your personal strengths and life experiences to contribute to a supportive community where all individuals feel safe to learn and work.

Let's get started!

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Values, Identities, and Relationships

Values, Identities, and Relationships

Video script:

All students at our school have values, and we all have identities. These almost certainly differ from person to person — and that's OK — but what we value and how we enact those values is central to the types of relationships we have (or want to have) with others. It's important to treat everyone with the respect they want and deserve, and to consider how to respond when we feel that our values or identities are being disrespected.

In this section, we'll explore how to:

- Interpret how values influence family and romantic relationships, and vice versa
- Recognize the existence of gender stereotypes and ways to intervene if someone you know is being stereotyped
- Implement resources to help friends and coworkers who may be experiencing abusive relationships

Time to Reflect

Video script:

Time to Reflect

Your values influence the relationships you have with a partner/spouse and other family members, your interests and passions, personal health and wellness, and even your service to others. Most of us seek out and want “good” relationships — with family, friends, colleagues, and in dating or more intimate relationships and partnerships, but what exactly is a “good” relationship?

Reflect for a moment:

- What values influence the choices you make in your daily life?
- How have you responded (or how do you think you *should have* responded) in situations where your values were challenged?
- Do you talk about your values with other important people in your life?

As you respond to the questions above, take the time to think honestly and carefully about what you want out of your relationships. Reflecting on your values can help clarify what you want for yourself personally and professionally, as well as what you expect from the relationships you have with others. Reflection also allows you an opportunity to assess if these relationships are enhancing your life.

Understanding Our Identities

Video script:

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Understanding Our Identities

The way that life experiences have influenced you is reflected in your identity: the way that you define yourself. Take a moment to think about some of the things that may have influenced your identity. How have your life experiences (whether you've chosen them or not) shaped the way you think and act? How have these unique experiences affected your perspective, the way you treat others, your relationships, and your goals?

Your identity is complex and made up of things that you choose, like the type of job you have, or want to have; where, or if, you worship; social groups that you belong to; or a talent or skill that you possess. It's also made up of qualities that you have less control over, like your race and ethnicity, age, or physical characteristics.

The combination of a person's identities — including their gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, physical abilities, and groups that they're a part of — can shape their thoughts and values on a variety of important issues (like politics and education).

Gender and Stereotypes

Video Script:

Gender and Stereotypes

Gender has an especially important influence on our awareness of and experience with relationship abuse and sexual violence. Society is full of cultural messages that deem certain characteristics, behaviors, and life choices as appropriate specifically for women or men, and many of our own personal values may reflect gender expectations that we have been taught. It can be easy to default to these assumptions when we don't know someone well, or are getting to know someone new. We may find ourselves stereotyping others; making assumptions about their identity based on things like how they look, how they act, the way they talk, or what their interests are; or questioning people who do not conform to cultural expectations about gender.

Stereotypes based on *gender* are assumptions within different cultures about how a person who is seen as physically male or female is *supposed* to act, what they *should* think, or what they *should want* for themselves. It's important to recognize when stereotypes negatively impact how we think about or treat someone, because these kinds of assumptions can be very harmful, emotionally and physically, if they reach an extreme. They can be personally hurtful when others impose them on us as well. Some people who are upset about violations of gender norms may use this as an excuse for violence.

Understanding the impacts of gender stereotypes is, therefore, an important part of preventing sexual violence.

How Can You Help?

Video script:

How Can You Help?

Think back to a situation where you heard someone say something rude or disrespectful about

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

another person's gender (or said something stereotypical about a group of people). How did this make you feel? Did it bother you? If you did something to help, was it effective? If you didn't, was it because you wanted to but you weren't sure *what* to say?"

Chances are that if *you* felt uncomfortable, others around you did as well.

Up next, you'll explore scenarios that exhibit two different ways of responding to stereotypical, sexist, and harmful language — language that targets and criticizes a person or group based on their gender or sexual orientation and expression.

“She’s just so…”

Video script:

Ethan: Ugh I wish we were still working for Joe. He was so much more relaxed. He would just talk with us as guys and tell us what we needed to do without being so demanding.

Coworker: Huh? what do you mean? I feel like Sharon is doing a really good job here. She's adapted super quickly and is keeping our team on track. I like that she's holding people accountable for getting work done.

Ethan: Maybe. But honestly, I just don't think she's equipped for the job. Do you know that last week she basically ran out of the room once our meeting was over because she had to pick up her kids? I mean, Joe never had to do that. He was able to hang out and get to know us without worrying about running out to be mommy or whatever.

Coworker: I don't agree. I think it's healthy for a family to be a priority, too. And I would have respected Joe if he did the same. And besides, it's definitely not affecting her commitment to work.

Ethan: Well, OK. Well on top of that, what really bothers me is that she is so bossy whenever she asks us to do something. Do this, do that. I mean come on, she needs to relax and just quit barking orders you know?

Coworker: Ethan, Joe use to ask us to do things all the time. Anyway, how can you say that your boss doesn't have the right to ask you to do things? That's her job. She's respectful and direct. Personally, I like how she supervises us. I feel like we're more productive now.

Ethan: I guess. But I don't really see us getting along.

Coworker: Thanks for being honest. I used to feel the same way. But now I care more about how my boss treats me and what our team accomplishes. And she passed the test.

“Why is he so…”

Video script:

Student 1: Did you see how uptight John got when I made that joke the other night at our meeting? Couldn't he just loosen up and laugh once in a while?

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Student 2: I know. He definitely overreacted. He shouldn't take things like that so seriously. I mean the rest of us don't. Honestly, I don't know if he's going to be a good fit for our group project, being so sensitive.

Student 3: Come on. John has a right to feel uncomfortable and I can see how he could be really offended by that joke. I didn't say anything but I thought it was a bit offensive. Why don't we avoid saying things like that in the future and let's just keep the conversation focused on the project and we should be fine, OK?

Student 2: I don't know. I think we should talk to the professor and find someone who is going to work better with our team. We could just ask for a substitute member for our group. I know she's done that before for other groups when they've asked.

Student 3: What will you say to our professor? He didn't laugh at my joke? You know, I really respect John for speaking up and I think we should focus on working together as a group.

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

Video script:

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

Title IX is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination based on sex or gender stereotyping in any educational, athletic, or other program or activity of a federally funded school, that jeopardizes a person's equal access to education.

Title IX also prohibits discrimination against pregnant or parenting students, and:

The following types of sexual harassment:

- Rape and sexual assault
- Relationship violence
- Stalking that is based on sex
- Unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive, creating a "hostile environment" that effectively denies a person equal access to an education program or activity
- An institution's employee conditioning a grade or other educational benefit or service on an individual submitting to unwelcome sexual conduct (called "quid pro quo")

Title IX applies to sexual harassment that occurs in an educational program or activity against a person who is located in the U.S.

Title IX requires schools receiving federal funding to appoint a person who coordinates your school's efforts to fulfill its responsibility to address sex or gender-based harassment or violence prohibited by Title IX. Identified as the Title IX coordinator, this person is responsible for responding to reports of sex discrimination and providing supportive measures to ensure that equal access to educational programs and activities is preserved for the person who reports being sexually harassed, assaulted, abused, or stalked, as well as providing any appropriate supportive measures for the person accused of sexual misconduct. This person also seeks to

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

prevent retaliation against someone who reports, or participates in an investigation or proceeding involving, sexual misconduct.

Questions or complaints regarding Title IX rights or violations may be directed to the Title IX coordinator, or to the Department of Education's [Office for Civil Rights](#) which enforces schools' compliance with Title IX.

Recognizing Relationship Abuse

Interactivity Audio script:

Recognizing Relationship Abuse

Read the statement and review each topic to learn more.

Interactivity Text:

Recognizing Relationship Abuse

Some people assume relationship abuse (also known as Intimate Partner Violence) only consists of physical harm. However, relationship abuse comes in many different forms — some of which are more subtle and difficult to identify than others.

Abusive behavior has a serious, negative impact on others and on our community. Even if *you* aren't personally experiencing abuse, it's important to understand how to recognize it so that you're prepared to help someone who may reach out to you for help or advice. It's also possible that you've had experiences of your own that empower you to be helpful to someone who is being abused.

An abusive partner often exercises more than one form of control at the same time and frequently uses different tactics over the course of a relationship to exert control over someone else.

Review each topic to learn more.

[Accordion 1]: Emotional Abuse

Abuse of this type is characterized by behaviors that are intended to psychologically hurt or confuse someone, or to keep them from forming or maintaining connections with others. These behaviors can be subtle or more overt, and may include:

- Making someone feel bad about themselves or unworthy of being treated well;
- Spreading rumors or lies about someone;
- Pressuring someone to choose them over completing coursework or job responsibilities, or spending time with friends or family;
- Pressuring someone to quit their job, activities, or program, or to turn down internships or other professional or academic opportunities; **or**
- Minimizing or denying abuse, or blaming a partner for abusive actions.

[Accordion 2]: Financial Abuse Involving Children

Financial abuse is characterized by behavior that is intended to manipulate and control someone by threatening their financial stability or independence, and access to financial resources.

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Manipulation (financial or otherwise) involving children or other family members is often characterized by behaviors that are intended to harm or undermine someone's relationship with children or family members, or threatening to take someone's children away from them. These behaviors can be difficult to identify, but may include:

- Preventing a person from getting or keeping a job;
- Refusing to provide agreed-upon financial support related to child support, utility bills, rent, tuition, or other needs;
- Withholding financial information and/or controlling access to shared money;
- Threatening to take children away or falsely reporting a person for child abuse or neglect;
- Telling lies to children or other family members about a person in order to frighten them or undermine their trust; or
- Using children to make a person feel guilty about spending time on their schoolwork or job duties.

[Accordion 3]: Stalking and Intimidation

Abuse of this nature is characterized by tactics that attempt to control another person through fear, threats, and intimidation. Some examples include:

- Excessively monitoring someone's behavior in an attempt to control what they do and with whom;
- Continuing to contact someone who has asked that you stop contacting them
- Tracking someone through technology or social media;
- Blackmailing a partner with knowledge of illegal or unethical activities;
- Threatening to share harmful, personal, or embarrassing information (for example, photos) with a person's family, friends, colleagues or professional network; and
- Threatening to end the relationship, harm themselves, or commit suicide.

[Accordion 4]: Academic Abuse

This kind of abuse is characterized by actions that monopolize someone's work or study time and negatively affect their academic success. It may include the following behaviors:

- Deliberately starting an argument before an exam, project deadline, or presentation;
- Using insults to undermine a person's academic status, grades, intelligence, or ability to succeed;
- Undermining academic performance by preventing a partner from attending class, study groups, or department events; or
- Sabotaging a partner's relationships with other students or with faculty through spreading lies or gossip about them.

Experiencing or Witnessing Abuse

Interactivity Audio script:

Experiencing or Witnessing Abuse

A person's well-being and success can be significantly impacted by any violence or abuse they may experience or witness being committed by family members.

You may wish to seek support and resources for healing after any abuse you have experienced within your family or by someone who lives with you.

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Below we have provided some confidential resources for support and help for abuse and/or violence within the family. Resources may also be available in your community or at your school.

All states have laws that require people in certain professions to report suspected child abuse, and most states also have mandated reporter laws for abuse of vulnerable adults.

If you have concerns, ask about confidentiality or whether a person is required to report before sharing any specific information with someone about your situation.

Resources related to family violence and abuse are provided via the links on this page:

Interactivity Text:

Child Abuse

[View Resource](#)

[popup content]: Child Abuse (opens in new window.)

[View Resource](#)

Elder Abuse

[View Resource](#)

[popup content]: Elder Abuse (opens in new window.)

Interpersonal or Family Violence

[View Resource](#)

[popup content]: Interpersonal or Family Violence (opens in new window.)

Resources for Parents Whose Children Have Witnessed Violence

[View Resource](#)

[popup content]: Resources for Parents Whose Children Have Witnessed Violence (opens in new window.)

#SelfCare

[View Resource](#)

[popup content]: #SelfCare (opens in new window.)

Federal and State Laws

Interactivity Text:

[Review your state's laws]

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

[Dropdown: View your state's laws]

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[Explore federal law definitions using the dropdown below.]

[Dropdown: View federal laws]

Interactivity Audio script:

Federal and State Laws Relationship Violence

It's important to be aware of federal and state laws defining relationship violence.

Explore federal and state law definitions below.

Helping a Friend or Loved One

Video Script:

Helping a Friend or Loved One

In the next scenario, think about how you would help a friend or loved one if they disclosed to you that they were in an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Consider how you would want to be treated if you were experiencing abuse, or how you would respond if a person you knew was being disrespectful or abusive to someone else.

Caitlin and Riley

Interactivity Audio script:

Caitlin and Riley

Consider the following scenario and think about how you should respond.

Interactivity Text:

You and your friend Caitlin meet up for lunch over the weekend. You've been looking forward to finally having a chance to get together because the last few times you've had plans, she's canceled at the last minute saying she needed to stay home with her husband, Riley. Just as you sit down, her phone rings. She silences it. Then she immediately gets a text. You ask her if everything is OK, and she says "yes," but looks upset and hands you her phone. You read a message from Riley:

Caitlin — you didn't tell me where you were going for lunch. Why not?? I don't deserve to be ignored. Not sure why you do this to me. And besides — why do you think you have to go out to eat all the time? Such a stupid waste of my money.

[Question-Text]:

What should you say to Caitlin?

[Options]:

- "Hmm. How do you feel about that text?"
- "Is he always so controlling? That has to be hard for you — I'm sorry."
- "He shouldn't say that — unless you've done something that is making him think that things aren't good between you guys. Did you two have a fight?"

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Feedback 1]:

That's Right

Good choice. Caitlin's reaction indicates that she's upset. What you did — letting Caitlin talk first— ensures that you don't impose any of *your opinions* onto *her* relationship.

[Feedback 2]:

Not Quite

Think for a minute: You've imposed *your* opinion on Caitlin, instead of asking *her* how *she* feels about it. Even if his behavior seems controlling to *you*, it is better to find out how Caitlin feels first. Try again.

[Feedback 3]:

Not Quite

Even if you don't think that Riley should treat Caitlin that way, judging him probably won't make her feel better. Suggesting that Caitlin did something to cause Riley's behavior is not helpful, either. Try again.

Caitlin's Response

Interactivity Audio script:

Caitlin's Response

Consider the following scenario and think about how you should respond.

Interactivity Text:

Caitlin's Response

Caitlin says, "I don't know, Riley is just a little intense sometimes. I really shouldn't complain about it, though. He's always making sure he knows where I am in case something happens with the kids, so that's good, right? He's literally always there for me, so it's probably not a big deal for me to just keep him happy. Besides, he does give me money when I need it, especially now that I'm taking classes and there's tuition to pay...and I think work has probably been stressful for him lately, too. He's mentioned that he's afraid he might lose his job."

[Alt-Text]:

[Question-Text]:

How should you respond?

[Options]:

- "It seems like you can't go anywhere or buy anything without getting his approval first. Have you ever thought that the way he's acting is a bit controlling?"
- "The problem here is that you're not standing up for yourself. He doesn't have the right to tell you what to do—but you're letting him do it by not confronting him."
- "It seems like you're having some concerns about Riley. If you want, you can share more of what's going on with me — I won't judge you or Riley. Do you want to talk about this a little more?"

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Feedback 1]:

Not Quite

Labeling Riley's behavior as "controlling" imposes how you feel about Caitlin's relationship onto her. Caitlin may not see Riley's behavior this way and may be reluctant to accept this. Try again.

[Feedback 2]:

Not Quite

This response places responsibility on Caitlin for his behavior and is not a supportive way to share your concern. Suggesting that she confront him without understanding more about her situation could put her at risk. Try again.

[Feedback 3]:

That's Right

Acknowledging Caitlin's situation and offering to listen and offer support is a good choice. Listening to her *without judging her or Riley* will likely be helpful to her.

A Few Months Later

Interactivity Text:

A Few Months Later

A couple of months go by and you haven't had a chance to see Caitlin. Today, she reaches out and tells you that she needs to talk. You call her and she explains that things are *really* not going well with Riley.

She tells you, "He's getting more and more insistent that he knows about *anywhere* I go or *anyone* I'm talking to, and wants me to explain how I'm spending *any* of 'his' money. He's gotten mad at me for doing things on my own a ton of times, and he's suspicious whenever I talk to someone he doesn't know, or if I even just stop to run a quick errand before going home without letting him know. I feel like I just can't get away from him and he keeps getting mad about everything. I'm worried about what the kids might be seeing of this situation, too. I know I need to talk to him about it, but I know he's going to be so mad and I don't really know what to do."

[Alt-Text]: Woman outside is on her cellphone.

[Question-Text]:

What should you say?

[Options]:

- "OK, it sounds like you want to talk to him about this, but you're afraid of how he'll respond, right?"
- "I'm sorry that Riley is treating you that way. You have the right to leave him if you aren't happy. You definitely need to confront him about this if you want out."
- "I think the best thing for you to do would be to just ignore him once you get home — you shouldn't have to put up with how he's treating you. He needs to respect your space and cutting him off might be the only way he'll learn how to respect you."

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Feedback 1]: That's Right

Good choice. Even if you feel differently, saying a friend's *own* words back to them can help to make it clear for both of you what they want to do about a situation. You can then offer them resources for support.

[Feedback 2]: Not Quite

Encouraging Caitlin to confront Riley may put her at risk of harm. If Caitlin wants to leave Riley, she needs to make this decision herself. However, you can share resources to support her and offer to go with her. Try again.

[Feedback 3]: Not Quite

Ignoring Riley probably isn't the best course of action in this situation, especially because Caitlin and Riley live together. If Caitlin were to do this, it probably wouldn't help and she may make Riley even more angry; potentially putting her in an unsafe situation. Try again.

Summary

Video script:

Summary

Our values and identities influence the types of relationships we have. Most of us want “good” relationships; however, it's important to recognize when a relationship has warning signs of harm or abuse.

Key Takeaways

Values

Your values are the beliefs, principles, and ideas that are important to you. The people in your life who are most important to you probably share many of the same values as you.

Gender

Gender has an especially important influence on our awareness of (and experience with) relationship abuse and sexual violence. Understanding the impact of gender stereotypes is an important part of understanding sexual violence.

Empathy

If a friend discloses that they're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, the best way to show them that you care is to thoughtfully express your concern, listen, avoid being judgmental, and encourage them to seek support and resources.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Defining Sexual Harassment

Defining Sexual Harassment

Video script:

Defining Sexual Harassment

Respect is an integral part of healthy personal and professional relationships. Interactions that are disrespectful or that make someone feel unsafe are inconsistent with supportive communities — places where we all want to live, learn, and/or work.

Anyone can commit or experience sexual harassment, including students, faculty and staff, and family members or friends.

In this section we will learn how to:

- Identify sexual harassment and the ways it can interfere with a person's ability to perform academically or at their workplace
- Recognize stalking and implement ways to support potential targets
- Execute best practices of bystander intervention should you witness stalking and/or sexual harassment

Types of Sexual Harassment

Video script:

Types of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment comes in many forms. Relationship violence, sexual violence, stalking, and "quid pro quo" sexual harassment are serious misconduct that inherently jeopardize a person's equal access to education.

Quid Pro Quo

When an institution's employee requires someone to engage in unwelcome sexual activity in exchange for some educational benefit, such as a grade, letter of recommendation, research position, or other academic decision, it is a form of sexual harassment called "quid pro quo," meaning "this for that," which violates Title IX. This type of sexual harassment happens when the person requesting the exchange has some form of power, control, or authority over the other person.

Hostile Environment

Interactivity Audio script:

Types of Sexual Harassment

Read the statement and select the different types to learn more about how to identify hostile environment sexual harassment.

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Interactivity Text:

Hostile Environment

Subtle and overt actions and comments may lead to unlawful harassment if they are severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive, creating a hostile environment that effectively denies a person equal access to educational programs or activities.

Select the different types to learn more about how to identify hostile environment sexual harassment.

[Tab 1]: Verbal

Examples of verbal sexual harassment include unwelcome sexual comments about the way someone looks, sex-based jokes or insults, gender-specific put-downs, or other threatening or intimidating language. Below are some examples of what verbal sexual harassment might sound like:

- Sexual rumors about a person
- Comments about a person's clothing, body, appearance, or sexual activities
- Repeated offensive and/or crude jokes about sex- or gender-specific traits
- Sexual sounds directed at someone (like whistling or kissing sounds)
- Sexual comments about someone's appearance
- Repeated, unwanted requests for dates and/or sexual activity
- Repeated, unwanted questions or suggestions about a person's sexual fantasies, preferences, or history

[Alt-Text]: Two women standing outside having a serious conversation.

[Tab 2]: Non-Verbal

Sexual harassment doesn't have to involve spoken words; it can also include a person's offensive gestures or explicit photos of someone. Below are examples of what non-verbal sexual harassment might look like:

- Physical gestures that refer to sexual activity.
- Messages, emails, or posts to social media that contain unwelcome sexual content.
- Indecent exposure.
- Videoing or photographing sexual activity and/or a person's intimate body parts without their consent.
- Sharing or posting images or videos that include sexual content without the depicted person's knowledge or permission, even if the depicted person consented to the images being taken.

[Alt-Text]: Woman looking frustrated while looking at her phone.

[Tab 3]: Physical

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Sexual harassment that creates a hostile environment can also be physical, such as a repeated and unwanted touching or suggestive body language.

Examples include:

- Hugging or kissing someone.
- Touching a person anywhere (including their back, legs, hair, or clothes).
- Rubbing someone's shoulders or feet.
- Pinching, grabbing, rubbing against, or patting a person's intimate body parts.
- Brushing up against someone's intimate body parts.

[Alt-Text]: A woman with her hands on her face is looking to the side.

Responding to Sexual Harassment

Video script:

Responding to Sexual Harassment

Think back on a time when you may have seen someone in an unsafe or problematic situation. If you thought to yourself, "I want to help," you're not alone. In fact, *most* people want to help others who are at risk of harm and would also respect someone who takes action to help, but often we are not aware that others are also concerned. Being part of a supportive community includes having the shared expectation that when something inappropriate, risky, or dangerous is happening, someone will offer assistance and be supported by others when they do so.

Many of those same approaches you learned about in the last section can also be good strategies for intervening to help someone who is being harassed.

Coming up next, you'll be presented with a few scenarios and asked to think about how you might support someone who you see being harassed.

Bystander Intervention Strategies

Interactivity Audio script:

Bystander Intervention Strategies
Review each technique to learn more.

Interactivity Text:

Bystander Intervention Strategies

When you notice a situation where an individual appears to be making another person uncomfortable or when it looks like someone may be in an unsafe situation, there are ways to help.

The strategy you choose depends on the situation and your relationship (if any) with the people involved.

Review each technique to learn more.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Carousel 1]: Direct

Intervening directly is the most immediate way to take action. This involves offering to help the person who seems uncomfortable *or* at risk, doing something to *directly* ~~or~~ address the person who is creating the situation. Some people — like law enforcement officers, those with military experience, teachers, or mental health professionals — may have specific training that enables them to respond directly to risky situations. This is also a good option if you know the individuals involved, feel confident that you know what to do, and can take direct action safely. This might be asking the person experiencing harm, “Are you OK? Is there something I can do to help you?” It could also be addressing the harasser: “That kind of language really makes me uncomfortable,” or even “Please don’t say that.”

[Alt-text]: group of people talking while holding drinks

[Carousel 2]: Delegate

If you’re uncomfortable intervening directly, you can ask others to help. Delegating can mean notifying someone who has a personal relationship with the person experiencing harm (or the person causing the harm). It can also mean reaching out to someone in an authoritative role or calling emergency assistance, school security, or the police — or simply talking with others who are present or aware of the situation. If *you’re* concerned, it’s likely others are as well. Examples might sound like, “Hey, that’s your friend over there, right? I think they could use your help ...,” or “Just wanted to let you know that I think he may be making her uncomfortable, is there anything you could do to help?”

[Alt-text]: person on their phone

[Carousel 3]: Distract

Using distraction may be a good choice if you’re in an unfamiliar environment, if you don’t know those involved in the situation, or if you’re simply less comfortable with a direct approach. The goal of this strategy is to either help the person who is being harassed out of the situation, or to distract the person who is creating the problem. Examples might sound like: “Hey, I need to ask you a question. Can we talk about it over here where it’s more quiet?” or, “Did you watch the game last night? What do you think of the team’s season?” or, “I can’t find my phone — can you call me so it rings?”

[Alt-text]: people talking to each other

[Carousel 4]: Delay

A delayed response is a good choice if you are concerned about a situation that you hear about after it’s occurred, or if you observed a problematic situation but weren’t able (or were uncomfortable) to intervene at the time. In these circumstances, you can still play an important role in creating a supportive community. For example, checking in and giving the person who was harassed emotional support after the fact or offering resources can be helpful ways to reduce the negative impact of the incident: “It sounds like you had a difficult experience. I’m so sorry you had to deal with that. Are you OK?”

[Alt-text]: two women looking at each other

Intervening

Interactivity Audio script:

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Intervening

As you review the following scenario, think about how you should respond if you were in this situation.

Interactivity Text:

Intervening

You go to a networking mixer with your friend, Jiro. The two of you walk around the room, chatting with different people, and then Jiro separates from you and starts talking to a woman who's standing by herself. After a few minutes, you hear Jiro ask the woman whether she has a boyfriend or not. You look over and the woman looks like she's embarrassed and uncomfortable. Jiro teasingly asks her again and starts trying to guess, saying, "I bet you do — *you do*, right? I hope you don't, but how could you not?" Then Jiro puts his hand on her arm and says, "It's OK, you don't have to tell me right now if you don't want to. But let's continue the conversation at the place across the street where we can get more comfortable. Do you like steak? They have the best filet ..."

[Alt-Text]:

[Question-text]:

How should you respond in this situation?

[Option-text]:

- Whisper to Jiro, "This is a networking mixer, not speed dating! What are you doing? We need to talk to some of the people we came to connect with," and move him along to chat with someone else.
- Walk over to the woman Jiro's talking to and say, "Excuse us — Jiro and I already have plans for dinner! We should get going so we don't miss our reservation, but nice to meet you!" and make sure Jiro walks away with you.
- Stop listening in on Jiro's conversation. You went to the event to socialize and make connections and it's obvious that he doesn't need your help talking to people, so you're free to talk to whomever you want to or just go home.

[Feedback 1]: Not Quite

This may not be an effective way of addressing his comments and behavior. Instead of criticizing him, a better choice would be to intervene in a way that addresses the situation while still being supportive. Try again.

[Feedback 2]: That's Right

Good choice. This interrupts the situation and avoids embarrassing Jiro. Later, you may let him know (privately) that he was making the woman uncomfortable and ask him if he wants to talk about why the situation was concerning.

[Feedback 3]: Not Quite

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

If you notice that Jiro's language or behavior is making someone uncomfortable, do what you can to intervene and help him avoid embarrassment or a problematic situation. Ignoring this situation is not the best choice. Try again.

Unkind Comments

Interactivity Audio script:

Unkind Comments

As you review the following scenario, think about how you should respond if you were in this situation.

Interactivity Text:

Unkind Comments

Your online course has an official chat forum, but you recently found out another student has created an alternate unmonitored chat group for some members of the class. You ask to join, hoping to get additional lecture notes, and discover the chat group is sharing sexually explicit and threatening comments about your professors.

[Alt-Text]: woman looking at laptop

[Question-Text]:

What could you do to address this situation?

[Option-Text]:

- Reach out to the professor with an explanation of what you've observed on the discussion board.
- The group's actions are completely inappropriate. You should intervene by emailing the students directly (so as not to embarrass them) to let them know they shouldn't treat others like that.

[Feedback 1]: That's Right

Good choice. Delegating this situation allows the professor, the person in a position of authority, to make a decision about how to respond.

[Feedback 2]: Not Quite

Although the group's actions are inappropriate, it probably isn't the best choice to take on this situation yourself. A better idea would be to delegate next steps for responding to someone in a position of authority, like your professor.

When to Call 911

Video script:

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

When to Call 911

If you're in a situation where you notice unhealthy or risky behavior, do what you can (as long as it appears to be safe enough to do so) either by taking direct or indirect action, or by talking to others who are involved.

However, in some circumstances, it may not be safe for you or others to intervene. For example, if you witness violence or if the situation causes a physical threat to you or others, you should immediately call the police, school security, or someone with authority. Don't delay before calling. Your choice to reach out for professional help can make all the difference for someone who needs help.

Stalking

Video script:

Stalking

Generally, stalking involves a pattern of unwanted contact or conduct that is repeated, intimidating, and causes a person to be fearful or suffer emotional distress. Stalking that is based on sex is a form of sexual harassment prohibited by Title IX.

Stalking behavior includes: following or watching someone; unwanted and repeated face-to-face, phone, text, or email communication; unwanted gifts; or using other forms of technology to track or spy on someone.

Next, you will read about a scenario involving stalking. Reflect on how you would respond to the situation.

Not So Chance Encounter

Interactivity Audio script:

Not So Chance Encounter

As you review the following scenario, think about how you should respond if you were in this situation.

Interactivity Text:

Not So Chance Encounter

Liam and Ivan met through an online dating site and had been seeing one another for a few months when Ivan's ex-girlfriend, Sabrina, reached out to him about getting back together. Ivan told Liam he wanted to try to work out a relationship with Sabrina again, so he and Liam ended their relationship. Since then, Ivan's been running into Liam seemingly everywhere: the grocery store, restaurants around where Ivan works, even the trail Ivan frequently runs during the week. Liam doesn't live or work anywhere near Ivan's neighborhood, so Ivan's pretty sure this isn't *just* a coincidence. When you see Ivan today, he tells you about what's happening and that he's concerned, but wants to know whether *you* think it's a big deal or not.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Alt-text]: person with umbrella

[Question-Text]:

What should you say to Ivan?

[Option-Text]:

- “I don’t think it’s a big deal, no. You know Liam, so it’s not like you keep running into the same stranger everywhere. There’s nothing to be worried about here.”
- “Well, you said that you’re concerned — do you want to talk more about that?”
- “Yes, I definitely think it’s a big deal. If you’re serious about working things out with Sabrina, you don’t want to keep running into Liam — that will be hard on you, not to mention awkward for Sabrina.”

[Feedback 1]: Not Quite

Even though you’re entitled to your opinion, it would be better — and more supportive — to focus on Ivan’s concern about this situation. Try again.

[Feedback 2]: That's Right

Good choice. It’s important to acknowledge Ivan’s feelings and support him in thinking about how he wants to respond, whether that’s seeking the help of an advocate or reporting these incident to someone who can help, including the police.

Next

[Feedback 3]:

Not Quite

Although this may be true, it isn’t the *only* issue in this situation. Ivan has said that he’s concerned about why Liam seems to keep showing up, so it would be best to focus on supporting what is problematic for Ivan. Try again.

Federal and State Laws

Interactivity Audio script:

Federal and State Laws

Defining Stalking

It’s important to be aware of federal and state laws defining stalking.

Explore federal and state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Review your state's laws]

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

[Dropdown: View your state's laws]

[Explore federal law definitions using the dropdown below.]

[Dropdown: View federal laws]

Summary

[Video script:](#)

Summary

Sexual harassment and stalking can have a negative impact on a person's personal life as well as their academic and/or professional success. It's important to be able to recognize this kind of behavior and to know how to respond if you, or someone you care about, experiences it.

Key Takeaways

Types of Sexual Harassment

Title IX prohibits different types of sexual harassment, including quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment.

[Alt-text]: A couple stands on the sidewalk and argues, visibly annoyed with each other.

Stalking Defined

Title IX also prohibits stalking that is based on sex and involves a pattern of unwanted contact or other attention that is repeated, intimidating, and causes a person to be fearful or suffer emotional stress.

[Alt-Text]: A person stands on the sidewalk, looking back with a scared expression on their face holding a phone to their ear.

Community Support

If someone discloses that they've experienced sexual harassment, including stalking, remember to validate what they are telling you and let them know that there are resources available to help them.

Consent and Coercion

Consent and Coercion

Video script:

Consent and Coercion

Consent is an important part of open communication and it isn't always about sexual activity. Communicating what you *do* and what you *don't* want is a normal, natural, and expected part of healthy communication and it's reasonable to expect that others will do the same.

In this section, we'll explore how to:

- Explain the definition of consent
- Navigate positive, productive conversations about consent
- Recognize and share the importance of respecting boundaries regarding consent

Consent and Healthy Communication

Interactivity Audio script:

Consent and Healthy Communication

Read the statement and explore some of the following reasons why communicating consent is so important to forming positive relationships.

Interactivity Text:

Consent and Healthy Communication

In your day-to-day life, you make decisions, set boundaries, respect other people's choices, and expect others to do the same. In other words, you *consent*, or not, to different kinds of things all the time.

It's an important part of communicating about sex, but it's not only about sexual activity. Establishing consent is part of any activity that two people may decide to do together.

Explore some of the following reasons why communicating consent is so important to forming positive relationships.

[Carousel 1]: Normal and Healthy

Communicating what you do and what you *don't* want is a normal, natural, and expected part of healthy communication and it's reasonable to expect that others will do the same. Consent, whether that's agreeing to meet for coffee, sharing personal information with someone, or something more serious, like sexual activity, is a natural part of relationships and communication of all types.

[Alt-Text]: A woman writes on notebook while a man looks at the writing

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Carousel 2]: Clarifying and Empowering

For any interaction that involves another person (whether it's sexual or not) it's the responsibility of the person *initiating* the activity to get the other person's consent. While it's possible to give non-verbal consent, using words is the clearest way to make sure that someone is agreeing to something. It's also the most effective way to share exactly what you are and are not interested in doing.

[Alt-Text]: Two women talking

[Carousel 3]: An Ongoing Process

Only you can decide what's best for you — you have the power to choose *and* the right to change your mind about what you want at any point in an interaction. If you're initiating an activity, whether sexual or not, listen for and respect the other person's choices throughout the interaction. If you're unsure of what the other person is communicating, check in to ensure you're on the same page. Unclear communication is a signal to stop and clarify. Boundaries should be part of an ongoing discussion and consent to one act does not mean consent to other, similar acts.

[Alt-Text]: A couple holding hands sitting on a sofa

Consent in Action

Video script:

Consent in Action

Being clear and open about your values and what you want (and don't want) helps others know who you are and what matters to you.

This is true whether you've been in many relationships, have chosen not to be in a relationship, or have been in one relationship for a long time. When it comes to consent, you're the *only* one who knows what's best for you. It's up to you to decide and share what you're comfortable with or what is not OK for you, whatever the nature of the relationship.

Most of us would agree that consent is really important, but many people are not quite sure *how* to talk about it, and may not have talked about consent in the past.

Coming up next, you'll be given a few scenarios and asked to choose the option that best demonstrates consent in action. You'll see examples of ways to comfortably communicate how you want to interact with someone, including the possibility of sexual intimacy.

You're at the monthly office meeting and your boss announces that your good friend, Heidi, has been promoted. Everyone claps, and you look over to Heidi, who's standing across the room. You see another co-worker, Tanya, excitedly hugging Heidi and grabbing her arm. Heidi looks stiff and awkward, but Tanya doesn't appear to notice. Then Heidi says, "Sorry, um, I'm just not a big hugger."

Sorry, I'm Just Not a...

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Interactivity Audio script:

Sorry, I'm Just Not a...

As you review the following scenario, think about how you should respond if you were in this situation.

Interactivity Text:

[Alt-text]:

[Question-Text]:

What should you do?

[Option-Text]:

- As you head back to your desk, find Tanya and pull her aside to chat privately. Let her know that hugging people at work can be seen as inappropriate.
- Wait until the meeting ends and ask Heidi if you can chat when it's convenient for her. When you're able to talk privately, let her know that you saw what happened and ask her if she's OK.
- When you get back to your desk, write a detailed email to the office email list sharing what you saw and why it was inappropriate, so that others can learn from what you observed happening.

[Feedback 1]:

Not Quite

It would be better to show your support by reaching out to Heidi to see if she's OK and wants to talk. If you do decide to say anything to Tanya, focus on workplace expectations and professionalism. Try again.

[Feedback 2]:

That's Right

Good choice. Reaching out to Heidi to see if she's OK shows her that you recognized that she may have been uncomfortable. Letting her know that you're available to listen if *she* wants to talk about the situation is also a supportive choice.

[Feedback 3]:

Not Quite

This choice isn't ideal because it doesn't allow the person who experienced the hugging/touching — Heidi — to decide whether she wants to share the experience with the rest

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

of the office. It would be better to reach out to Heidi and let *her* decide how and if she shares her experience. Try again.

Making Assumptions

Interactivity Audio Script:

Making Assumptions

Read the statement and select a response.

Interactivity Text:

Making Assumptions

Brittany and Frances have been married for a number of years. Recently, they went on a weekend trip to celebrate their anniversary. On their last night after dinner, Frances decided to try something new. The next morning, Brittany told Frances, “Last night was great and while we didn’t discuss it at the *time*, it ended up being unexpected and exciting. You know though, one thing I’ve been thinking ... we’ve been talking to the kids about verbal consent and how important it is in relationships ... so we should make a habit of following our own advice. Let’s make a pact with each other that in the future, we’ll talk about things first so that we can be completely sure that we’re in agreement about everything and respecting what each other wants. Sound good?”

[Alt-text]: Couple holding hands and walking

[Question-Text]:

What should Frances say?

[Option-Text]:

- “I assumed you’d like it; I didn’t think we’d need to have a discussion, since we’ve been together for so long — and if I thought you didn’t like it, I would have stopped. But I’m willing to give the ‘talking about what we want’ thing a try.”
- “I feel like verbal consent is important to teach the kids, but we’ve been doing this for a long time and I know your body language. Believe me, if you hadn’t wanted it, I would have known — talking would have distracted me.”
- “I feel like the bad guy here — you just said you liked it, so what’s the problem? I don’t see why we can’t just trust each other like we’ve been doing. Now I’m second-guessing whether there are other important things you just aren’t telling me.”

[Feedback 1]: That's Right

Good choice. It’s risky to assume that someone will be OK with sexual activity *even if* you’ve known them for a long time *or* if you’ve engaged in that activity before. Having open, honest conversations about what each person wants builds trust.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Feedback 2]: Not Quite

Even in long-term relationships, it's important to talk about what you want and don't want when it comes to sexual activity. Having open, honest conversations about what each person wants can strengthen a relationship. Try again.

[Feedback 3]: Not Quite

Talking about what you want in sexual or intimate situations builds trust and strengthens relationships. By responding defensively to Brittany's request, Frances misses the opportunity to show Brittany that they respect her and want to communicate openly about intimacy. Try again.

Coercion and Sexual Assault

Video Script:

Coercion and Sexual Assault

Generally, coercion occurs when someone purposely uses physical force, threats, or manipulative tactics to pressure, intimidate, or otherwise make someone engage in an unwanted activity, including activity that's sexual. It's an abuse of power and/or a way of trying to leverage control over someone.

Sexual assault is a crime and a severe form of sexual harassment that involves sexual contact or activity *without* a person's consent, including the use of force, threats, intimidation, or other means of coercion.

What Does Coercion Look Like?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What Does Coercion Look Like?

Sexual coercion can take many different forms.

Explore each topic to learn more.

Interactivity Text:

[Flip card 1]: Guilt

Making a person feel like they owe someone sexual activity, or anything else. This might sound like, "You're *not in the mood*? But we were just getting started ..." If the pressure escalates and causes someone to engage in sexual activity against their will it may be considered a coercive behavior.

[Alt-Text]: A couple sits together facing away from each other, visibly upset and holding their hands up to their head.

[Flip card 2]: Pressure

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Repeatedly asking someone to engage in sexual activity after they've explicitly indicated they weren't interested. Such as, "Come on ... We never do this anymore ..." If the pressure becomes intimidating or threatening after being told "no," it could cross the line into coercive tactics.

[Alt-Text]: A couple sits together outside, with one person draping their arms around the other.

[Flip card 3]: Incapacitation

Using drugs or alcohol to make someone more vulnerable, or trying to engage in sexual activity with someone who is unable to consent (i.e., incapacitated or asleep).

[Alt-Text]: Two people drink at a party on the beach.

[Flip card 4]: Threats

Subtle threats can pressure someone into unwanted sexual activity, beginning with "You *do* realize that the only reason you can enroll in classes is because I'm paying for them ..." and ultimately crossing the line into coercion.

[Alt-Text]: A person sits alone on the bus and scrolls on their phone.

[Flip card 5]: Manipulation

Seeking to punish someone emotionally because they have declined sexual activity is a form of subtle intimidation that may turn into coercion. For example, "You're *never* in the mood. I deserve more than this."

[Alt-Text]: A couple sits together on a couch, with one person speaking urgently to the other.

[Flip card 6]: Rationalization

Placing blame on the other person, external factors, or outside circumstances may also pressure someone to act against their will. This might sound like, "You got me too turned on and it's been so long ..."

[Alt-Text]: A couple stands together in the street with their arms around each other.

Factoring in Alcohol

Video Script:

Factoring in Alcohol

Though alcohol use and sexual assault can be correlated, this does not mean that alcohol use causes sexual assault. However, sexually aggressive individuals often use alcohol to create conditions in which it's easier for them to take advantage of another person.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Alcohol reduces a person's ability to communicate clearly, including the ability to give consent or identify a lack of consent. It also adversely affects judgment and motor functions, which can keep someone from being able to recognize or react in a potentially harmful situation.

Alcohol and Coercion

Interactivity Audio Script:

Alcohol and Coercion

Read the statement and explore each of the topics to read more about how alcohol affects a person's ability to give consent, ask for consent, or recognize and respond respectfully when consent is not given.

Interactivity Text:

Alcohol and Coercion

Being drunk is never an excuse for someone committing sexual violence, and it is never the survivor's fault for having been assaulted, regardless of whether or not they were drinking.

This is true whether a person is in a long-term relationship or whether they're connecting with someone for the first time. While it is possible for two people who have been drinking to have consensual sex, it is risky and unwise to do so because the conditions for consent are not clear.

Explore each of the topics to read more about how alcohol affects a person's ability to give consent, ask for consent, or recognize and respond respectfully when consent is not given.

[Accordion 1]: Judgment

Alcohol can negatively impact someone's judgment and may affect their ability to make decisions that reflect their values when it comes to engaging in sexual activity. It can also reduce a person's ability to recognize risky or unsafe situations.

[Accordion 2]: Motor Control

Even if its impact is not visible, alcohol can affect a person's movement and coordination and, as a result, may reduce their ability to leave an unsafe or uncomfortable situation, or to resist an assault.

[Accordion 3]: Communication

Alcohol can affect a person's ability to clearly communicate what they want or understand what others want. This includes the ability to ask for consent (and understand and respect the response), and the ability to give or decline consent.

State Law Consent

Interactivity Audio Script:

State Law Consent

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

It's important to be aware of state laws defining consent.

Explore state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

[Review your state's laws]

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

[Dropdown: View your state's laws]

[Popup Text]

Sexual Assault Laws

Sexual Assault

Under Title IX, sexual assault includes:

Rape—sexual intercourse, or anal or oral sex (with even slight penetration by a body part or an object) without consent

Fondling—touching another person's private body parts for sexual gratification without consent

Statutory Rape—sexual intercourse with a person who is under the age of consent

Incest—sexual intercourse between two people who are related to a degree prohibiting marriage

Statutes

Federal Law

Sexual Assault

Code of Federal Regulations

TITLE 34—EDUCATION

SUBTITLE B—REGULATIONS OF THE OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER I—OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PART 106—NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

SUBPART D—DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

§ 106.30 Definitions. *[Effective Aug. 14, 2020.]*

(a) As used in this part:

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- (1) An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- (2) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; or
- (3) "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

.... *[Content omitted for clarity.]*

§ 106.44 Recipient's response to sexual harassment. *[Effective Aug. 14, 2020.]*

(a) General response to sexual harassment. A recipient with actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an education program or activity of the recipient against a person in the United States, must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. A recipient is deliberately indifferent only if its response to sexual harassment is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. For the purposes of this section, §§ 106.30, and 106.45, "education program or activity" includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the recipient exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs, and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a postsecondary institution. ... *[content omitted for clarity]*

.... *[Content omitted for clarity.]*

Title 20-EDUCATION

CHAPTER 28—HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES AND STUDENT ASSISTANCE

SUBCHAPTER IV—STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Part G—General Provisions Relating to Student Assistance Programs

§ 1092. Institutional and financial assistance information for students

.... *[Content omitted for clarity.]*

(f) Disclosure of campus security policy and campus crime statistics

(6)(A) In this subsection:

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

(v) The term "sexual assault" means an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

.... [Content omitted for clarity.]

Crime Definitions From the Summary Reporting System (SRS) User Manual From the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program

Rape

The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.

Crime Definitions From the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) User Manual from the FBI's UCR Program

Sex Offenses

Any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent.

A. Fondling — The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

B. Incest — Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

C. Statutory Rape — Sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

Federal and State Laws Sexual Assault

Interactivity Audio Script:

Federal and State Laws Sexual Assault

It's important to be aware of federal and state laws defining sexual assault.

Explore federal and state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

[Review your state's laws]

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Dropdown: View your state's laws]

[Explore federal law definitions using the dropdown below.]

[Dropdown: View federal laws]

Summary

Video Script:

Summary

Asking for and giving consent doesn't *only* occur in sexual situations; it's a normal part of day-to-day communication. Consent is absent when threats, pressure, or other intimidating behavior is used to force someone to act against their will.

Key Takeaways

[Tab 1]: Communicate

Having conversations about consent is important even in the context of a committed and/or long-term partnership or marriage. Consent builds trust, and contributes to healthy relationships.

[Tab 2]: Listen and Respect

It is important to listen to and respect others' decisions — especially in situations where consent is *not given*. Every person is unique regarding their boundaries; caring for others means respecting those boundaries.

[Tab 3]: Don't Push

It is *never* OK to use physical force or other coercive tactics to make someone engage in sexual activity. *Sexual assault* occurs when someone engages in sexual activity without the other person's consent. It's a crime and violates school policies.

Reporting Options and Responding to a Survivor

Reporting Options and Responding to a Survivor

Video Script:

Everyone deserves to live, learn, and work in a safe and supportive community. It's helpful to know what to say and do if someone (a friend, a family member, another student, or co-worker) shares with you that they have experienced harm. Responding to a survivor of sexual assault (or any violence or abuse) is an opportunity for you to express your values through your words and actions.

Giving your full attention and truly listening are important communication skills. They're also helpful skills for supporting those who have been sexually assaulted or abused. Your supportive response to someone who shares an experience of harm can make a positive difference in their healing process.

In this module, we'll explore how to:

- Support survivors by listening to their experiences
- Share reporting options with survivors
- Connect survivors with resources for additional support

Impact of Trauma

Interactivity Audio Script:

Impact of Trauma

Read the statement, then explore some of the science behind these reactions.

Interactivity Text:

Understanding some of the ways researchers have identified that the brain and body may react to trauma can help you to offer a caring and informed response. It may also help you come to terms with an experience of your own.

The types of effects highlighted here can also occur if people have, for example, witnessed violence, survived other violent or sexual crimes, experienced social injustice, been involved in accidents, or had combat experience.

Explore some of the science behind these reactions.

[Carousel 1]: Memory

Trauma can trigger the release of hormones that impact a person's memory. A person who experiences trauma may hesitate when remembering an event, or remember only details like smells, sounds, or what something felt or looked like. They may also have accurate, but fragmented, memories and not be able to put event details in the order in which they happened.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

[Alt-Text]: Man sitting with a frown while listening to others talking

[Carousel 2]: Emotions

During a traumatic experience, the person's body may release chemicals to block physical and emotional pain. These neurobiological effects can't be controlled and may contribute to unexpected emotional reactions. For example, a person may not cry, or could experience extreme emotional feelings (from laughing, to fear, to rage) while recalling an incident.

[Alt-Text]: Couple sitting on the ground

[Carousel 3]: Physical Response

A person's physical response to trauma can also be significantly impacted by neurobiological factors. Tonic immobility (or trauma-induced paralysis) is an autonomic hormonal response that causes the body to freeze in situations that provoke extreme fear. Resisting or escaping is not possible for someone experiencing this, because they do not have control over their muscle response.

[Alt-Text]: Woman with a frown

How Identities May Impact Survivors' Experiences

Interactivity Audio Script:

How Identities May Impact Survivors' Experiences

Violence or abuse can impact *anyone*, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. However, some survivors are faced with unique challenges in seeking or receiving support related to one or more of their identities. Additionally, someone seeking to harm another person may single out individuals who are made more vulnerable to violence or abuse due to discriminatory intent.

Explore each identity to learn more about some of the potential experiences members of these groups may have.

Interactivity Text:

[Accordion 1]: LGBTQIA+ Survivors

Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual (LGBTQIA+) experience sexual violence at higher rates than the general population. These survivors may face additional obstacles when recovering or seeking help, including:

- The risks of coming out, or being outed, to friends, family, or the community.
- Fear of rejection, isolation, or lack of privacy within their community, or of inadvertently reinforcing negative societal stereotypes.
- Potential judgment, cultural incompetence, or discrimination by first responders and healthcare providers based on the survivor's identity or medical history.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

- Questioning their sexuality or how it is perceived by others, especially if the assault was perpetrated as a hate crime or involved the survivor's sexual orientation or gender identity.

[Accordion 2]: Survivors with Disabilities

People with physical or cognitive disabilities or mental illness report experiencing violence at even higher rates than people without disabilities. For people with physical disabilities, sexual abuse can also take the form of lack of respect for privacy and unwanted exposure during personal care routines like bathing, dressing, and toileting. For these people, barriers in seeking and receiving the support they need can include:

- Being stereotyped as identifying as asexual, which can lead to a perceived lack of credibility due to a preconceived assumption of not being sexual;
- Physical and/or social isolation, and limited access to outside communications and interactions;
- Lack of a support network and/or lack of accessible transportation; or
- Potential judgment or discrimination by first responders and healthcare providers based on the survivor's disability.

[Accordion 3]: Survivors Who Identify as Male

There are a number of assumptions about relationship abuse and sexual assault in society today that make it especially difficult for male survivors to understand, acknowledge, and heal from harm that they have experienced. Many of these assumptions cause male survivors to be reluctant to disclose their experience to others or seek support, including:

- The fear that a man who has been sexually assaulted by another man will be perceived as gay when he may not identify that way.
- The false assumption that a "real man" would have resisted an assault or that being a survivor of sexual assault somehow makes him "unmanly."
- The survivor's assumption that an uncontrollable physical response during an assault indicates pleasure or enjoyment.

[Accordion 4]: International or Undocumented Survivors

International or undocumented survivors may be unsure or unaware of their legal rights and available resources, or the impact reporting may have on their visa status — they may even fear that reporting an incident could lead to an investigation of their immigration status.

Title IX protects all students, regardless of citizenship status or legal residency. Non-U.S. citizen survivors of sexual violence can face some additional challenges related to reporting or seeking assistance, including:

- Fear of losing visa status and/or being removed from the country if they report sexual misconduct or seek medical help;

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

- Worry that family or community members in their home country may be told about the harm they experienced;
- Cultural values or beliefs within their community that cause shame or self blame
- Social isolation and/or language barriers that prevent them from seeking support
- Fear that reporting violence or abuse or seeking other help will lead to their family members' detention and deportation from the U.S.

If an international student with a student visa has experienced harm and needs to reduce their course load, it's important that they get approval from their Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) ahead of time (even during a Title IX investigation) to avoid jeopardizing their visa status.

[Accordion 5]: Survivors from Communities of Color

People of color come from many widely diverse backgrounds. Stereotypes and racism can create additional challenges for survivors of color when recovering or seeking help, potentially including:

- Distrust of first responders, law enforcement, the criminal justice system, or other social services, which can result in a reluctance to report sexual misconduct or seek help.
- Cultural and/or religious beliefs that may prevent a survivor in an abusive relationship from leaving or seeking help from outsiders
- Fear of inadvertently reinforcing negative societal stereotypes.
- Lack of providers who respect the survivor's culture and/or have resources and services available in different languages.

When we understand the challenges that many survivors may face in seeking help, we can work to identify and reduce these barriers and provide the support that all survivors need and deserve.

Understanding Impact and Supporting Survivors

Interactivity Audio Script:

Understanding Impact and Supporting Survivors

Read the statement, then explore each topic to learn more about these feelings.

Interactivity Text:

Understanding Impact and Supporting Survivors

Just as each survivor's experience is unique, their recovery process is as well. It may be influenced by multiple factors, such as their identities and their familiarity with or relation to the person who harmed them.

Another influence on recovery is how survivors expect important individuals in their lives to react and how their culture may define or react to their experience. Despite these unique elements, there are common reactions that many survivors share.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Explore each topic to learn more about these feelings.

[Carousel 1] : Shame and Guilt

Survivors may have feelings of shame and guilt. Remind them that the only person responsible for the assault is the person who harmed them and that what happened to them, regardless of the circumstances, is in no way their fault.

[Alt-Text]: Man with a frown has his hand on his head

[Carousel 2]: Fear of Retaliation

Offer information about confidential resources who can help survivors understand their options for seeking support. If appropriate, remind the survivor that there are protections against retaliation, including when employers, and/or faculty and staff are involved.

[Alt-Text]: Two people looking at a phone together

[Carousel 3]: Depression and Anxiety

Empower the survivor to make their own decisions. Healing can be a long-term process. Encourage a survivor to care for themselves and remind them of their strength. Offer to connect them to professional resources for additional support.

[Alt-Text]: Two people sitting together

Responding to Survivors

Interactivity Audio Script:

Responding to Survivors

Explore the different steps to learn more about how to respond to survivors sharing their experience with you.

Interactivity Text:

[Flip card 1]: Trust

Let them know that you care about them and are sorry that this happened. Tell them that you are there to listen and help in any way you can. Thank them for trusting you.

[Flip card 2]: Encourage

Encourage a survivor to care for themselves and remind them of their strength. Offer to connect them to professional resources for additional support.

[Flip card 3]: Reinforce

Remind them that the harm that they experienced is *not* their fault. Consider saying, “It’s not your fault.” or, “You’re *not* to blame for what happened to you.”

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[Flip card 4]: Listen

Pay attention — avoid reading text messages or taking phone calls; allow *them* to do the talking; and do not analyze or question what they're disclosing to you.

[Flip card 5]: Empower

Allow the person to make their own decisions about seeking support or reporting. You might say, "It's completely up to you..." or, "I will respect your decision ..."

[Flip card 6]: Support

Continue to support the person after they have disclosed to you. For example, offering to go for a walk, grabbing coffee, or arranging a "playdate" with their children.

Student Engagement

Interactivity Text:

[Alt-Text]: person using a laptop

[Question-Text]:

Would you like our school to contact you about getting more involved in sexual assault prevention and education?

[Option-Text]:

- Yes
- No

By selecting "Yes," you are authorizing this course to share the name and email address you used to log in with our school exclusively for the purpose of contacting you about such opportunities. Our school or organization may or may not contact you, even if you authorize us to do so. Please note that your survey responses will remain completely confidential.

National Resources

Interactivity Audio Script:

National Resources

These organizations provide information, support, and resources to survivors of sexual and relationship violence, as well as those who care about and want to help them.

Interactivity Text:

National Network to End Domestic Violence

[Popup content]: National Network to End Domestic Violence (opens in new window.)

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

The [National Network to End Domestic Violence \(NNEDV\)](#) is dedicated to creating a social, political, and economic environment in which relationship violence no longer exists.

Office for Civil Rights

[Popup content]: [Office for Civil Rights \(opens in new window.\)](#)

The Department of Education's [Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#) enforces federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. Questions and complaints regarding Title IX rights or violations may be referred to our Title IX Coordinator or to the [OCR](#).

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

[Popup content]: [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \(opens in new window.\)](#)

The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \(1-800-273-8255\)](#) provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources, and best practices for professionals.

National Sexual Assault Hotline

[Popup content]: [National Sexual Assault Hotline \(opens in new window.\)](#)

The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) operates the [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#) at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) in partnership with rape crisis centers across the nation, providing free, confidential advice 24/7. RAINN also provides helpful information for supporting friends or finding local counseling and advocacy organizations.

Protection Orders

[Popup content]: [Protection Orders \(opens in new window.\)](#)

[WomensLaw.org](#) provides state-by-state legal information on obtaining a protection order, and the Battered Women's Justice Project's [National Center on Protection Orders and Full Faith & Credit](#) supports inter-jurisdictional enforcement of protection orders.

Victim Rights Law Center

[Popup content]: [Victim Rights Law Center \(opens in new window.\)](#)

The [Victim Rights Law Center](#) provides legal services to sexual assault survivors, as well as education, housing, and employment resources.

Men Stopping Violence

[Popup content]: [Men Stopping Violence \(opens in new window.\)](#)

[Men Stopping Violence](#) organizes men to end male violence against women and girls through innovative trainings, programs, and advocacy that engage men in prevention of gender-based violence.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Changing Our Campus

[Popup content]: [Changing Our Campus \(opens in new window.\)](#)

The [Center for Changing Our Campus Culture](#) is an online resource of research, policies, and best practices to address sexual and relationship violence, and stalking, that is supported by the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women.

myPlan

[Popup content]: [myPlan \(opens in new window.\)](#)

[myPlan](#) is a tool to help someone with safety decisions if they are experiencing abuse in their intimate relationship.

FORGE

[Popup content]: [FORGE \(opens in new window.\)](#)

[FORGE](#) supports, educates, and advocates for the rights and lives of transgender individuals and their significant others, friends, family, and allies.

Stalking Resource Center

[Popup content]: [Stalking Resource Center \(opens in new window.\)](#)

The [Stalking Resource Center](#) provides information and resources for stalking victims, including a stalking incident and behavior log.

Men Can Stop Rape

[Popup content]: [Men Can Stop Rape \(opens in new window.\)](#)

[Men Can Stop Rape](#) provides information on awareness and involvement programs, and resources for perpetrators and male survivors of sexual violence.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

[Popup content]: [National Domestic Violence Hotline \(opens in new window.\)](#)

Advocates at the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) are available 24/7 to talk confidentially with anyone experiencing relationship violence or an unhealthy relationship, or seeking resources or information. 1.800.799.SAFE (7233) 1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

National Women's Law Center

[Popup content]: [National Women's Law Center \(opens in new window.\)](#)

[National Women's Law Center](#) works to protect and promote equality and opportunity for women and families through legal and public policy efforts. They combat sex discrimination by providing information, resources, and referrals to legal professionals for those who have experienced sexual misconduct.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

[Popup content]: National Sexual Violence Resource Center (opens in new window.)

The [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#) provides information and tools to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

[Popup content]: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (opens in new window.)

[The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) works to raise awareness about domestic violence and to support those impacted by relationship violence.

JED Foundation: Mental Health Resource Center

[Popup content]: JED Foundation: Mental Health Resource Center (opens in new window.)

[JED Foundation: Mental Health Resource Center](#) provides essential information and resources to strengthen the mental and emotional health of young adults, and to prevent substance abuse and suicide.

Clery Center for Security on Campus

[Popup content]: Clery Center for Security on Campus (opens in new window.)

[View Resource](#)

State Laws

Interactivity Audio Script:

State Laws

Understanding Legal Protections

It's important to be aware of state laws defining legal protections.

Explore state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

[Review your state's laws]

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

[Dropdown: View your state's laws]

Reporting

Interactivity Audio Script:.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual or relationship violence, harassment, abuse, or stalking, there are reporting options available.

Explore the following approaches to reporting.

Interactivity Text:

[Tab 1]:

Preserve Evidence

Even if you or someone else is undecided about filing a report, it's important to consider preserving evidence, which can be helpful in obtaining a protective order and ensuring you have as much information about what happened as possible, in case you or they decide to file a complaint.

This can mean saving clothing that was worn or receiving a forensic medical exam that will collect and preserve evidence from your body. This exam may be offered at a local hospital or clinic and a trained person may be available to accompany you to provide support; it does not, however, require someone to file a police report. In all types of violence, harassment, or stalking, be sure to save any communication with the offender, such as emails and texts.

[Alt-Text]:

[Tab 2]: Notify Title IX Personnel

When someone reports an incident of sexual harassment to the Title IX coordinator or a designated "official with authority" at our institution, the first step is to discuss and provide available supportive measures that the person reporting sexual harassment ("complainant") may need (e.g., changing your academic, living, transportation, and/or working situations), regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed. Check your school's policies or contact the Title IX office to find out what other steps may be taken after a complaint is made.

[Alt-Text]:

[Tab 3]: Notify Law Enforcement

If you have been assaulted, harassed, or stalked you have the right to notify law enforcement and to be assisted by school authorities (if you want their help) in notifying law enforcement. You can also choose not to notify law enforcement.

[Alt-Text]:

Reporting Options and Processes

Interactivity Audio Script:

Reporting Options and Processes

Select each aspect of the process to learn more.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Interactivity Text:

Reporting Options and Processes

Select each aspect of the process to learn more.

[Tab 1]: Types of Employees

Below are types of campus employees and general information about their Title IX obligations and duties of confidentiality.

Title IX Coordinators

- Are responsible for coordinating an institution's efforts to comply with its Title IX requirements, including responding appropriately to reports of different types of sexual harassment.

Officials With Authority

- Are employees who can take corrective measures to address all types of sexual harassment, such as providing supportive measures or initiating investigations.

Confidential Employees or Resources

- Are employees or other persons who have a professional duty of confidentiality and can explain your options for reporting sexual harassment and seeking academic, living, or work accommodations.

Depending on state laws and licensing requirements, confidential employees may include:

- Licensed mental-health counselors
- Pastoral counselors
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Some health center employees

Other Employees

- May be required to report sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator, depending on institutional policies.

Anonymous reporting options

- May be available by the school; and
- Must report the type of offense, but may not need to include identifying information in the report.

[Alt-Text]: A woman touching another woman's arm while talking

[Tab 2]: Reporting to Our School

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

When a report is made to the Title IX Coordinator or Official with Authority, we will provide information to both the reporting and responding parties on a number of details, including:

- Available services (counseling, health, legal, etc.) and accommodation options (like changes to academic, living, transportation, and working situations);
- Protection against retaliation;
- Information about our responsibilities regarding orders of protection, including mutual and one-way no-contact orders, and restraining orders; and
- How our school will protect both parties' confidentiality in any publicly available recordkeeping, protective measures taken, and grievance process.

[Alt-Text]: Smiling woman

[Tab 3]: Grievance Process

If a formal complaint is filed by a person alleging sexual harassment (the "complainant") or signed by a Title IX Coordinator, the proceedings must:

- Be reasonably prompt, fair, and impartial;
- Be conducted by unbiased officials who are trained on investigating sexual harassment; and

Provide both the complainant and the person accused of committing sexual harassment (the "respondent") equal opportunities to:

- Access information that will be used at formal and informal meetings or hearings, and review any evidence obtained during the investigation;
- Present witnesses and other evidence;
- Have an advisor or other support person present during the grievance process; and
- Allow advisors to cross-examine witnesses and parties, and either party to request that they be in separate rooms with technology enabling them to see and hear a witness or party answer questions

Both complainant and respondent must be notified at the same time of:

- A statement of, and rationale for, the result of the proceedings and any sanction imposed against the respondent;
- Information on how to exercise the right to appeal;
- Any change to the result; and
- When the result becomes final.

[Alt-Text]: Woman sitting at a desk across from another woman

[Tab 4]: How to File a Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights

The Department of Education's [Office for Civil Rights](#) (OCR) enforces federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Assault Prevention for Adult Learners

Contact the [OCR](#) with questions or complaints regarding Title IX rights or violations.

Summary

Video Script:

Summary

Making a commitment to supporting those who have experienced harm is an important part of contributing to a learning environment where everyone feels safe to learn and work.

Key Takeaways

[Tab 1]: Trauma Has An Impact

There are different ways that the brain and body may react to trauma; understanding these reactions can prepare you to offer a kind and helpful response to a friend who may have experienced harm or to better understand your own experience.

[Tab 2]: Support is Available

Offering information about confidential resources who can help survivors understand their reporting options can aid survivors in making informed decisions, and some survivors of sexual assault face additional challenges in seeking or receiving support because of one or more of their identities.

[Tab 3]: Reporting Options

If you or someone you know has experienced violence, harassment, abuse, or sexual assault, there are options available, including confidential resources.

Conclusion

Course Summary

Video Script:

Course Summary

We hope that this course has shown you how to:

- Recognize signs of relationship and sexual harassment or violence, and stalking
- Respond to someone who has had a harmful experience
- Implement intervention strategies in situations of potential harm

Even if you have not been directly impacted by these issues, chances are you know — or will know — someone who is. You are a part of the solution, and you can help.

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